A GUIDE TO BETTER BUSINESS PHOTOS

1. Why Photos Matter for Businesses

- First impressions are everything (website, Google, social media)
- Good photos build:
  - Trust ("this looks real and professional")
  - Perceived value (two photos of the same product, people would pay more for the better photo)
- Consistency beats perfection
  → A clean, clear photo taken today is better than waiting for "someday"

In the photos below:

The left one is great, nice window light is coming from the top left corner, shadows aren't too intense, it's a clean shot

The one on the right is just using whatever light is happening, crop is odd, it's kind of yellow. You can tell no thought was put into it.

2. Gear You Already Have (and What Actually Matters)

- Your phone is enough (newer phones = nice enough cameras for your own business photos)
- What matters more than the camera:
  - Light
  - Clean background, not busy

- Optional upgrades (budget-friendly):
  - Small tripod
  - Window light
  - white foam board for a reflector (as big as you need)

Key mindset:

"Photography is 80% lighting, 15% composition, 5% camera."

3. Lighting: The #1 Skill

Natural Light Basics

- Have a window light hitting person/item's front, at a slight angle
- Shoot during daylight (avoid night + overhead lights)
- Cloudy days = soft, flattering light

What to Avoid

- Harsh overhead lights
- Mixed lighting (yellow + daylight)
- Sunlight blasting through windows
- Direct flash (turn the flash off your camera/phone, it just washes everything out)

Simple Fixes

- Turn off overhead lights when possible
- For harsh sunlight, try different times of day when sun is higher
- Use white walls, poster board, or napkins to bounce light
- Move the product/person, not the light

*In the photos above, on the left the front windows were behind me, so the light hits the people nicely and sort of cancels out the fluorescent lighting.

In the right photo of the restaurant, the windows are behind the area being shot, so there's a weird mix of back lighting and bad fluorescent lighting - not as nice

4. Composition That Looks Professional

Simple Guidelines

- Tidy background (remove clutter)
- Fill the frame (get closer)
- Straight lines (especially shelves & walls)
- Rule of thirds (don't always center everything)

Imagine a grid like below when lining up your shot. Place your subject in one or two of the red dot areas like this for a better composition

Angles That Work

- Products:
    - Eye level
    - 45-degree angle
    - Flat lay (from above)
- Stores:
    - Wide shot + detail shots (stand by the windows when possible)
- People:
    - Eye level
    - Slight angle, not straight-on (tilt your camera down slightly)
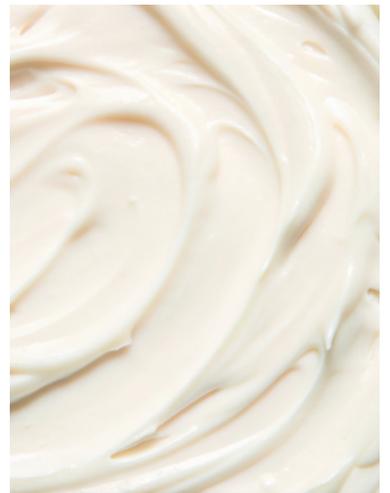   - Step back and zoom slightly for a more flattering shot

Mantra:

"If it doesn't help tell the story, remove it."

5. Product Photography Basics

For ecommerce websites you sell from - Each item needs

- One clear "hero" shot
- In-use or lifestyle shot
- Close-up detail shot

Styling Tips

- Clean the product, watch for fingerprints
- Labels straight, lids closed
- Odd numbers look better (3 items > 2)

6. Photographing People & Employees

Goal: Make staff look friendly, confident, and real. It builds trust in your brand if you show your face online/socials

Before the Photo

- Simple clothing (no crazy patterns)
- Relax shoulders, soften face (practice in the mirror!)
- Hands doing something, like holding coffee, tools, or products
- Not standing directly under overhead lights

During the Photo

- Talk to them while shooting, clicking the whole time
- Capture laughs and in-between moments
- Take multiples—no one loves the first photo

Poses That Work

- Slight angle to camera
- What's closes to the camera will appear bigger (weight on back foot, shoulders closer to camera)
- Leaning on counter
- Working, not "posing"

We're showing personality and real people, not perfection.

7. Store & Space Photos

Goal: Help customers imagine walking in

Must-Have Shots

- Exterior (daytime, sign visible)
- Wide interior
- Detail shots (products, textures, decor)
- People in the space

Tips

- Straighten shelves
- Shoot from the corners of the room for depth
- Step back—wide shots feel welcoming

8. Quick Editing (Without Overdoing It)

Goal: Improve photos without making them fake

What Editing Is For

- Brighten
- Straighten
- Slight color correction
- Crop

What NOT to Do

- Heavy filters
- Over-sharpening
- Changing colors of products too much

Rule: If the product looks different in real life, you went too far.

9. Consistency & Workflow

Goal: Make this sustainable

- For product shooting pick:
  - One spot
  - One time of day
  - One background
  - one person or a small team to handle your photo needs - consistency
- Create a simple photo checklist
- Batch shooting = less stress

3 things to remember:

1. Light matters most
2. Clean + simple beats fancy
3. Practice = improvement. Don't give up!

Please reach out if you have any specific questions, I love helping businesses improve their photography!

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Photography