PBS invites everyone to explore new worlds, discover new ideas and broaden personal horizons— to *Be more™* — especially in ways that might not otherwise be possible.
Photos are a vivid way to bring our brand promise to life. Photos communicate the exciting and unique characteristics of PBS programs, which are distinct, engaging, immersive and inviting. They challenge convention, celebrate diversity and defy expectations. They take a unique journey and invite the audience along for the ride. Promotional photos should evoke the dynamic qualities of PBS programs. They should be everything the “standard publicity shot” is not.

An engaging, inviting photograph that’s artfully composed, technically flawless and reflects the PBS brand can:

- Attract the attention of press, PBS member stations and, most important, viewers
- Inspire viewship for your program through placement in publications, websites, social media
- Be useful for securing underwriting and in creating sales materials
• Remember the basics of producing good promotional photos: planning ahead, securing a good photographer and encouraging creativity.

• Review your Redbook and Exhibit “E” obligations as soon as your program is accepted.

• Build photography costs into your promotion budget: photographer fees (including extra time for separate or additional sessions), equipment rental if applicable and fees for rights clearances – which are the producer’s responsibility – for all media. Budget approximately $5,000 - $10,000 per day for a photographer for a one-day shoot (plus travel expenses and talent fees).

• Engage the services of a professional still photographer. Include the photographer in your plans to help determine whether location shots, live performance, rehearsal or set-up shots are most appropriate.

• Consider buying images outright. If you own them, you can use them any way you choose, in perpetuity.

• Develop engaging, immersive, fresh photo concepts ahead of time. Communicate these clearly to the photographer.

• Plan accordingly; remember that various photo sizes, angles and orientations (horizontal and vertical) are necessary for placement in traditional media, online pages, social media sites, web banners and ads, etc.
Following are some photo composition considerations to create images that are as engaging and immersive as PBS content itself.
Evoke the spirit of the PBS brand with photos that make our audience want to step right into the experience. Compose images that are inviting and immersive. Take people so close they feel they are a part of the moment.
What Works

- Portray the people, characters or things that best represent the program’s theme.
- Prominently feature a single, striking image of the principal personality, object, flora or fauna appearing in the program.
- Artfully arrange all when there is more than one subject in the photo.
- Pursue close-up action shots, creative angles or poses, perspectives that make the readers/viewers feel they are part of the scene.

What Doesn’t Work

- “In-production” photos (i.e. behind-the-scenes images with cameras or videographers visible).
Deliver a perspective that's unexpected. Explore new angles. Avoid staged shots that are conventional or appear posed. Capture a real moment that reflects the authenticity of the PBS brand.
What Works

- This perspective brings you “under the wing” of this archeologist. Once there, mysterious elements pique the curiosity and engage the imagination.

What Doesn’t Work

- This shot gives you the expected “professional in the lab” image. It may be a necessary shot to tell the story during the show, but it lacks the visual interest and energy required to promote a show.
Keep it simple. Avoid overloading the image with lots of elements. Favor clean, uncluttered compositions.
What Works

- Focus on the subject.

What Doesn't Work

- A shot where the subject is lost against a busy background.
Capture a moment in the story you are telling. Encourage the viewer to tune in to the program to discover the rest of the story.
What Works
• Subjects captured in “a moment” evoke the feeling of a glimpse into a story in progress

What Doesn’t Work
• A shot that feels like a staged publicity photo
Consider placing the subject or subjects off-center.

- Blank space in an image is useful for layout and design purposes.
- Ask the photographer to provide some images with space that can be used to drop in copy.
Creative Checklist

- Does the photo tell a story?
- Does the image spark curiosity?
- Does the photo draw the viewer in and make him or her part of the experience?
- Does the image feel real, not artificial or fake?
- Does the photo feel unique, reflecting something possible only on PBS?
- Will it inspire someone to watch the program?
Technical Considerations

Photos must meet the following criteria:

- JPEG or TIFF file
- Well lit, in sharp focus, and free of dirt and scratches
- A full tonal range, with visible detail in both shadow and highlighted areas
- Resolution of at least 300 ppi at 11”x17” (horizontal or vertical). This size file will allow good quality and flexibility for print media and is adequate for online media.
- Digital photos should be captured in the camera’s raw format for maximum quality.
- Raw photos require an additional level of post-processing which may be appropriate only for those selected for print reproduction.

These materials/formats don’t meet technical specifications and are not acceptable:

- Video grabs/screen shots, even HD video grabs
- Aesthetically inappropriate or poor quality photo materials
- Material previously submitted for ads or product packaging (e.g. DVD covers)
- Laser-printed digital photos
Photo Submissions

You may submit your photo by email, transfer service, on disk or on an ftp.

- Deliver your promotional photos to PBS at least three months prior to the month of air.

Contact information for photo submission:

publicity@pbs.org

Delve deeper into the PBS brand values and overall creative guidelines. Visit our online brand guide:

pbs.org/brands

u: partners
p: explore