

MASTERING

Smartphone Photography for

CAMPAIGNS



Are SMARTPHONES *the new* CAMERAS?

YES – AND NO.

While many people have replaced point-and-shoot or DSLR cameras with smartphones, creating professional-quality images still takes thought and intention.

Smartphones today are powerful tools for capturing authentic, high-quality images that can be used in both digital and print advertising – if used correctly.

This guide will help you master smartphone photography and avoid common pitfalls, so you can deliver photos that work in digital ads, printed mail pieces, websites, and more.



Getting STARTED

Before your shoot, get comfortable with your phone's camera. Learn what options are available in:

- Standard mode
- Portrait mode (for shallow depth of field)
- Night mode (for low-light conditions)
- Live or burst mode
(for capturing motion)

Use the default camera app on your phone – it usually provides the best quality and is easiest to use.



CAMERA

Settings

First, check that your phone is set to capture at the highest resolution.

FOR IPHONES

Settings > Camera > Formats
> Most Compatible

FOR ANDROIDS

Settings inside Camera app

Avoid using digital zoom, as it reduces quality and creates grainy images. Move closer to the subject instead to achieve the desired framing and image.

PRO TIP

HEIC/HEIF files are high-efficiency formats used by many smartphones. You may need to convert them to JPEGs or PNGs before sharing, especially for printing.



PRO TIP

Phones from the last 4-5 years (e.g., iPhone 11 or newer, Pixel 6+, Galaxy S21+) offer significantly better sensors and software processing than older devices. Use a newer phone whenever possible.

COMPOSITION

*Good photography
is intentional.
Use easy-to-
master composition
techniques like:*

NEGATIVE SPACE

Leave room for headlines or text in ads. Think sky, walls, or grass around your subject.

RULE OF THIRDS

Use gridlines and place your subject off-center.

LEADING LINES

Include roads, fences, or railings that guide the viewer's eye.

PRO TIP

Tap on the screen to **lock focus** on your subject's face and slide up or down to manually adjust brightness.



LIGHTING



Lighting is key.

Aim for soft, natural light, and avoid harsh shadows or midday sun.

How do you do that?

AIM FOR GOLDEN OR BLUE HOUR

Shoot in the morning or late afternoon during "Golden Hour" or "Blue Hour."

SHADE IS YOUR FRIEND

Use open shade under trees or beside buildings.

AVOID FLASH

Avoid using the built-in flash – it's harsh and unflattering.

PRO TIP

Don't use filters or enhancements. These distort the natural look and complicate ad design. Let professionals edit your best shots in Photoshop.

PRO TIP

Tap on dark or light areas of your screen to adjust brightness manually on most phones.



Quick Reference CHECKLIST

COMMON SMARTPHONE MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ✗ Using digital zoom — walk closer instead.
- ✗ Shooting everything centered — use gridlines for better framing.
- ✗ Taking just one shot — capture 3-5 per scene and select the best.
- ✗ Forgetting to clean your lens — smudges ruin sharpness.
- ✗ Ignoring the background — scan for poles, trash, or signs.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Use a modern smartphone with the highest resolution setting.
- Tap to focus and adjust brightness manually.
- Use natural light and avoid flash.
- Don't crop tightly — leave space around your subject.
- Avoid filters or enhancements.
- Capture multiple angles, expressions, and shots.
- Think about background and negative space.





FOR MORE INFORMATION

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