HOW TO TAKE BETTER PHOTOS WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE

Smartphone photos can be used on various advertising and social media channels to help build your brand and support your messaging. Whether you're shooting with an iPhone 7 or Galaxy S7, you can take amazingly sharp photos thanks to the 12 Megapixel (Mp) built-in camera. Previous models can produce quality images as well, provided you keep some basic principles and end-use size in mind. How can you take the best photos and avoid hearing the dreaded, "I'm sorry this photo is low resolution and can't be used." Here are some tips to get the best shots with the highest resolution.

1. Technology: The older the smart phone, the dumber it gets. For example, the iPhone 6S and 7 both use a 12 Mp camera. The iPhone 6 used an 8 Mp camera and the iPhone 5 only sported a 6 Mp camera. That's half the total potential size in a span of 3 years. Check what you're using and whether or not your current plan is eligible for an upgrade.

2. Picture Size: This one's important. Check your settings. You should always be on the highest quality setting your camera allows. Most phone factory settings are set to a lower size by default. This is done to save space by compressing down the image allowing for more photos to be taken.

To check into this: Open your camera and look for settings (it might look like a small gear icon). Once there, look for the largest picture size option. This may vary based on your device. For example, a 3264px x 1836px setting is smaller and lower quality than the 5312px x 2988px setting even though they are both a 16:9 aspect ratio.

3. How to Share Without Losing Quality: Okay, you've checked your phone and your picture size and you're ready to share your photo with a designer or vendor. While there are many ways to send one or multiple photos, the best way to do so is directly from the source. Simply add a single image as an email attachment and send it over. If sending multiple photos at one time, you may have to upload them first. When you do so, make sure the photos aren't being compressed down to a smaller format. Some platforms will compress your original photo (i.e., if you upload an image that's 3264px x 1836px to Facebook and then download it again, it'll only be 960px x 540px and too small to be used for print).

4. Sizes: What do the numbers mean and why can't you use the same photo for everything? Lets stay with the 16:9 aspect ratio example we discussed above in no. 2. Full HD video is 1920px x 1080px and common for most televisions and monitors. If you take a 3264px x 1836px photo it will appear sharp. Now, take the photo downloaded from Facebook instead. At only 960 x 540px, it would need to be enlarged to fit the full HD video. At this point, the photo will not be sharp and is too low resolution to use.

5. Translation to Print: How big can I print my 3264px x 1836px size photo? Screen resolution is 72 dots per inch (dpi), but print resolution is 300 dpi. That means a 3264px x 1836px size image would print at 10.88" x 6". This size works well for an insert photo but not so well for an 8" x 10". Let's compare that to an actual digital camera (not smart phone). A good digital camera's file size is 4288px x 2848px. The difference is that the dpi is already 300dpi and can print at 14" x 9". This equates to a much sharper image printed at a much larger size.

Next time your taking photos to promote your business keep these questions in mind.

- What camera am I using?
- Am I shooting with the largest available file size?
- How am I going to get the photo where it needs to go?
- What size will I ultimately need and does it meet my needs?

Using this basic guide will help you not only answer these questions but also better understand why size matters.