

Making Product Photography Profitable (4-6 hours)

Description

Product photography is one of the most technical and challenging fields of professional photography — requiring patience, planning, and precision. This workshop will provide an overview of the purposes, equipment, skills, and challenges in approaching product imaging. We will work through several studio applications to create simple stills, and so-called product “hero shots” that require multi-layered post processing. Finally, we will address the business side of product photography: planning, pricing, and executing photography jobs to be profitable.

Outline

- Opening and Introductions
 - Current and former clients & their products
 - How and why I got into this
- Keynote
 - Purposes and overview of today’s session
 - Simulate the workflow for product photography assignments
 - Analyze the characteristics of a product to determine how to best light and photograph it
 - Design lighting for several sample products
 - Evaluate and modify lighting on sample products
 - Explore equipment and software for product photography
 - Explore how to price and complete a project efficiently (include the questionnaire from my Acuity site)
 - Opening Keynote

- Slideshow of product photos
- What is product photography, and what are the “subjects” it includes?
- What are the purposes of product photography?
 - To produce images a potential buyer believes are an accurate depiction of a product’s attributes (how do *they* see it?)
 - To show the product as it is
 - To appeal to potential buyers, wow factor
 - To show the product on an “appropriate” background or context
 - To complete the photography in as efficient a manner as possible
- Considerations in planning product photography
 - Introduction: What factors or questions might we need to consider when photographing a product?
 - Lighting techniques are dictated by the characteristics (shape, form, texture, opacity, finish, depth) of the product
 - What traits do we see in the sample products (on screen)?
 - Non-reflective opaque
 - Shiny
 - Textured
 - Reflective
 - Mixed Reflective
 - Reflective, transparent (glass)
 - What does the client want and need (a critical factor in planning and pricing!)?
 - Communication is key!
 - Where and how will images be used?
 - Square ratio: Amazon

- 5x3: Groupon
- Angles of view?
- Front-to-back sharpness?
- Background: white, black, reflective, other?
- How many images or views of the product?
- What other requirements does the client have?
(No assumptions!)
 - Lessons learned in this area
 - Failing to discover up front what the client really wants costs time and money!
 - Make expectations clear as to what's included in the job and what's extra
 - Product preparation? Cleaning, steaming, cooking, staging, grouping
 - Single set-ups vs. additional setups?
 - Simple still, focus-stack, animation?
 - Primary vs. secondary views?
 - Post processing expectations: image extraction, pure white background, blemish removal, etc.
 - Image licensing?
 - Have the client complete a standard questionnaire prior to building an estimate
 - Reflect all expectations in the estimate, as well as what is and is not included.
- Business workflow for effective and efficient

product photography — from initial conversations to estimating to planning the shoot to processing the results to client proofing to invoice and delivery.

- Preparing to image
 - Plan the shooting sequence to minimize set-ups and save time
 - If needed, design an organizational system: spreadsheet, numbered sequence, product tags
 - Build the set beginning with the product
 - Layer in the lighting
 - Shoot tethered and evaluate the set-up as you go
- Case studies of how particular products and groupings were set up, photographed, and processed.
- Summarizing and recapping business concepts, including how to approach pricing.
- Optional hands-on photography of sample products, followed by debriefing;
- Questions & Answers