How to use photography to enhance your homepage

By Sarah Doody
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Facebook recently reported that over 350 million photos were uploaded to its website every day during its fourth quarter of 2012.

This comes as little surprise when you consider that, nowadays, more pictures are taken every two minutes than were taken in the 1800's.

click to enlarge

So, how can this 'photo boom' work for the rest of us? Let's focus on your website, specifically the homepage.

The challenge with using photography on website homepages is that far too often, the images don't tell a cohesive story. It's as if one person designed the website, and another chose the images. The end result is a disjointed narrative. Visitors to your homepage decide within seconds whether to stay or leave, so you have only a moment to capture their attention.

Some of the best homepages replace paragraphs with pictures. They effectively communicate the product, process, and people. Strong photography choices can result in an emotional connection, and increase the chances that a customer will recall your website later.

Lesson #1: Show your product

This picture turns your mobile phone into a virtual cash register. Imagine if the site had only relied on words to describe this gadget. If at all possible, show people your product. The image instantly tells you that by adding 'the square' to your phone, you'll be able to accept credit cards for your business. The story continues beautifully as you scroll down its page.

click to enlarge

Lesson #2: Show the customer
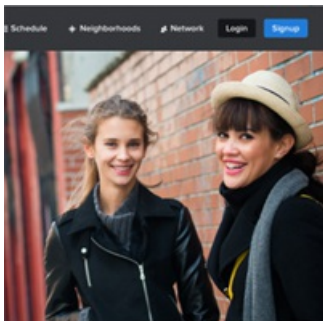
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Finding an apartment can be a frustrating experience. Broker fees. Fake photos. Wasted time. By the time you finally move in, you're more exhausted than your bank account. The website Urban Compass seeks to change the way people find apartments, promising to make it a more enjoyable, engaging experience.

To convince people of this, its homepage has high-quality photography smartly showing happy people in idyllic neighbourhoods. Don't have the resources for a photo shoot? Use stock images.

Lesson #3: Show your team

One of the biggest fears people have when creating a website is that they'll get stuck in the process, and need some real help. To help build trust with potential customers, Squarespace chose to include images of its 24/7 Customer Support team

on its homepage.

Note: If you're going to include photos of your team on your homepage, take time to invest in professional photography, be a bit fashion-savvy, and have your team wear outfits and looks that more or less match.

Photography and storytelling is a worthwhile investment. Photos are what people remember, perhaps even more than a well-crafted tagline.

Photos are what connect with people on an emotional level and ultimately influence their first impression of you, your customers, and your business.

Source: [BigStock](#)

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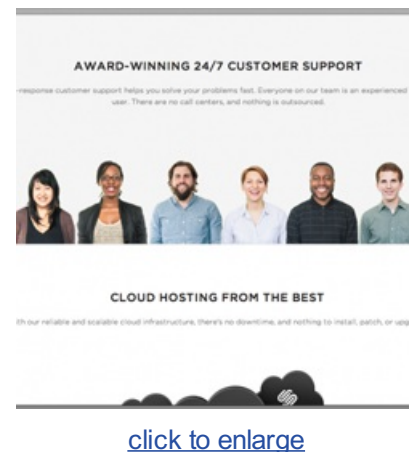
ABOUT SARAH DOODY

Sarah Doody is user experience consultant and designer who specializes in product and brand development. She is passionate about helping teams use the power of storytelling to turn their ideas into thoughtful product experiences. Follow her on Twitter @sarahdoody.
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