

Fotolia experts: How to sell your photos on stock?

Issued by [Fotolia](#)

17 Jan 2014

Stock photography is becoming increasingly popular with both consumers and contributors. How to start selling your photos as stock and what to look for while shooting, to interest the client as much as possible with your photography? [Konrad Bak](#) and [Tomasz Tulik](#) answers these questions - two of the top providers of images on the [stock image library, Fotolia](#).

Millions of creative files on Fotolia (photos, vector graphics and HD video) attracts the daily attention of thousands of customers who is in search of suitable images, are increasingly turning to professionally prepared files. So how to begin to sell your work in the stock industry and make money with them? Especially that stock photography is quite specific and different from the traditional type.



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One camera is not equal to another

Good equipment is essential when taking stock pictures. Quality of the images must be the highest, and such quality, only good quality equipment is able to provide. And it is not about the manufacturer, but about some features which must characterise such equipment. "The camera matrix should have a minimum size of APS-C, and we do not suggest by trade set body and lens kits, usually because it does not meet today's standards of stock photos. When planning a budget we must therefore reserve some money for a camera and at least on lens, so unfortunately, expensive. It's an investment for the future, remember that the camera is being replaced every year or two, and good lenses will stay with you for much longer," says Tomasz Tulik.



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A properly configured set will allow you to avoid many disappointments. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a universal lens, depending on the conditions in which we take pictures, we will need different lenses for studio photography or for those taken in an artificial light. Other lenses will be needed when shooting outdoor static, for example in traffic (stabilisation) or at a specific perspective (wide-angle, fish-eye). "Generally speaking, with good lighting conditions, weaker 'glass' is enough, it is not necessary to set filters and accessories. In low light, in difficult lighting conditions, clear sharp lenses certainly will help, it will reduce the noise

caused by the need of raising the sensitivity of the sensor. However, we must reckon with the fact that a good set of lenses can cost two to three times the value of our SLR," adds Konrad Bak. In addition, for the images taken outdoors a very useful accessory will be also a blend that with very little expense will produce much better lit photos. Another useful item will be a solid tripod.

Postprocessing - is this the standard?

Technical issues certainly differ stock photography from the traditional one. What counts here is primarily keeping the standards: focus and quality in the context of image noise, special lighting or framing. "Fortunately, I still often do photos that does not require serious interference with graphic programs and from the beginning looks very good. Then I make only a slight correction," says Konrad Bak.

Basic knowledge of graphic software is very useful in the stock photography industry, for example in colour postprocessing. Often, the photo session takes place in different weather conditions. The images are then not lighted enough, there are differences in



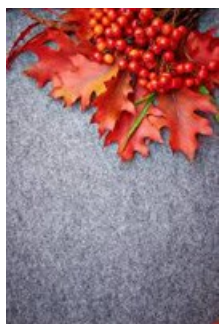
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contrasts or the background correction is indispensable, so that nothing distract attention from the foreground. In such cases, delicate colour treatment is indicated. However, when combining photos with graphics, thorough knowledge of programs such as Photoshop is essential. "I often postprocess my works this way, which makes it more magical and unique. The nature of the images also determines the approach to the subject - certainly an ordinary photo image of 'lifestyle' will look better without excessive postprocessing. And remember: the image after postprocessing must always look better than before - if we have doubts about the above - it's better to go back to the original," suggests Konrad Bak.

In such cases, RAW format, which we receive from the camera is only half way. But remember that the better the output image quality in RAW, the easier the postprocessing. Every minute you spend on a session on fine-tuning illumination of the object/model is a lot of time saved on labour-intensive processing. "Before uploading your images to the site it is worth it to perform a 'miniature test'. If the preview of the photo of the size of a postage stamp attracts attention, this is very good," says Tomasz Tulik.

An interesting indicator of the popularity and advancement of image processing may be the stock TOP100 best selling photos on Fotolia. If, however, knowledge of graphic programs is not our strongest point it's worth it to choose a course in graphic postprocessing. "Before you make a decision, for which course to pay, please check the online reviews carefully about the course itself, and the people running it. An portfolio of such persons will also certainly tell you a lot. Shop around for courses online that are already really high-level, and you can learn at your own convenience. Often such individual classes are also offered by people recognised in the world of photography," adds Tomasz Tulik.

Find your own niche



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When shooting stock photos you should first of all pay attention to what you want to present on a picture, what kind of topics you want. Surely these can not be accidental photos, sessions must be carried out according to a predetermined plan. Women are always a very good theme for stock photography, because such photos can illustrate virtually every area of information, and the classic "beauty" has long adorned many advertising billboards regardless of the field or subject. "It's worth it to wonder which themes customers may seek in stock photography, where else can you encounter niches that are poorly represented in terms of good quality graphical content in an image library," says Konrad Bak.

According to Tomasz Tulik there is no division on topics that sells out or not. Photos can definitely be divided into interesting and indistinct, despite the fact that both are technically good. "All actions of the photographer should focus on the fact that his works were among the first group, regardless of the subject. What matters most of all, is the quality and the creativity, that is, how the session has been prepared, it is just as important as the process of shooting and postprocessing itself. The selection of props, models, sets, locations and styling. It all sums up to the end result, which is to distinguish the photo on the background of thousands of others, and encourage customers to purchase it. Let's not spoil your own ideas by mediocrity," explains Tomasz Tulik.

Let us remember that sometimes it is worth it postpone implementation of the session for a week or two if it guarantees a better preparation. Each session, more or less successful, is also a new experience, new tricks and creative ideas. It is important to not be afraid to experiment, to work and talk with positive people, to analyse their comments and to enjoy a good energy that a harmonious team generates.

Fotolia Instant

In response to the new trends combining mobility, smart phones and social media, Fotolia - Europe's leading stock agency - has launched a new collection of images and an [application created for photographs taken by smartphones](#). With this Fotolia's Instant application, designed for the iPhone 4 and later, providers may via mobile upload their photos directly to Fotolia. With the new filters and simple use, the application allows users to capture better, more aesthetic subjects without losing picture quality and resolution. Photos for the Instant collection must meet the same standards of quality and aesthetics, as well as the legal requirements relating to intellectual property, as all the other photos sold on the site. Fotolia's



Instant application allows users to easily upload digital photos to the site directly from smartphones, making the whole process quick and efficient.

[Start earning money on your photos](#)



Every day photographers from all the world send thousands of new images to Fotolia. Each submitted image is evaluated for quality and technical requirements by a team of professional editors. If it successfully passes the verification, it's added to the Fotolia's database, and the author begins to make money with it. Photographers whose images are licensed by the service, receive a commission on every image sold. This business model provides profitable solutions for both photographers and buyers. Protecting copyrights and generating a commission for artists, Fotolia's Image Library offers high-quality images at prices that are affordable to every buyer. Any information relating to the requirements for sending photos are available on the website:

Required criteria for images uploaded to Fotolia:

- Photos must be in JPEG format
- The image resolution can not be lower than 2400 x 1600 pixels (4MP)
- Photos should have normal proportions
- The file should have a size smaller than 30 MB
- Files should not have had size changed (please send files in their original resolution)
- The sender must be the author
- The sender must have a valid model (model release) for each person represented in files
- You can not send photos containing logos or registered trade marks
- You can not send images containing buildings, goods, or places protected by intellectual property

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