

How to get your writing and photos published as a package

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1. *Why this makes sense* – Editors like it—they're busy, it saves them time doing photo research; it gives your submission an edge over the competition; you make more money (often photos pay better than writing); you control both visual and written content (you can be sure your story will run with something that relates to it, adds meaning and value to it, and not the opposite); if the magazine accepts advertising, ask editor what in my story a publication ad sales rep can use (equipment mentioned by name, location hotel or attraction, etc.); write-offs for transportation/mileage/lodging expenses to shooting sites (helps bottom line at tax time); it's more fun!
2. *But I can't shoot!* – Oh, yes you can (digital is easier than film, and cheaper: Nikon Coolpix 9MP 3" LCD, wireless email, 3X zoom, \$!99 Costco including 2GB memory card); some stories BEGIN with the visuals (wildlife, action/sports) and words come later to explain or add information.
3. *Think like an editor* – Page design/layout requires more vertical images; if it's a how-to story, show the steps visually; if story is about people, photograph people showing emotions that go with and amplify the story; research the publication to know what kinds of stories and photos it uses; use your own archives for before/after shot comparisons or general-purpose "beauty" shots (landscapes, sunrise/sunset, water, abstracts); captions are best-read part of magazine, so provide plenty of caption info.
4. *Research publications* – online, at supermarket, at bookstores, pick up freebies when you see them (local/Idaho), subscribe, check Writers Guide listings for periodicals covering subjects you know something about (or want to). Look for "want lists" of future desired story topics online or in editor's column and get on a contact list to receive them if possible. Continue to read the publication(s). Know what has been run recently and consider what topics SHOULD be covered (check the competition, if there is any, to see what they're running). Figure out who the primary market is (from ads, Writers Guide, editorial philosophy, etc.) to determine the style to use, approach, content, education level, etc.
5. *Contact editor* – follow publication guidelines about how/when to pitch your story/images. Instructions are usually on or near title page of hard copy or on website.
6. *Write a compelling pitch* – If you know who the audience is, explain why your story and photos will be meaningful to them. Timely, "news they can use," seasonal, etc. If story will appear in spring, photos must reflect that season, so may have to be shot a year earlier or pulled from stock archive.

7. The CONTRACT – If you are offered a contract, read it to make sure it covers both your writing and your photos. You retain copyright to the images, but you sell use rights, up to and including the entire copyright (should ask more for that).

So how do you go about it?

Step 1: Brainstorm: In your network of personal friends and professional colleagues, who can help you do this? [Jana Kemp – Porches story]

Step 2: Research publications and how to approach them

Step 3: Write a compelling pitch that grabs editor's attention

Step 4: Submit your proposal like a pro

Step 5: Follow up until you get confirmation it's a go (or not—try again with a competing publication).

Step 6: Meet with or correspond with editor about the story and nail down expectations of what it will contain. Suggest ideas of your own if editor is receptive. Define end product (receivables) clearly, including word length, deadline(s), content, photo technical needs (resolution, dimensions, vertical/horizontal format), how to deliver text and images (snail mail, email, FTP, CD).

Step 7. Outline the story and how you will create it. Who, what, when, where, why and how. What photos will help?

Step 7. Plan the shoot(s) and interview(s), secure appointments/ dates/ locations with subjects. Be sure subjects know how to contact you by phone and email in case something comes up. Write up questions and shots you must have for your story outline, in the order in which you think you'll write the story. Think about the typical reader of this publication and what questions they are likely to have about your topic.

Step 8. Location Interview/Shoot. Be on time and in the right place (don't get lost). Use GoogleMap, print it out. Carry subject's phone numbers with you, just in case. Write/shoot as planned, but follow conversational paths and take supporting photos as they occur to you. "Better too much than too little—no such thing as too many photos." Take wide angle (establishing) shots, close-up and macro if applicable. Analyze face and clothing for portrait angles. Put people in their habitat and also take them away from it (close-up). Check images for correct exposure as you go. Also for sharpness (action shots and low-light shots, especially). Grip & Grin: Be prepared, get handshake or award presentation. Use flash if necessary (be sure battery is fresh and flash is set to correct distance/ASA). Have backup memory cards (1MB to 4MB) or a computer to download into. Bring a tripod (even if you don't use it). Can bring a tape

recorder; must bring pad and pen/pencil, and list of questions. Last question should be open-ended: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Step 9. Bring home all equipment, notes, recordings, etc. ASAP, download images into folder(s). Delete unusable shots. Archive remaining images in a folder along with your notes (transcribed or taken on computer). Back up this folder onto a different drive, for safety. THEN you can delete the images from the memory card(s).

Step 10. Write the story from your outline/notes, inserting in brackets the frame numbers of pertinent photos as they fall. Set aside this first draft for a few hours or days, then revisit and revise it. If story exceeds word length, first edit it for tightness, then pull out sections that could run as separate sidebars, leaving the main story at the length the editor asked for.

Step 11. File the story and photos with the editor, on time and in the format(s) required. Be sure to let the editor know how you can be reached for the next several weeks.

Step 12. If the editor sends you a revised version, check it carefully and return it on time.

Step 13. Invoice the editor as per your contract agreement (editor may want invoice with manuscript or upon approval or upon publication). Request three tearsheets/copies of the publication for your files.

Step 14. Continue to invoice every 30 days until receive payment. When check comes, deposit it immediately. Celebrate with your favorite beverage and a friend or two!

Resources:

Local/regional media: *Idaho Press Club* [<http://idahopressclub.org/>--click on Idaho Media Links] has downloadable PDF of the *IHFA Idaho Media Guide* organized by region and media, and a link to the *State of Idaho's list of hotlinks* to all Idaho print media. [www.state.id.us/aboutidaho/medianews.html]

Pick up copies of tabloids, etc., where you find them. Investigate airport, supermarket and drugstore magazine racks.

Online: Google your favorite subject and see where it leads you.

Oh, yeah....and HAVE FUN!