The guide to photographs & videos on social media for coffee small & medium enterprises in East Africa

High-quality images connect coffee SMEs to customers and increase brand awareness. © Nicole Motteux 2019

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Disclaimer

Background / About

You know what they say about a picture painting a thousand words? If you had to describe in words all the images you come across when you take a trip online, how many words would that be? You probably don't think about it, but you are surely aware of all the photos you encounter in your social media channels, in websites or in e-commerce as you go browsing. And if you did the exercise of trying to express in words what you see in the photos, what kind of messages would you write?

More than ever visual imagery is coming to dominate our daily lives. It is certainly not new: before social media there were websites and blogs and before that there were magazines and posters - all placing images as the centre of focus. And as we are ever busier, and ever more consumers of digital content, we have less and less time to read the detail. We gather our impressions quickly. We make decisions on our instincts, feelings.

We address this guide at coffee producers as part of our work to build capabilities in new techniques of marketing, branding and communications. Although coffee is a special product - one that supports livelihoods in developing countries and can potentially bring much higher margins to its producers - there is much in the marketing of coffee that is common to other goods.

We bring you the techniques and the lessons that have been learned in general, but we apply them in a context that should be more familiar to you as a coffee producer, transformer or sales agent.

This guide is about photography and its application to social media, and marketing communications in general. We bring you this advice and hope you will learn enough to improve your skills or become more critical of the photography that is made on your behalf.

We hope that it will make a difference to how well you present yourself, your enterprise, your community and your coffees. And in doing so that you will find better market opportunities, command a higher price for your coffee.

And if it helps you take better photos of your friends and family, well that would just be a bonus for you.

Keep smiling, someone may be filming!"

James Howe

Senior Advisor – International Marketing, Branding, and E-commerce

International Trade Centre

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The origins of this guide

The origins of this guide

The Market Access Upgrade Programme (MARKUP) is a regional development initiative that aims to contribute to the economic growth of the East African Community (EAC). More specifically, it aims to support increased exports of agribusiness and horticultural products, promote regional integration as well as access to European markets. MARKUP assists small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda by targeting specific agricultural commodities such as avocado, cocoa, coffee, spices, tea and horticulture.

Jointly designed by the European Union, the EAC Secretariat and the governments of all five countries, the initiative is implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other national partners.

In 2020-21, MARKUP is focusing on training a select number of EAC small and medium coffee enterprises (SMEs) in specialty branding and market communications. Specifically, from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

The Guide to Photographs and Videos on Social Media for Coffee SMEs in East Africa is the second manual in the MARKUP branding project. The first, the Social Media Guide for Coffee SMEs, is available on the ITC website here[1].

Images and videos tell a story that is an essential part of your brand's social media. © Nicole Motteux 2018

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[1] www.eacmarkup.org/news/latest-news/social-media-guide-for-small-and-medium-coffee-enterprises.

1. Introduction

We live in a visual world and people are visual creatures. We are attracted by bright colours, compelling pictures, and particularly, moving ones. Images are a crucial part of telling your story. They can transport people into your coffee field, business and life. They're the most effective means of capturing attention, and building brand recognition, credibility and trust.

Consumer tastes are increasingly sophisticated and demanding. They actively seek out smaller, more tailored brands that deliver the same quality. Like yours. They want to know about these brands – the people, the story and ethos, what makes your brand special.

Learning how to take quality photographs and videos for social media and other branding communications is a valuable business skill. This guide walks you through the fundamentals of creating your own unique images, both stills (photographs) and video.

It will help you develop lifelong photographic skills, brand awareness and communication techniques that will benefit all parts of your marketing. You can use good quality images across your social media, blog posts, media releases, news articles, websites, brochures and more.

Specifically, this guide covers:
- Branding coffee on social media
- Photo and video ideas for your target customer
- Photography styles
- Smartphones vs cameras
- Planning a photoshoot
- Tips for shooting videos
- Tips for new and advanced photographers
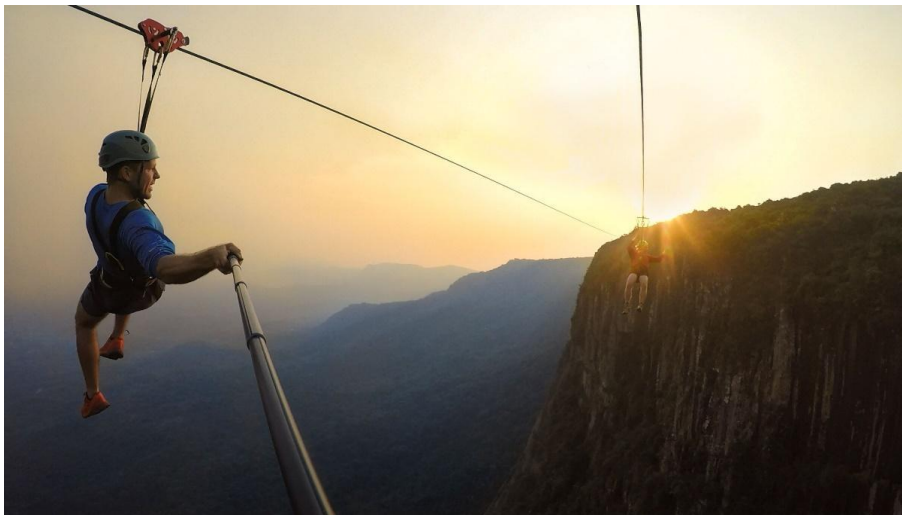
Images are vital for tourism companies, such as the Skyline over Mutarazi Falls and the coffee regions of Honde Valley in Zimbabwe. © Christopher Cragg 2020

Okay, are you ready? Let's get stuck into creating some great quality images and videos to take your social media and digital marketing to the next level.

Why imagery is essential on social media

There are more than 500 million tweets a day, 80 million photos posted to Instagram and 600,000 Facebook shares a minute. Phew.

It's a good rule of thumb that every social media post must have an image or video. Posts with good images can get 94% more views than those without. Imagery is not just nice to have, but an essential element of your marketing.

There's no doubt it's a competitive world and strong visual content is the only way to stand out.

- LinkedIn posts with images have a 99% higher comment rate on average
- Tweets that include visuals get three times more engagement
- Stanford Business found Facebook posts with photos get more likes and comments

People are 65% more likely to remember a post that contains an image or video.

Social media is an integral part of our everyday lives. © Nicole Motteux 2020

Well composed images will help people make sense of your business. They need to be purposeful, timely, engaging and tell your story.

Specialty coffee customers

One of the key considerations in creating great visual content for social media is knowing your customer. We talked about this in the social media guidelines. Consider your ideal customer and the type of visual content they'd like to see.

Let's look at the specialty coffee customer. They're savvy, sophisticated and keen for new experiences but also suffer from information overload and poor attention spans.

Specialty coffee customers like brands with ethics and purpose. They enjoy being up to date and on top of the latest coffee trends. They appreciate honesty and authenticity.

They can also be sceptical and fickle. If they lose interest, they may swap your brand for one of your competitors.

If they follow you on social media, they expect regularity and consistency. Posting once a month, or even once a week, is not enough. Aim for three times a week.

Knowing this about specialty coffee consumer, you need to gather a good stockpile of images and content. You also need to sit down and plan your content over the year. In the *Social Media Guide,* we discussed developing a social media calendar to plan your posts. It really does help.

Millennials are never far from their phones and they love coffee. A barista at Signature Wines cafe in Adelaide, Australia, scrolls through her social media between customers. © Nicole Motteux 2020

Understanding your visual identity

Visual identity is about shaping customer perception through the visible elements of your brand.

These elements can include your logo, product packaging, labelling, the signage on your truck or building, your website, and the interior design of your café or roastery. It's everything your customers see in relation to your business.

This is why it's important to keep your visual identity consistent across platforms with similar fonts, colours and styles.

Example: Starbucks on Instagram

Starbucks on Instagram is a great example of branding consistency. Their signature colour is dark green. They use it in all their branding, and social media is no exception. Every post includes the colour green, even if it's just a straw.

The aim is for their customers to associate that shade of green with Starbucks, even when their logo (which is often front and centre in posts), isn't used.

Benefits of images and videos

A picture is worth a thousand words, goes an old saying. Images can:
- Evoke powerful emotions, giving a sense of credibility and inspiration
- Communicate emotions, ideas and thoughts that often words can't convey
- Provide an honest glimpse into your operations, products and services
- Create trust and connection between a brand and its audiences
- Demonstrate expertise and familiarity in your industry
- Be easier to create than written text
- Be used throughout your marketing

Good quality images demonstrate individuality and are essential for marketing materials like brochures.
© Friends of Mothers (Uganda) and Edelweiss Oldeani Estate (Tanzania) 2020

Video is the most popular form of content on social media. It can:
- Provide an in-depth experience into your operations, products and services
- Demonstrate authenticity through candid, unrehearsed moments
- Allow your subjects to speak in their own words
- Reach more people than written text

Images help people connect, trust and engage with your coffee brand.

Brand awareness helps people know that your brand exists. This is where every business starts. Over time, images and posts can help people identify your brand with descriptions such as "quality coffee", "Kenya", "women coffee farmers", "fair trade coffee" and so on.

Relatable images are those people feel are familiar to their own lives. Whether it's you at a desk doing paperwork or out meeting clients, the everyday may seem boring but it's relatable and it can still form part of your brand.

Credible images help customers trust you. This is important when your customers are far away and don't know your brand or region. Your social media and images will help them understand you. However, customers are discerning, so make sure your images match your business story.

Brand recognition is about developing regularities in your imagery and posts. You can do this by using your brand colours and fonts in your marketing, or by regularly doing a particular style of post, such as a funny post every Friday.

Images help people understand and visualise the realities of your business and life. @ Nicole Motteux 2018

Other uses of imagery

Good quality images and video can be used across your branding materials. Learn how to create quality imagery and use it for multiple purposes, such as:
- Printed marketing materials - brochures, posters, signage
- Digital and online -website, Google My Business page, social media
- Brand objects - product packaging, coffee mugs, t-shirts, drink coasters

2. Photo and video ideas

The sky's the limit when choosing what type of images or videos to take for a coffee business. We're going to give you some ideas to start with.

This section will take you through:
- Ideas for photos and videos to appeal to your audience
- How to use the competition to your advantage

What kind of photos should I take?

You may be surprised to know that the daily running of a coffee farm is of great interest to your faraway customers. Many people who drink your coffee are not in Africa and may know very little about your country. But they want to.

Customers today want to know where their coffee comes from, how it's grown and who produces it. They want to understand your world so they can see how it fits into theirs.

The more detail and information you can give people, the more they'll appreciate and trust you. These are the details that differentiate your coffee business from everyone else's.

Photos of your daily operations can be very interesting to your end consumer. Drying washed coffee at Migoti Coffee, Mutambu, Burundi. @ Carley Serwa 2020

Let's look at the types of photos and videos that your customers will find engaging.

Farming, people and environment
- Landscapes – mountain ranges, natural habitat and local wildlife, insects and flowers
- Plants – coffee varieties, nurseries of coffee and shade trees seedlings
- Portraits – farm labourers, pickers, drivers, village families, office workers and you
- Farming – planting, pruning, weeding, stumping and land clearing
- Harvest – this is one of the most photographically interesting seasons

- Coffee processing – washed/natural/dry processed coffee, honey/pulped natural coffee
- Coffee drying – sundried on tables, mechanically dried or spread out on plastics sheets
- Coffee storage and bagging – showing the efficiency of your farm operations
- People – the farmers, harvesters, roasters and villagers
- Environment – good seasons and bad, flourishing coffee fields, floods and ice
- Sustainable innovations – solar power, technologies and water and waste management
- Good agricultural practices – organic, climate smart agriculture and other agricultural standards
- Grading – coffee cupping, tasting and certification processes

Technologies used to benefit your farm or your workers' lives can demonstrate how you proactively support your local community. © Nicole Motteux 2018

- Events – International Coffee Day, International Women's Day, African World Heritage Day, World Environment Day, national days and other important days in your country
- Culture – local festivals, activities and customs
- Business developments – new product launches, planting different varieties, changing the café menu or building a sustainable water treatment plant
- Personal events – an employee having a baby, graduating from university or getting married

Check out the competition

If you've ever looked at another coffee brand and felt envious or worried about your own business, don't worry. It's completely normal, and actually, you *should* be looking at other brands.

See what your competitors are posting, as well as more established brands in the marketplace. This is a great way to get ideas and inspiration. Focus on what makes your brand different to theirs and think about how you can express that through photography and videography.

3. Photography styles

There are so many different styles of photography and video. By experimenting with different styles, you can develop your own preferences and see what works for your audience.

Landscape photography

Landscape photography is, unsurprisingly, all about location. It often takes planning and effort to get to a place that shows off your amazing coffee fields, the rolling mountains, forests or lake views.

Landscape photography relies on capturing images filled with the splendid rays of morning or late afternoon light. However, stormy or cloudy days can also make interesting images.

The great thing about landscape photography is that you can take your time to get your composition right; the trees and mountains are not going to disappear. What will change is the light with the angle of the sun, the clouds and the weather.

Key elements for landscape photography:
- Focus on the big subject – mountains, distant trees, distant lake or even clouds
- Tripod – use a tripod to reduce camera shake and keep horizons straight
- Angles – experiment with different variations of the shot by changing the angle. Try taking an image while crouched down on the ground or standing on a chair
- Composition – if the scene doesn't look right before you shoot, then it won't look good afterwards either

Example: Migoti Coffee in the mountains above Lake Tanganyika, western Burundi

The below image is taken by Carley Serwat of Migoti Coffee, Mutambu commune, Burundi, on her NIKON D5300 camera.

The horizon is closer to the top third line, giving it an off-centre, interesting effect. @ Carley Serwa 2020

Carley used a technique called the rule of thirds to bring the horizon closer to the top third line. This made the mountains the dominant feature and reduced the sky. However, if the foreground was dark, she could also have made the horizon closer to the bottom line and focused on the sun rays and clouds.

The rule of thirds breaks the temptation to place the horizon in the centre, which can make a boring and predictable image. Experiment instead for different effects.

Portrait photography
Portrait photography is all about people. It can range from headshots, to arranging people into a group image. Putting people at ease is important. Provide positive feedback in a friendly way to help people relax and give images a more natural and calmer feel.

Key elements of portrait photography:
- Frame the shot around the subject
- People relate to faces enhanced by good eye contact and natural smiles
- Coffee props or clothing can fit your brand personality and complement the background
- Try different angles to make your portrait to stand out
- Consider using continuous shooting mode to as 1 out of 10 shots could be worth keeping

TIP: In portrait photography, it's key to aim for a sharp focus on the subject's eyes.

Group shots
Coffee images often bring people together. It's always good to mix head heights in coffee group portraits to add a dynamic touch and a sense of closeness.

Family or friendship group images avoid straight lines but add a sense of closeness. © Nicole Motteux 2018

Candid images and video
These shots are unposed and capture the reality of your coffee enterprise. They are spontaneous, authentic and honest and show the real people in your operations.

TIP: Be aware of the laws in your country when taking photos of people, especially children. It's a good idea to always get parental permission first.

Abstract images

These types of images encourage people to stop for a closer look. There are no guidelines on how to take abstract images. It could be a photograph that focuses on a small area of your subject, where you can play with form, colour and shape.

Abstract images are commonly used in print form and packaging, including logos on coffee cups. African coffee packaging uses a lot of beautiful high-quality abstract images.

This abstract photo of a building depicts a colourful mural of farm diversification. © Angie Lazaro 2020

Funny images

These are effective in capturing your audience's attention. They are memorable and build rapport if they hit the mark and are not controversial.

Don't be scared to take photos or videos that show the funny moments in your business. Sprout Media found that 36% of consumers are prompted to purchase after seeing funny posts.

Product images

These are typically high-resolution photos of individual coffee products. They're often shot against a crisp white background to eliminate distractions and keep the focus on the product.

Pinterest is a popular platform for businesses to showcase their product images. It's designed for pinners to easily identify and understand product details as they scroll through.

TIP: Ensure you optimise your image names if you use them for Pinterest to make them more searchable. See section 9 of this guide for tips.
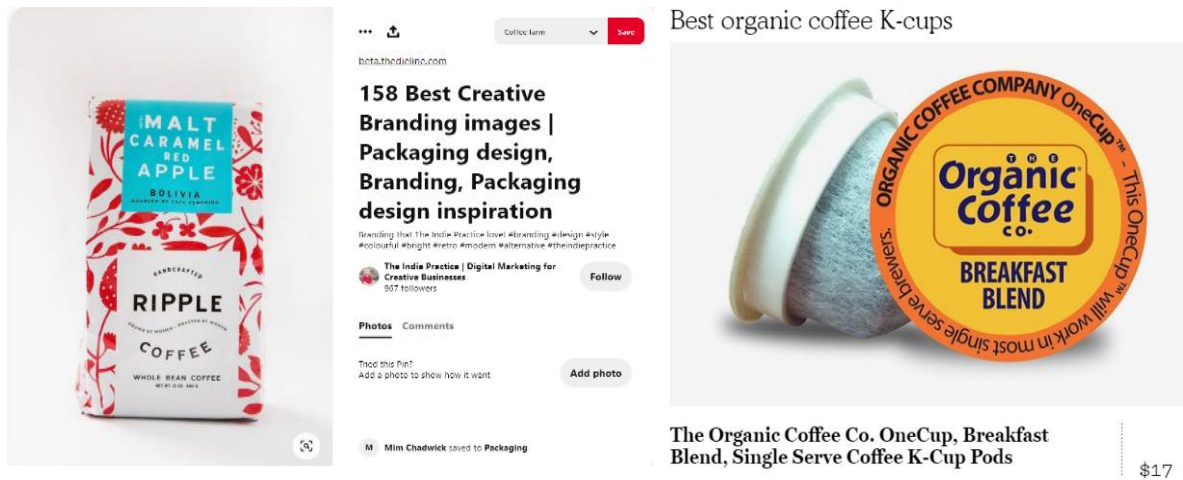
Ripple Coffee and Organic Coffee Co's product photos work well on Pinterest.

Lifestyle images

These can capture life-related activities of SMEs staff, cooperative members and even the family. They can be doing things like walking in the coffee fields, with friends, using technology, working in a team or sitting down to share a cup of coffee.

On average, lifestyle images perform well because they are personal and show the people behind a brand. They are typically positive and general in nature. For this reason, try gathering a stockpile of lifestyle photos for future branding, promotions and marketing activities.

Inside your business

Insider images can bring your operations alive in your customers' minds. They give a sense of character, such as friendly, innovative or entrepreneurial. They can bring to life your enterprise mascot, such as the loyal estate dog, the elephants that roam your farm borders or the wild gorillas in nearby mountains.

People love getting an insider view on operations. They change your brand from a faceless enterprise to an interesting and active business.

Wildlife and environment

Coffee fields offer a wonderful insight into the natural world you live in. Taking photos of wildlife can be challenging, requiring commitment and understanding their habits. You'll also need to work out camera settings, e.g., a fast shutter speed helps avoid motion blur when animals or birds are moving.

Most wildlife photography benefits from a telephoto zoom lens, which can take photos from up close to long distances. However, if you're thinking of shooting insects or other small animals, like brightly coloured chameleons or tree frogs, consider a macro lens for close ups.

TIP: Learn more about specific camera settings and other techniques that you can apply to wildlife photography in the advanced and very keen photographers' section at the end of this guide.

Example: Edelweiss and Finagro coffee farms, Tanzania

Neel Vohora's family farms, Edelweiss and Finagro, border the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania. This is a UNESCO world heritage site and home to numerous wild animals, and conservation is core to their operations.

Strong, descriptive imagery is key to their brand story, allowing customers to join in the journey of working towards a sustainable future together.

These images below show the Vohora family's ethics, personality and everyday life as the farm operations co-exist with some of Africa's most iconic wildlife.

A big male tusker roams at the edge of one of the farms, and (right) a close up of an African elephant in the scrub on the slopes of the Ngorongoro crater, Tanzania. © Neel Vohora 2020.

Wildlife photography doesn't need to involve big animals like elephants or gorillas. Insects are wildlife to, and they can demonstrate your good agricultural practices, healthy plants and biodiversity.
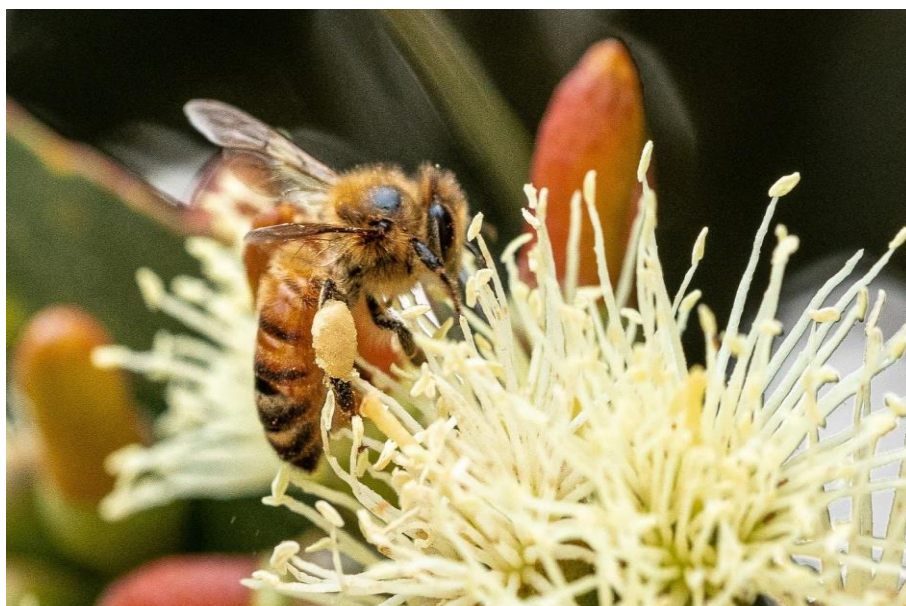
Images of the local insects can show a healthy farm and good agricultural practices. © Nicole Motteux 2020

4. Taking your own photos

Let's look now at what's involved in creating good quality images, including photography decisions and equipment choices.

Specifically, this section looks at:
- Professional photographer vs Do It Yourself (DIY)
- Smartphones vs cameras

Professional photographer vs DIY

Your customers aren't looking for, or expecting, world-class photography. What they do value is original, interesting and thought-provoking imagery. Images that can take them into the heart of your operations and answer their questions.

There are two ways to do this – hire a professional photographer or do it yourself (DIY).

A professional photographer will have technical knowledge, experience and sophisticated equipment. They will very likely produce high quality, edited and well composed images with a distinct visual appeal. They can provide personalised and unique images that give your brand an authentic feel.

Hiring a photographer is an investment you may want to consider this for a particular project or campaign. Discuss your visual brand style, vision and backstory with the photographer to get the images you want. Photoshoots need to be planned carefully so see the tips below.

The other option is to **DIY** - take your own images and control the whole process. This is virtually free, apart from the cost of buying a camera or a smartphone. It's still worthwhile planning your shoots though, so you end up with better quality photos.

This guide is largely focused on DIY photography. Photography is a lifelong skill and if you can invest the time and effort, you will only improve over time.

Smartphones vs cameras

Smartphone photo quality has come a long way in the last 10 years and continues to improve. The resolution is even good enough to print.

You can easily upload images from your smartphone directly to social media. Editing apps can help you fine tune images before using them online.

You can also download smartphone images to a computer, edit them there and then upload them to social media platforms.

When choosing a smartphone for its photographic capabilities, read the reviews. There are some great bloggers and reviewers (e.g. Digital Photography Review) that can guide you through the important features of the device.

Consider things such as:
- Camera resolution
- Available shooting modes
- Aperture range
- Sensor
- Other features, e.g. panorama, HDR, or video recording

Cameras come in all sizes and each one is different. There are point-and-shoots, DSLRs (a digital single-lens reflex camera), mirrorless, smartphones, Polaroids and more.

It will take time to learn the settings on your camera and get the perfect shot. Online tutorials can support your learning (search your camera name plus model, e.g. "Canon EOS 800D tutorial" on YouTube).

Point and shoot cameras can be great for taking close up images, such as of plants. © Nicole Motteux 2021

If you plan on buying a camera, take the time to understand your needs and budget, and ask lots of questions. It's a big investment and it's important to get it right. If you only use the camera for social media, there's no need to spend a lot of money.

Choose one that's lightweight, transportable and has connectivity so you can share images and videos easily. The main advantage of DSLRs and mirrorless cameras is image quality, which the bigger sensor (compared to a point-and-shoot camera) allows for.

Verdict

There is no doubt that smartphones are convenient and make creating and sharing quality images incredibly easy. However, if you have the time and patience, it's even more fun to produce sharp quality images on your DSLR/mirrorless camera.

Ultimately, you should make the choice based on your capabilities and the needs of your business.

5. Planning a photoshoot

Now let's get into how to plan for a photoshoot, DIY style. This may seem daunting when you're starting out, but with time it will become second nature. Once you develop an eye for lighting, angles and styles, your photography will go from strength to strength.

Smiling people and bright, contrasting colours make for a memorable picture. © Nicole Motteux 2019

We're going to explain the basics of planning a photo and video shoot. These tips also apply to smartphones.

Before the shoot

- Consider the story or message you want to capture. Decide if you're shooting for a particular project or campaign, or general business images.

- Choose the right time of the day. It's always best to shoot in natural light in the early morning, before the sun gets too bright.

- Before heading out, check the local weather report for wind, rain, fog and temperatures. Stormy skies, dense fog and dangerous weather can make for awe-inspiring images. But poor weather is bad for, and can destroy, camera gear.

- Many high-altitude coffee fields in East Africa are not far from the ice cap peaks of Mount Kenya, Kilimanjaro and Rwenzori Mountains. If you want to shoot in bad weather, plan carefully. Let someone know where you are going and the expected time you will be back. Take a cleaning kit if your lens fogs up with condensation or consider a waterproof camera lens in snow or rain.

- Plan your props and think about what you may need. Say you are shooting the process of readying sacks of green beans for market. Consider how you will place the bags to capture the light, such as positioning them next to a window with direct light to capture farmers tying up the sacks for market. You may like to try a few different set ups and poses.

- Inform and gain consent from people in your shoot. Check the laws in your country but regardless, it's polite and ethical to get permission from your subjects beforehand.

During the shoot

- East Africa can experience hot days. Heat can impact your camera equipment (memory cards, batteries and even mobile phones). Consider using a lens hood to help reduce the amount of light reaching your lens or find shade. Shade also ensures people don't squint and reduces deep shadows under their eyes and nose.

- When not using your gear, even for a few minutes, store it in your camera bag. This will keep it clean, dry and protected.

- Coffee grows on steep mountainous slopes, so minimise the risk of tripping and falling. If you do have an expensive lens, consider using a filter to protect the lens glass. If you change lens, try to do it in a clean environment out of the wind and away from sand, dirt, water and food.

Africa's steep, rugged cliffs and outcrops are beautiful but tough, so travel safely. © Angie Lazaro 2017

- Snap away: 5-10 quality photos for every 100 you take is a good average.

After the shoot

- Pack away your camera gear safely.

- Make time to edit your photos. Delete any poor-quality images and work out which ones to keep. For every hour of shooting, allocate an hour for editing.

A note on light

Sunlight is the best and easiest form of light to work with. As a general rule, try to use natural light, either outdoors or by a window, whenever you can.

However, different times of the day are better than others. The light is at its softest early in the morning and evening, when you can get rich colours and no hard shadows.

At noon, the sun is directly overhead, which can be intense and tends to make shadows more pronounced.

There is no such thing as bad light; it really depends on what kind of image you want to create and if you want to work with soft or hard light.

Remember you could always move your subject to the shade. Just have your mobile phone or camera at hand so you don't miss any great shots.

A portrait of a coffee farmer shot in natural light. @ Carley Serwa 2020

TIP: Often the most interesting time to capture images, such as harvest, is also when you're busiest. Use your social media calendar to plan ahead of time and ask someone in your team to play photographer if you can't do it.

6. Tips for new photographers

Every photograph or video shoot is the beginning of a new story. Here are some pointers to help new photographers get those high-quality images.

Every image needs a subject. Perhaps yours will be about the women pickers harvesting the cherries, or the natural habitat for birds or wildlife around your coffee field. The subject needs to be clear for your viewers to fully appreciate your visual story.

This image focuses on coffee fields bordered by forest along the waterways. @Nicole Motteux 2018

Props may help to capture an interesting image but try to keep it simple. For example, you may shoot your newly labelled products on a nice table, but don't add other items. Focus on the product and remove distractions.

TIP: Remember to keep your social media images in line with your brand – your colours, fonts and environment. This creates brand authenticity and makes you stand out from the crowd.

Clean your lens before starting. This applies to both professional cameras and mobile smartphones. As we handle them, they tend to get smudged and grubby, which can ruin or fog up your image.

If you are **photographing an object**, check it's clean and free of dust, creases and marks. Images pick up all imperfections, which often means you can't use an image or will need a skilled photo editor.

Know your subject and make this your focal point in the image. Don't crowd the shot with other things or people.

Filling the frame helps your viewer focus and see the details of the image. © Nicole Motteux 2020

Keep a steady hand and try not to shake. Be still as you press the shutter to get a sharp image. You can also consider getting a tripod to keep your camera steady.

Consider your **composition** and the rule of thirds. The image is divided evenly into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) making nine squares of equal size. Place your subject at the intersection of those dividing lines or along one of the lines itself.

Leading lines are elements in your photograph that draw the eye. These lines could be anything – coffee bushes, shade trees, drying racks or wash stations. They can be straight, circular, natural, man-made or even contrasting colours. Leading lines create a pleasing, balanced aesthetic.

This image at Wild Horizons Lookout Café in Zimbabwe incorporates the rule of thirds and leading lines, taking the viewers' eyes from the cup of coffee to Victoria Falls Gorge with ease. © Kevin Hogan 2017

Experiment with angles to introduce different viewpoints. People often shoot straight ahead with the camera and the subject at the same level. Try taking an image while crouched on the ground looking up or standing on a chair looking down.
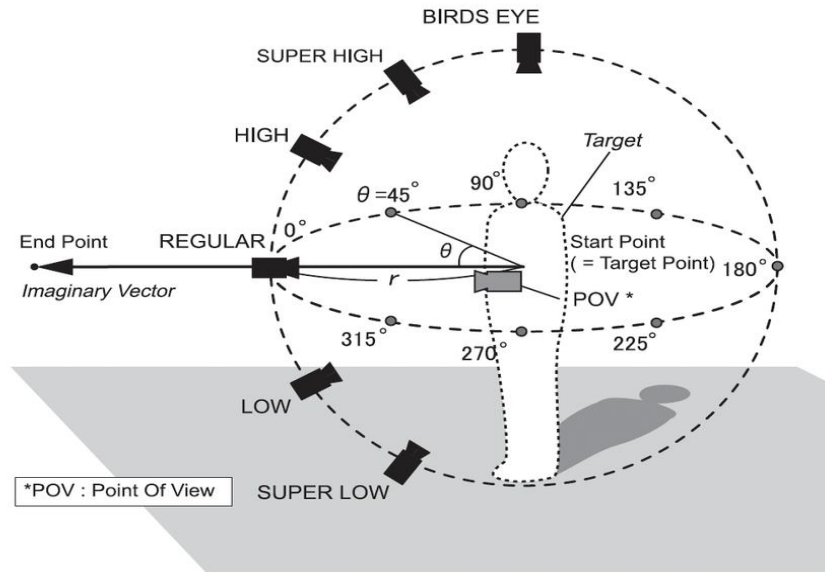
You can choose from eye-level to low and high camera angles. © Itaru Kitahar 2005

Shoot in natural light. Artificial light is often very harsh. If it's a bright sunny day, try to avoid shadows. Favour natural light over your camera's flash. If shooting inside, use light coming through the windows, rather than artificial light.

The best time of the day for outdoor photography is about one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset, when your images get a magical glow.

The "golden hour" is just after sunrise or before sunset, when the light is soft and warm. © Angie Lazaro 2019

Try shooting against a **plain background** to avoid distraction. This is especially useful when shooting a specific product or person. While other light colours, like pale blue, yellow and pink also work, white is often your best option to get a crisp clean shot.

Complementary colours involve pairing contrasting colours, such as red with green, yellow with purple or blue with orange.

The complementary colours of the subject's clothing make this image visually striking. © Nicole Motteux 2018

Use natural borders to give a framing effect to your images. Think images taken through trees, archways, windows or doorways.

If a **background** is messy, too colourful or disjointed, it draws the viewer's attention away from your subject. For example, if shooting women picking coffee, check there is no car parked behind them. If there is, try a different angle.

The focal point of your image is the subject or point of interest that draws the viewer's attention. Images can have more than one focal point, but usually there is a dominant or key focal point—a person or object, or a group of people or objects in sharp focus.

The focal point attracts attention through the use of focus, tone and contrast. © Nicole Motteux 2018

Develop your eye to constantly look for images that tell your story. There are thousands of photo opportunities in coffee and farming. Your coffee knowledge will expand your creative eye and allow you to capture more aesthetic images.

Look for reflections to create an artistic creative dimension to your photo. Use reflective surfaces, such as water, windows, mirrors. The best time to capture reflections is often early in the morning or in the evening, e.g., sunset caught in the window of the car/sunglasses.

Look for patterns and repetition. Once you look, you will see them everywhere. They can be bricks on a wall, a line of school children's shoes or an arrangement of coffee cups. They can make for interesting and creative photographs.

Repetitive horizontal lines crossing vertical lines draw the eye from the front to the back of the coffee storage shed. © Nicole Motteux 2018

Know your camera well so you can get the best shot when an opportunity arises. This also means understanding how your camera sees the image, not just how you see it. If you're a beginner, using the "auto" function will help.

If you want to improve your photography, there are many helpful YouTube videos, as well as free online courses available.

Take these tips on board and practice. And keep taking photographs to build up a library of images that you can use over time.

7. Editing photos

Editing can help improve the end result of your photographs and videos. It may just be a few tweaks here and there, but it can help them stand out and come to life. There are many editing programs, both basic and comprehensive that can help you crop, trim, colour-correct, add filters or text overlays and much more.

The type of equipment you use and your level of photography knowledge will also affect the editing process. If you are new to editing, there are plenty of online courses and tutorials. Take time to find a channel that works for you.

Smartphone and computer software can help improve images. However, if you are shooting on a DSLR camera, consider professional, subscription editing programs like Lightroom or Photoshop. Other free options are Pixlr or Gimp, or even the software that comes with your computer, like Preview or Paint.

Basic photo editing tips

Cull your images to get rid of unusable ones. If unsure, ask for a second opinion.

Crop to improve composition and remove distracting elements in your photograph.


Cropping an image removes unwanted areas and emphasises the focal point. © Gloria Gummerus, Sakami Coffee, Kenya 2020

Straighten your image if it looks slightly misaligned. Use an item in the photo that should be straight, like a fence line or horizon to adjust the angle.

Fix exposure to adjust the brightness or darkness. Edit the contrasts between the light and dark tones or the highlights.

Saturation is the intensity of the colours. Lowering the colour saturation can have a calming effect. But it can also look washed out. The higher your photograph saturation, the more vivid the overall photo.

Getting the balance right is important; though our eyes are attracted to vibrant tones, oversaturation can look artificial.
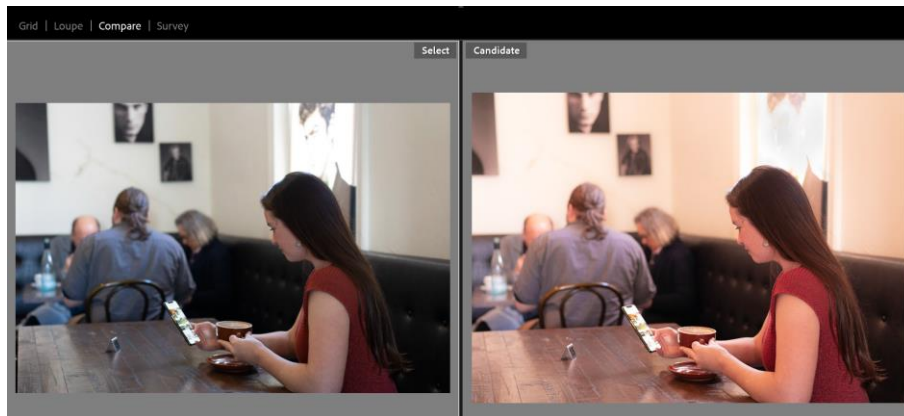
Before (left) and after. Gently tweaking the exposure and saturation improved this image without over-editing.
© Nicole Motteux 2020

Spot-clean your images with a spot-removing tool. Most editing programs have one, which may be called "clone stamping" or "spot healing". This removes any dust or grit that may have been on your camera lens, and then onto your photos.

Sharpness is how defined the details look in an image. Sharpening your photograph can compensate for camera blur from a shaky hand or a slow shutter speed.

Contrast and clarity affect the tonal range of your photograph**.** Contrast affects the entire sharpness of the photograph. It makes the shadows darker and highlights brighter. Clarity affects the midtones and softness.

Retouching your photograph alters part of the original image. You can use it to mask blemishes, make skin smoother, teeth whiter or change hair colour. It can also be used to remove imperfections from the image background or retouch products, for example, removing a glare from your coffee mug.

Filters are available by the hundreds. They are easy to use, enhance your image and can cover many of the elements discussed above.

8. Stock photos

Keeping up with visual content is essential for social media but can also be time consuming. You may feel like you don't yet have the skills to take great photos, and you don't have the budget for a professional photographer. You still want your visuals to shine. In this case, consider stock photos.

Stock photos are found in large, online image libraries that are easily accessible. You can find excellent quality, professional photographs in a huge range of subjects, and you can access and use them legally. Stock photos are available through both paid and free options.

Paid or subscription-based stock photo agencies:

Shutterstock	Adobe Stock	Stock Photo Secrets
iStock	Dreamstime	Pond stock
123rf	Getty	Media Bakery

There are also free stock photo libraries where photographers have given permission for anyone to use their images. Some sites request that the photographer is credited. Check the copyright conditions carefully to avoid hefty fines, being sued or even having your social media account blocked.

Free stock photo libraries:

Unsplash	Shopify	Negative Space
Gratisography	Picjumbo	Kaboompics
IM Free	Morguefile	FancyCrave
Pixabay	Reshot	FoodiesFeed
Pexels	Stockvault	StockSnap

It's very appealing to use stock images, especially if they're free. However, as anyone can use them, especially your competitors, your brand will seem less original if you rely too much on them.

There are thousands of variations of the birds' eye view (aerial) shots of a perfect coffee next to a computer on websites and online marketing around the world. @ Nolan Isaac, Unsplash 2021

9. All about video

Let's turn our focus to video now, in particular how to create great videos and get the most out of them.

This section covers:
- The value of investing in video
- Types of video marketing
- Planning your video shoot
- Tips for shooting video

It pays to take the time to set up the shoot before starting. © Nicole Motteux 2020

The value of investing in video

Video is the most popular and powerful form of online content. It's the fastest-growing medium, especially among the 18 to 34-year-old demographic (millennials), who would rather watch a 2-minute video than take 15 minutes to read the same information. Video can catch and hold attention longer than text-based content.

No wonder video is very popular on social media and is largely viewed on mobile phones. The time spent watching videos has increased on Facebook live by over 4 times, Instagram by 80% and LinkedIn has also become an effective video channel. Still, YouTube is the most widely used platform for video marketers.

Coffee operations like yours, across B2B and B2C, are taking advantage of video. Enterprises who use video grow their revenue 49% faster year-on-year than those who don't. They also see 27% higher click-through rates and 34% higher website conversion rates.

Video users grow company revenue 49% faster year-over-year than organizations without video.

Video users enjoy 27% higher click-through rates and 34% higher web conversion rates, compared to non-users.

Video users are more than three times as likely to factor content consumption behaviors into lead scores.

Video users enjoy 41% more web traffic from search than non-users.

Pardon the Disruption: The Impact of Video Marketing. @ Aberdeen Group & Vidyard, Andrew Moravick 2015

Using video in business marketing can:

- Inform, entertain and increase understanding of your product
- Make complex concepts easier to understand
- Build brand awareness, credibility and personality
- Help audiences understand your vision, value, stories, inspirations and aspirations
- Evoke emotion which increases memorability
- Convert followers into customers
- Help you rank higher in online searches. YouTube is the second largest search engine behind Google and Google owns YouTube
- Offer insightful analytics on click-through rates to help improve future video content

Types of video marketing

Before you start creating videos, it's important to know what type of video you need to create. The sky's the limit. Here are some options you may consider:

Demonstration videos are great for informative, how-to content, and to showcase your products and services. For example, how to selectively harvest coffee, how to dry and sort coffee to produce a specialty grade, or how to roast your espresso coffee.

Brand videos in advertising campaign format can showcase your enterprise's value proposition, values, mission, on-ground works and product.

Event videos are useful before or after an event, such as a fundraiser or new product launch.

Expert discussions can capture podcasts, interviews or round table discussions with coffee experts. These videos can build authority and trust with your target audience.

Educational videos can help your audience learn something about coffee. Building their knowledge helps them better understand your product and showcases your expertise in the industry.

Customer testimonial videos interview your customers talking about your product, service or value. They are great for promotions.

Live videos are an opportunity for your viewers to see your enterprise or ask questions in real time. Facebook offers live video.

360° videos give an opportunity for a viewer to experience and see an event, e.g. coffee cupping.

Professional video uses sound, light, tripod, script and careful direction. © Nicole Motteux 2019

Many of the fundamentals of planning, taking and editing photographs apply to video creation too (with smartphones and cameras for video).

Planning
What is the purpose of your video? All decisions and questions during a shoot will often go back to the purpose. Once this is clear, work out how long it will take you (e.g. timeline), set a budget and decide who will shoot it, the type of video you'll create and how you'll measure success.

Audience
Who will watch it and what action do you want them to take?

Storyboard
Branded videos usually start with a storyboard to work out the shots. You can draw this, or even use a series of still photographs to sketch out each scene so you know every shot before you film.

Carefully pick the first image, it needs to make an initial impression and grab viewers' attention. Even consider colours schemes so that your subject stands out.

Running sheet
A running sheet is simply a list of what happens during the video. List the key points with the script in the left column. In the right column put the matching visual.

Ensure that the key messages are at the start of your video to hook your audience. Make it interesting so people hang around. Keep the video short.

TIP: YouTube has lots of helpful free tutorials on creating quality videos, using both video cameras and smartphones.

Ideal length

This depends on your social media platform and different user expectations:

- Instagram - 30 seconds
- Twitter - 45 seconds
- Facebook - 1 minute
- YouTube - 2 minutes

A two-minute-long video needs a script of about 350 words. If you can make it shorter, do.

Call to action (CTA)
Script a CTA at the end of your video. What action do you want your audience to take? It could be asking people to subscribe to your channel, visit your website, buy a product, share a photo or send a message.

Video language
Keep your language conversational, clear and relaxed. Use simple sentences, keep the language concise and stay away from buzzwords. The key is to minimise the words and maximise the visuals.

Example: San Coffee, Rwanda
Christian Aime Nsabemungu is a Rwandan coffee trader who understands the importance of using high-quality visuals to connect with his market. His business, San Coffee, hired professional videographers to make a four-minute video showcasing the brand, products and operations.

The script draws on content developed in MARKUP training. Christian outlines San Coffee's vision, mission and value proposition, current operations and future plans.
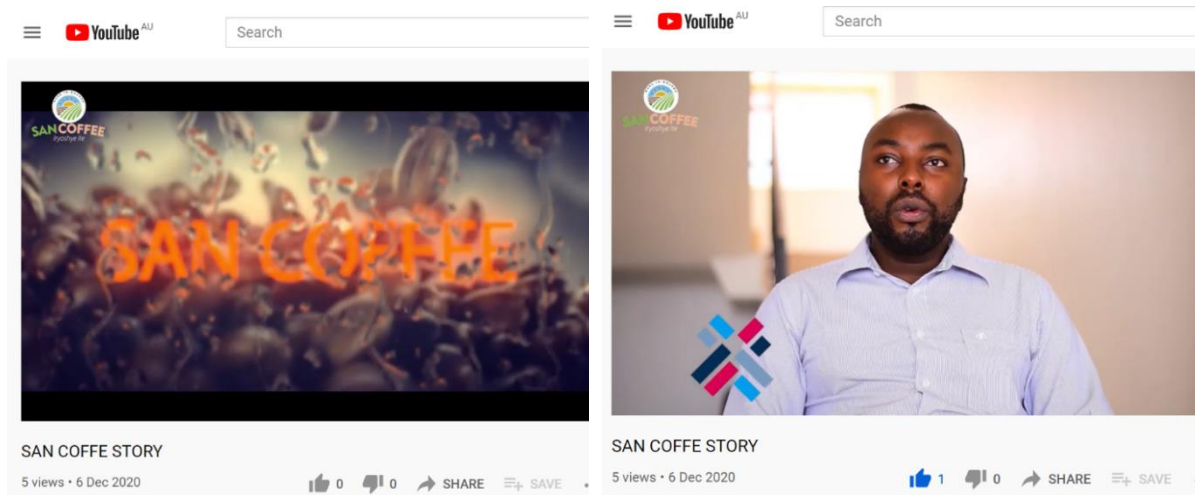
San Coffee's video features Christian Aime Nsabemungu speaking, combined with shots of their coffee production and operations in Rwanda. https://youtu.be/xq0uOszMN8w © San Coffee 2020

Two months after releasing the video on social media, San Coffee has gained three major customers.

Understand your equipment
Often it's fear or uncertainty around the equipment that prevents people from trying video marketing. Don't let it. Everyone starts somewhere and can only improve through perseverance and practice.

Audio

Take time to pay attention to sound. If someone is speaking in your video, find a quiet place to film. Let people know you're filming. Check for other sounds; if you can hear traffic, the sound of the roaster or even dogs barking, move to another location or wait until it's quiet.

Fixing sound after taking the video (in post-production) is difficult. In-built camera microphones can be very handy if you want to catch a scene. However, if you want to produce professional footage, your inbuilt microphone may not be ideal for high-quality recordings.

Useful video accessories

Taking high-quality videos can be expensive. Here are a few accessories that aren't essential but may improve the quality of your videos.

Higher quality sound

Consider camera-mountable alternatives with external mics or shotgun mics. Check you get the right microphone for your video as some might pick up too much sound.

Storage space

Video takes up storage space on your SD card. Don't be caught out during a shoot with a pop-up notification on your phone saying you're out of space. If you're using a camera, select the right memory card for video; speed and capacity are your primary criteria.

Stability

Tripods or even a gimbal (stabiliser) will help you shoot better quality video. A tripod will avoid distortion from shaky hands. If you don't have a tripod, hold your camera with both hands. Or even lean into a wall to steady yourself or get something flat, like a book, to rest your camera on.
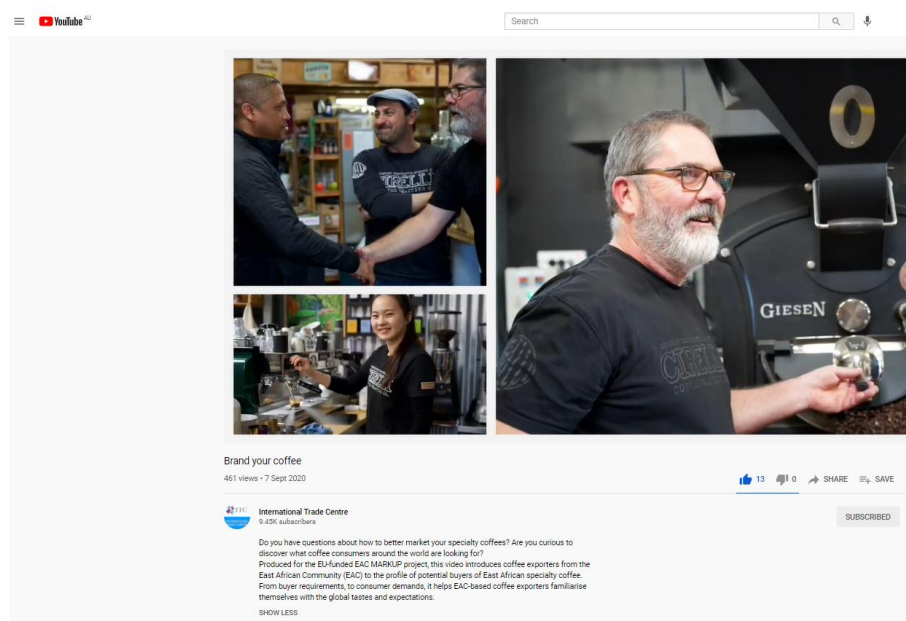
Scenes from shooting "Brand your coffee" for MARKUP EAC
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AutgUBZy8Ck&feature=youtu.be] © International Trade Centre 2020

10. Tips for shooting videos

In this section, we dive deeper to help keen videographers shoot high-quality and professional-looking videos for social media. They apply to both cameras with video functions and smartphones.

Prepare your subjects. Before you shoot, ensure they have a good idea what they'll be doing and saying, so you can reduce errors and wasted time.

Consider your video style and choose the right angle from the start.
- YouTube - best suited to horizontal videos
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter - viewed on mobile phones are best suited to square videos
- Instagram and Facebook Stories - best suited to vertical videos

Lighting can be complex. Smartphone cameras have a small image sensor, so avoid shooting in dark environments or you'll get a grainy finish. Avoid moving from dark to bright areas, and direct intense light, including near a window. Make sure your primary light source is even and consistent.

Front, direct   45-degree   Side or 90-degree   Side with reflector fill

reflector

There are many lighting techniques to help you achieve the effect you're looking for.

Zooming in is best avoided in smartphones as they get blurry and pixelated. To focus, press on the subject in your video until a yellow box and AE/AF Lock appears.

Avoid panning (moving the camera) and zooming in and out. Just move closer to your subject. A wobbly video is hard to watch, distracting and can even make the viewer feel nauseous.

Avoid camera drifting or jerky footage. This can happen as you follow your subject around and accidently drop the focus or the focus blurs as the camera adjusts. Aim for smooth slow transitions that look polished and even cinematic.

Stay with the shot and commit to the subject for at least 10 seconds. Show the viewer what you want to capture and then keep with the action.

Smartphone videos have a grid setting to position a subject, just like with photos. © Drew Hays, Unsplash 2020

Shoot multiple takes as it's easy to make mistakes.

Mix up the scenes to keep the viewer's interest, for e.g., have someone talking for 10-15 seconds, then capture some scenery. Adding people to a scene provides familiarity and perspective.

Know your purpose. Avoid shooting video from a car window, taking selfies or filming people's backs as you walk through coffee fields.

Interview people in the same direction. E.g., they can be looking directly into the lens or standing to your left or right of the phone. Consistency is easier for viewers.

Music can add a powerful dimension. Select music that fits your video. If you're filming sweeping views of the coffee field, then more cinematic tunes could work, compared to a buzzing café, which fits upbeat music. If you have a small budget, look for a suitable (free) track on Creative Commons.

TIP: You don't have to use music with your videos. People may be in a public place and choose to watch your video without sound, so as not to be intrusive.

Voice overs are useful to explain what's happening in a part of your video or convey essential information.

Text captions can also make your videos accessible to people with hearing impediments.

A good title for your video can prompt people to click play, or not. Make it short and to the point to let a viewer know what they can expect.

To **export your video,** work out what resolution you need. Your goal is to maintain quality without overloading your systems. It's good to keep a copy of your original video clip on file.

Upload your video to a video platform like YouTube or Vimeo when you're ready to publish. This allows you to share it more easily on other social media platforms or websites with just a link, as well as promote it on YouTube if you like.

Choose **native video or links** when uploading to social media. Some platforms, like LinkedIn, prefer "native" video, that is, the original video clip uploaded directly to their channel. Others accept YouTube or Vimeo links.

Post-production processing

Once you've finished filming, the next half of your work is the processing stage. This is a combination of technical knowledge and creativity. Here are a few helpful tips:

Editing apps

If you're editing on your smartphone, there are many tools that can help you. They can fix shaky videos, edit clips up close, blur borders, adjust speed, add audio over a video clip, special effects, transitions and much more. They can also help you easily share to social media platforms, Airdrop and email.

Some free and paid editing apps for 2020:

iOS and Android (phones)
- QuikApp
- InShot app
- KineMaster

- VivaVideo
- Magisto
- PicPlayPost

iOS and PC
- Adobe Premiere Rush
- Spice

- CLIPS

Video can capture the human interest in your farming operations. @ Annie Spratt, Unsplash 2021

11.   Organising your images and video

You're well on your way to creating some amazing imagery and video for your brand and marketing. Now, we want to ensure that everything is secure, and not just your creative assets.

Specifically, we'll discuss:
- Backing up files, optimisation and storage
- Writing posts for social media
- Copyright and consent

Backing up images

Storage cards, smartphones, computers hard drives can crash. Unexpected things can happen, like losing your memory card, files corrupting, or even deleting an image folder by accident. Avoid this by regularly backing up your work.

Consider different locations to back up your photos, e.g., an external hard drive/s or the cloud.

Optimise your images for searches

Once you upload an image to social media or your website, it's available for anyone to see on the internet. Retain your copyright by labelling each image with your organisation name and a brief description. This is called optimisation.

Search engines are far more likely to find your image when you optimise it correctly.

Don't upload "IMG3498.jpg"; change it to your-brand-country-topic-subject. For example, Starbucks-Burundi-coffee-African-paradise-flycatcher or mycoffeebusiness-farm-view-west-mountains.

Storage

Your images are precious. Organising and labelling them is critical. Save time searching for images or missing a critical post time if you can't find the right image. Use a folder system on your computer and organise images by date, location, event name or theme.

Catalogue your images to make it easy to find the best image for your post. © Nicole Motteux 2020

Writing social media posts

You'll need some text to go with your images on social media. Don't worry, you don't have to be a wordsmith to write up a few lines.

- Write a brief description of the image and why you're posting it (1-3 sentences is enough)
- Use active language, e.g., "drinking coffee" becomes "drink coffee"
- Use emojis sparingly – they count towards your characters
- Tag people or businesses where relevant
- Use 1-3 hashtags (#) to categorise your post
- Add a CTA (call to action) at the end directing your reader to a certain action, e.g., "Message us with your questions" or "Sign up to our coffee promotion"

And hit publish. Hooray.

*TIP: See the Social Media Guidelines, section 3, for more detailed tips on creating social media posts.*

A word on copyright and consent

What is copyright?

Copyright refers to the legal ownership rights over a photograph, video or any original creative artwork. Copyright covers anything from photographs and videos to maps, drawings and articles.

Laws about image copyright vary from country to country, however many countries have signed up to the Berne Convention treaty, which sets basic copyright standards.

Put simply, make sure you have permission to use images on social media, on your website or in other types of marketing *before* you use them. That means you've either taken the images yourself, paid for them, or are using copyright-free images from a reliable, legal source.
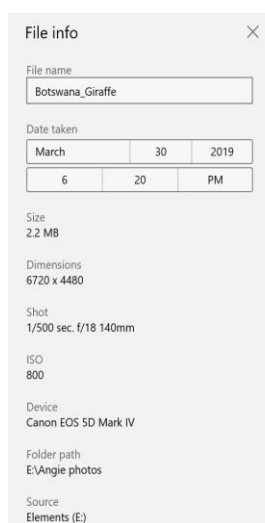
If you use other people's images, check the file Info for copyright information. © Angie Lazaro 2019

Example: Sharing photographic equipment
Say you lent your smartphone to your neighbour. She snapped a photograph of Hugh Jackman visiting the Ethiopian coffee fields that supply his coffee shop, Laughing Man, in the United States.

Who has copyright over the image?
Technically, the image belongs to your neighbour as she took the photo, even though the smartphone was yours. For you to legally use that image, you must get permission (preferably written) from your neighbour.

It's quite simple: if you want to use an image that's not yours, you must get permission to use it. This could be directly from the creator or through a licence. If you do get permission to use the image, keep the licence acceptance as your proof.

Subject consent
There are also laws on public photography that include taking photos or videos of people, especially children. When photographing or filming people, familiarise yourself with the laws on public photography in your country.

It's vital to get consent before taking or sharing photos or videos of people. @ Ninno JackJr, Unsplash 2020

TIP: See the Social Media Guidelines, section 6, for more information on privacy laws and consent.

12. Tips for advanced and very keen photographers

Do you want to really hone your photography skills using a digital SLR camera? With time and practice, you can do it.

This section briefly covers more comprehensive strategies and tips for those who want to seriously develop their photography skills.

Let's start with a common question.

Raw or JPEG format?
Most new DSLR photographers shoot in JPEG until they know more about their camera and understand editing.

With JPEG your camera does all the processing, such as colour saturation, sharpening, tone curve and colour space. This makes taking and sharing photos much easier. JPEG files are also smaller, which allows for more storage on a memory card.

RAW format is uncompressed and files take up a significant amount of space. Each image captures all the data in a high-quality file with more colours, increased tones and a higher dynamic range. This allows greater options during editing, but can also take a significant amount of time, especially if you are new to editing.

Not all editing programs are designed to open and edit RAW files. Check before you switch to RAW format.

Manual vs auto settings
Most new photographers shoot in auto, which means that the camera automatically chooses the optimal settings depending on the light, angle, focus and so on.

In the manual setting, you can control many more options such as aperture, shutter speed and ISO (light sensitivity).

Aperture
Aperture is measured in f-stops and is commonly referred to by f-stop numbers, e.g. 1.8 or f/2.8, f/5.6, f/22 etc.

Aperture regulates the amount of light that passes through your lens at a given shutter speed. A small aperture (say f12) will let less light in compared to a larger one (say f1.8), simply because the iris of the lens is larger. A larger lens is more open and therefore lets in more light.

Depth of field
Aperture also regulates the depth of field (the contrast between what is in focus and what is out of focus in your picture). For example, 1.8 gives a narrow depth of field, but it will make part of your image blurry.

If you want more of the image in focus, a mid-range aperture, such as f/5 or f/8, is a good starting point. f/22 will keep more of your shot in focus.

The depth of field you use varies depending on the type of photography you are doing, such as portraits (often at f/5) vs landscapes (f/11, f/16 or even f/22).
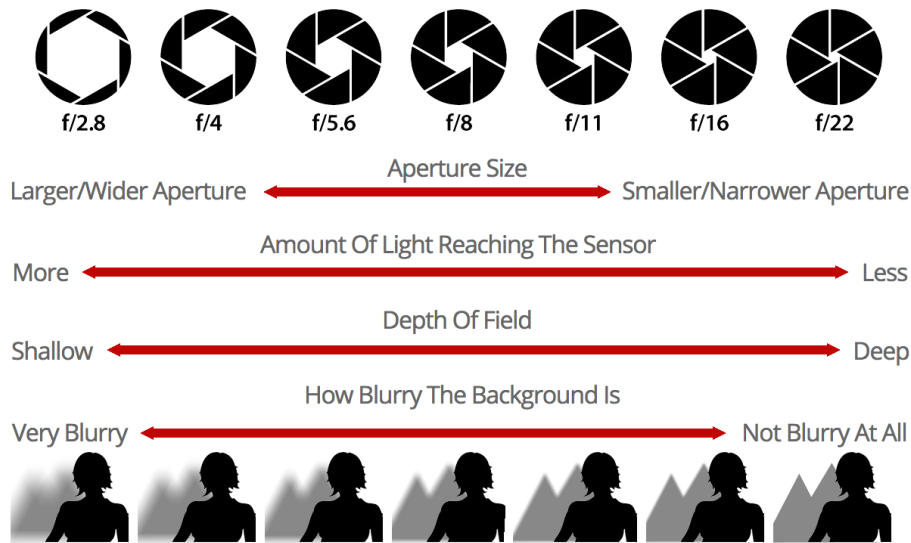
An illustration of aperture size (f/numbers), depth of field and blurriness. © Photography Pro, 2020

Exposure
To get a properly exposed image, where the image is not too dark or too bright, the aperture, shutter speed and ISO have to be balanced. The best way to get this right is to study the exposure triangle and practice.
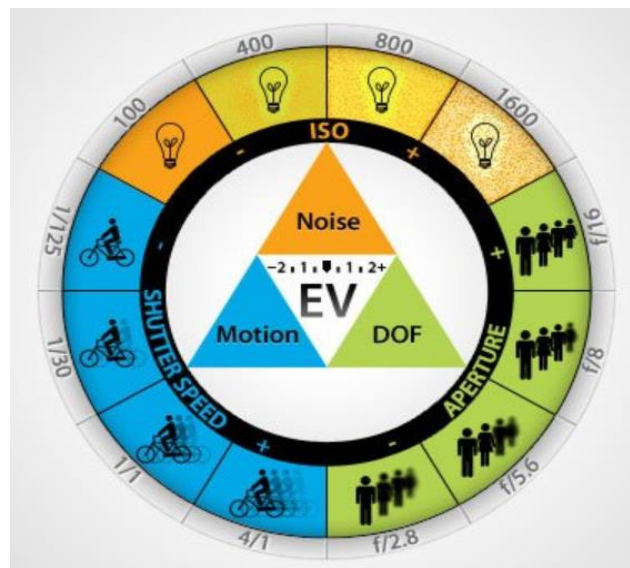
The exposure triangle is key to creating a perfectly exposed image. © Attila Kun, Exposure Guide 2019

ISO
This setting brightens or darkens your image. Most cameras have at a base ISO of at least 100. As you increase the ISO, your images become brighter.

A low ISO setting, for example, less than 100, is best when there's a lot of light. If you have enough natural light, keep your ISO as low as you can to reduce graininess and noise in your image. You will have better quality photos in general with stronger colours and contrasts.

If the light is low, such as inside or at night, you may have to increase your ISO from say, 100 to 2,400. A higher ISO setting means your camera's sensor is more responsive to light.

Shutter speed

This is the length of time your camera shutter is open to allow light through to the sensor. A slow shutter speed allows more time for the sensor to collect light and a fast shutter speed gives the sensor less time to capture the light.

If you're taking photos of your coffee bushes and there is slight wind, consider increasing your shutter speed to reduce blur. Be aware of shakiness, even if you think you have steady hands. To avoid camera shake, increase your shutter speed, use a tripod, or even lean into a wall for support.

TIP: *An easy way to remember how to apply the depth of field concept is this: the lower your f-stop, the smaller the depth of field; the higher your f-stop, the larger your depth of field.*

In portrait mode, the subject is often sharp and the background is blurred, highlighting the depth of field and focal point. © Nicole Motteux 2018

13. Let's see those photos and videos

We have established the why and the how of taking and using images and video for your social media marketing. They are a key component to successfully branding your business online and turning followers into clients.

By now, you know that taking images is not just pointing your lens in a direction and clicking a button. Taking good images relies on understanding composition, focal points, the rule of thirds, leading lines, symmetry and lighting.

It may seem like a lot of information to remember, but as with anything, practice is key. As your images improve over time, your ability to harness them to tell your story will also improve. Before you know it, you will have developed your own authentic style.

After all, a great photographer isn't someone with the best equipment but one who can tell a story and evoke an emotional response. So worry less about being technically correct. Focus on your story and draw on your personal interest to find your next image.

Good text and images will give you every competitive advantage to stand out, build trust and loyalty with customers and give your business credibility. Create your content with your customer in mind.

The great part of taking images is that once you know the rules, you can go ahead and break them. Always aim to take great images and not rely on editing them later. Know your focus. Experiment. Shoot. And have fun.

Images tell customers the unique story of your brand. © Nicole Motteux 2018