STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY

Thriver Circle

Excellent photography is ESSENTIAL to succeeding online.

Don't waste your time on other things before you've got great photos.

- The key elements to succeeding online are excellent photos & good SEO.
- Both of these are ASSETS that will pay off for years to come.
- All other marketing efforts are secondary, and only pay off in the short term.
- Focus on photos first.

Okay, so what do I do?

There are some key elements that go into creating excellent photos.

5 Minute Activity

- Before we begin!
- Brainstorm what you think you're doing RIGHT with your photos, what you're doing WRONG, with your photos, and anything you are UNSURE about.
- Make a list of these. We'll come back to it later.

Focus on the following

- Lighting
- Focus
- Background
- Colour
- Styling
- Angle
- Photo types
- Branding
- Editing
- ***Let's break these down***

Lighting

- Natural lighting is best - by a window, outside on a cloudy day.
- If artificial, choose white (not yellow) light.
- Make sure light is diffuse and bright.
- Avoid flash.
- Avoid harsh shadow.
- Avoid over-exposure (TOO bright - i.e. light too close to item).

Focus

- You MUST have your item in focus.
- Make sure if you're using macro, that the focal point is correct. You can have, for example, the chain out of focus on a close-up of the pendant on a necklace.
- Do not use blurry photos.
- Check your depth of field.
- You can have background/styling elements out of focus/blurry to help draw the gaze to the product.

F-stop

Background

- White or not?
- Personal decision - but white is not required.
- Choose a background that complements, but doesn't distract OR detract from your product.
- If you product is patterned, generally avoid patterned backgrounds.
- Don't choose a colour too close to your product, or it may blend into the background.
- It must be clean!
- Branding may affect this.

Colour

- Your items must be as true-to-life as possible.
- White backgrounds MUST be a true white - you need to look at your colour balance.
- Colour casts can affect how your photo looks - you might have a blue or red colour cast, for example.
- These can be removed (mostly) in editing, but it's best to minimise them through good lighting.
- Try to avoid colours around you reflecting on your products!

Styling

- 'Tis better to understyle than to overstyle!
- Remember: the product is the STAR of the show.
- Leave no doubt what is for sale.
- Styling must be in line with your branding.
- Styling must complement, not compete with your product.
- You can have more styling in additional photos - but not the main one.

Angle

- Try to photograph your item from different, interesting angles to catch the eye.
- That said - you must still show the product in full.
- Some products work better with a simple front-on shot (like artwork) - some with an interesting angle (like jewellery).
- Show all angles - front, back, inside, outside, top, bottom across your photo slots.

Photo types

- Use your photos to tell the story of your product.
- Help your customer envision it in their life.
- 7 types of possible photos:
    - Main/studio image
    - Scale
    - Style/model shot
    - Detail
    - Group shot
    - Packaging
    - Process

Branding

- Your photos should reflect your brand.
- The colours, styling, textures, etc should be evocative of the your brand story.
- The model you choose, the 'in situ' lifestyle shots - should all be in alignment with your brand and ideal customer.
- Ideally, someone could look at your photo and think 'that looks like a piece by ….'

Editing

- This is where you adjust your colour balance, as well as light levels.
- Try to avoid using the 'brighten all' option.
- Instead, adjust the highlights & shadows. Ambiance in Snapseed can be good for this, too.
- Be careful with contrast, too.
- You can also adjust the sharpness and structure, but don't go overboard.
- Apps: Snapseed, Lightroom, GIMP, Photoshop.

5 Minute Activity

- Look back at your list from earlier, and have a think through what I've covered today.
- What 1-2 things leap out at you that you know you could improve about your product photos?
- If you're unsure, or you want a second opinion, choose 1-4 photos, go upload them to the Thriver Circle group NOW, and ask for feedback! Make sure to tag me.

Further Resources

Workshops & Podcasts

- Podcast/video: 7 Types of Handmade Product Photos you Should Be Taking [230]

- Podcast: Product Photography Top Tips with Amy Eaton [229]

- Podcast: [170] How to take product photos with your smartphone (iPhone or Android) with Chaitra Radhakrishna

- Ebook: The Create & Thrive Guide to Product Photography

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

Thriver Circle