



MARKETING SOLUTIONS

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Market Your Skills With Cosmetic Photography

By Larry H. Oskin

Professional photography is the best way to show off your cosmetic, makeup, body art and paramedical skills! You can create before and after portfolios, brochures, advertisements and public relations campaigns with the right photography. The marketing options are endless. Professional cosmetic, salon and day spa photography is an important marketing investment to make your business stand out from the competition with a very unique and distinctive advantage.

Focus on creating your exclusive marketing image by taking advantage of your personal skills as well as your staff's tremendous technical and creative cosmetic art abilities! With great quality photographs, you will quickly be able to educate your prospective employers as well as your clients on all of your special talents. These photographs will also help you introduce your seasonal cosmetic fashion trends, new body art and any extra services. Creating your own customized photography session will allow you to introduce your cosmetic and body art talents, whether you are a freelance makeup artist, a permanent makeup artist, a salon or day spa offering these same services.

PHOTO PLANS: Prepare for a photography session date and get ready to interview several professional photographers. Determine your specific future 'portfolio, marketing, advertising and PR needs'. Put your annual marketing plans in writing, so you are organized before you interview or hire any photographer or models.

Create your list of 'Photographic Needs' like specialty cosmetic service brochures, salon menus, wall posters, in-salon Point-of-purchase materials, newspaper and magazine advertisements as well as your future public relations packages. Create a 'Photography Shot List' noting exactly which potential shots you may want, like before and afters with permanent makeup, temporary body art designs, airbrush makeup artistry, sunless tanning makeovers, paramedical cosmetic arts, skincare, facial treatments, body treatments, nailcare services, hair removal services, cellulite treatments, makeup and hairstyles ... or whatever you and your business may offer.

QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCES: Ask other top quality cosmetic artists and salons for referrals, especially if you like their published work. Ask your clients for referrals and look in the local Yellow Pages. Just look at the photo credits next to fashion editorial photos you like before you call those photographers. Call to ask the beauty and fashion editors of your local newspapers and regional magazines, who they would recommend. If selecting a local photographer, you can shoot in their studios, by taking all of your equipment, products and models with you. The minimal extra time and travel expenses may be worth it.

Find a photographer that has the talent and personality you can work with, at a price you can afford. Ask that they bring in their cosmetic, hair and fashion photo portfolios, to share with you. Tell them you would like to see some of their work in the photography format your work will be created in. Whether you want to have black and white prints, full color prints or 35mm color transparencies for your photo assignment, you should see all of their work.

You may even want to explore the use of nationally recognized beauty and cosmetic art photographers, whose work is regularly published in both consumer and beauty trade magazines. Often these nationally published photographers are much more experienced, yet not always much more expensive. There are specialized salon and cosmetic industry photographers that will travel to your salon.

Find photos you like in magazines to show your photographer the types of work you like. Photography is purely a visual medium. Tell them what you like and don't like. Photographers are artists, and their styles can be dramatically different. Analyze their special lighting techniques and artistic styles. Share your desired Shot List, while asking for a price estimate of a half and a full day photo session. We suggest you get at least 8 to 10 models and plan for a full day session.

Capturing cosmetic, skin and hair details in photography with special lighting effects will be critical. Besides getting the standard before and afters and the other normal lighting shots to show off your creativity, color artistry and talents, don't be afraid to use some special lighting effects and props, for some more unusual shots.

SELECTIVE FILM FORMATS: You may need an array of finished photographic images from full color prints and 35mm

color transparencies. It will be highly unlikely that you will ever need black and white prints. Most color photographs can be later turned into black and white images, but you cannot go the other way around. We always recommend the use of professional 35mm color slide transparencies, since most magazines and publications prefer this for advertising and editorial purposes. It's much more costly, yet if you require exquisite close-up photography details, you will need to invest in 2 1/4" film format photography. Despite the new popularity with digital photography, we do not recommend it, as the quality is just not there yet. Besides, most magazines and newspapers will still not accept this digitized format to use on any photo that may be published bigger than 2 inches.

PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION COSTS & OPTIONS: Most professional photography sessions cost from \$1500 to \$2,000 or more. Some start-up and amateur photographers will work for free, a lower price or they may barter for your services. Some semi-professional photographers may work for as low as \$500 to \$1,000 a day while charging you extra for their film, processing and studio rental. Shop around. Your photographer and models will be your most important investments. You may be able to trade your desired models for free cosmetic, makeup and body art services, while also giving them a free 8" x 10" color photograph as well as a \$50 gift certificate towards future services with you and/or your salon.

PHOTOGRAPHY AGREEMENTS: Determine early, if you will have ownership rights to the photographic images or if the photographer has any rights to these same images. We suggest you negotiate to maintain complete ownership with full 'Buy-Out Rights' at the same price. Some photographers will insist on ownership rights to your photographs or ask for a larger fee. This is a good reason to select another photographer. This area is completely negotiable.

MODEL SEARCH: Determine the types of models that you will need. Determine what type of cosmetic, permanent makeup, body art and any other service clients you will want to attract through future marketing, advertising and public relations efforts. Factors like age, ethnicity, skin type and sex will be important.

To use a model agency, start your search in the local Yellow Pages. Try to avoid using friends, relatives, co-workers or clients as models – unless they are extremely attractive or a professional model. We often find professional and semi-professional models by doing our own 'MODEL SEARCH'. Put up fliers and posters in the salon and community, noting "Models Wanted!" Your marketing materials should explain the type of services you will be photographing and what freebies or payments that you will be offering. You may need to find some models willing to pose semi-nude or nude, if you are performing any discreet professional services on their more private body parts. You can often barter your cosmetic, salon and spa services with both professional and non-professional models.

MODEL INTERVIEWS: Set up a time and date for a 'Model Go-See', where you can personally meet to interview the prospective models at one sitting. Create a 'Model Interview Sheet' before you consider each model. Bring a good camera to the interview session, to test their comfort as well as to remember everything. Look for the little details like, beauty marks, tattoos, eye color, straight teeth, natural smiles and skin quality. Your photographer or marketing services agency should partner with you to select the models.

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS: Plan ahead to avoid surprises. Meet with your staff at least two months before each photo session to plan every detail. Review everyone's responsibilities and the desired shots. Share photographic examples from cosmetic, body arts, skincare, hairstyle, beauty care and fashion magazines -- so everyone understands what they must achieve. Share this planning process with your team, rather than to just take on the responsibilities by yourself.

Determine if you are shooting on a Hollywood set, in a theatre, salon, spa or in a photography studio. Shooting in the salon and spa may be a necessity to properly capture both the desired artistic results and the 'action shots' of the services being performed. For example, in a salon you can easily shoot the a permanent makeup artistry or airbrush makeup application with before and after shots, while also taking photos of you and your team performing these same services.

WARDROBE, PROPS & CREATIVE ARTISTRY: Be prepared for anything! Assign someone to be responsible for wardrobe and props or hire a special Wardrobe Artist. We suggest that you ask each model to bring at least ten of their outfits plus some simple jewelry and accessories. Unless you are specifically shooting for a spring/summer or a fall/winter makeup artistry collections, avoid wardrobe seasonality. Consider fresh sheets, new towels and robes. You may desire some props like roses, plants or sculptures.

THE PHOTO SHOOT: Designate an Art Director, even if it is the photographer or yourself. It's just too hard to keep your eyes and ears on everything at once. Photographic art direction is critical and will be extremely important and this is where you will create your defining image. Facial expressions on your models will be everything, yet take advantage of the tremendous power in a model's expressions of their eyes, lips and faces. Every model's service must be created to perfection in order to use it in your advertising, marketing, merchandising and PR projects. Great lighting is vitally important! Make every photograph count. Shoot as many angles as you can for each setup. Shoot at least 18 frames of every model's pose and setup. Keep the backgrounds simple and uncluttered. Shoot plenty of extra shots, and don't be afraid to use lots of extra film at your photo sessions.

MODEL & TALENT RELEASES: Models, makeup artists, estheticians, staff stylists and the photographer should always

sign a formal 'Release' authorizing the potential use of their photographic image for any marketing, advertising and PR work that you may desire in the future. Your photographer or your marketing services agency should be able to create this for you. Most consumer and trade magazines will require verification of photography ownership with model releases.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING PHOTOS: Save and carefully protect your best photographs for your future newspaper and magazine advertisements. Your marketing brochures, promotional fliers and in-studio point-of-purchase materials will take on an entirely new progressive look to represent your own salon services and your very own work. Your new photos will help your salon menus, spa price and service brochures come to life with distinctive full color photography, if utilized in the printing designs.

PORTFOLIO PRESENTATIONS: The professional presentation of your new photographic images will mean everything! Get ready to create exciting new portfolios, websites, reception area stylebooks and wall photos with your new photographs. Now you can decorate your studio or salon with your own professionally framed photography. Create a stylebook for the reception area that shows off all of your cosmetic artistry, body art and skincare service talents. Add an attractive title page and credits for your staff. Add biographies and your 'Studio Story' to the front with a colorful title page.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PHOTOGRAPHY: Send photos press releases to the local consumer newspapers and regional magazines, besides some of the national beauty and women's magazines. Properly label each PR photograph with 'Photo Credits' before mailing them to any publication. Some beauty trade publications and beauty industry websites will accept a scanned CD or disc copy of your very best photographs, yet they usually do not prefer these digital photographs.

Get ready to create more exciting professional press releases and press kits with your new photos. Send each of your future cosmetic artistry, fashion trend predictions, news, fashion and business release with photographs. Include a special cover letter that offers additional photo and story opportunities for the editors to consider. Many publications will require exclusivity in use of your photographs, while authors will want to take their own - but use yours to judge whether or not you are worthy of a photo session for their editorial team.

You will eventually be able to create a 'Wall Of Fame' to show off your published articles, photographs, PR reprints, educational honors and all of your esteemed achievements. Getting your photos published is an achievement you and your staff will be very proud of.

DO IT YOURSELF? You should not attempt amateur photography when professional quality work is very important to create the right image in your future advertising, marketing and public relations efforts. Some cosmetic artists attempt to take photographs out of their national magazine ads and regional publications, which is illegal! Any published photograph is automatically copyright protected.

As professionals and specialists in our field, we must respect and hire the talents of other professionals, inclusive of graphic designers, writers, publicists and photographers. However, if you are a talented amateur or a professional photographer, go for it! Consider shooting your first photo session indoors near your studio and/or salon until you really learn how to control your lighting and light metering. Use professional lighting with strobes, umbrellas and bounce cards. Invest in several versatile backdrops inclusive of a medium toned beige and gray, besides black, white.

PHOTOS ARE ALWAYS BETTER! Nothing beats professional beauty care photography for your cosmetic studio, salon or spa. Make your first impression - your best impression through professional photography! A picture will always be worth more than a thousand words. Plan at least one photo session per year. Photographs will illustrate your talents, craft and artistry like nothing else can. Create a few daring, different and unique photographs to make your cosmetic marketing approach distinctively different! Invest in great photographers, models and staff talent to watch your business grow through with each new effort!

Make every picture count! It's time to show off your professional cosmetic, makeup, body art, paramedical, makeover and other beauty care service talents to make a powerful new artistic statement for your business.

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