

Commissioning Photography

Most of the readers of this text will be seasoned professional photography buyers and directors who will know only too well the fundamentals listed below. For those with less experience we hope these notes will be helpful.

Begin with the end in mind - Why do you want the pictures?

The way you want to use the pictures will dictate the license you want to purchase. This will influence the charge for the photographer's day rate.

Have a clear and realistic idea about your budget.

Do you want to share the commission with another party? This needs to be established prior to the commencement of any assignment. We'll need to know the name of the other party and how they need to use the pictures. Their name and needs will be stated on the license. Shared commissions carry a minimum additional fee of 20% on the photographer's day rate.

Are your requirements realistic?

A good photographer can work wonders but not miracles. Consider the climate, the time of year and the condition of the location.

Create a sound working relationship.

Ensure everyone knows what is happening. Have you cleared the way for the smooth and efficient shoot? Does everyone from security to the top management at the location know that a photo shoot is taking place and do they know what to expect. It is an advantage to enlist their enthusiasm and co-operation. Be there.

Using the pictures:

The license to use pictures is not granted until the client has paid the invoice in full.

Further use of the pictures by third parties.

I like my photographs to be seen by as many people as possible. It is good for me and it can also be very good for my clients. All pictures are automatically entered into my archives for potential future publication. That is unless a prior agreement has been made.

A free PR service?

Well sort of. Many designers and architects working with me see the advantage of pictures of their work potentially reaching a wider audience via my photo library.

Differing needs.

We come full circle - for an advertising campaign exclusivity may be paramount - the client wants total control and that comes with a higher price tag. If the client only wants to use the pictures once in a magazine and there is no problem with the pictures being made available for future publications this is reflected in a lower price.

Estimating time for an assignment.

All assignments are different - but don't expect the photographer to achieve more than 6 - 8 shots in a day on a straightforward 10 hour shoot.

The more information I am given the easier it is for me to prepare a realistic estimate. Once I have established the parameters of the license and estimate I would usually require an advance payment. My full terms and conditions are stated on our estimates.

