Anderson University
Brand Book
Photography/Videography Style Guidelines
January 2024

Creating style guidelines for visual multimedia content (photography and videography) in marketing materials is crucial for maintaining a consistent and visually appealing brand identity.

To that end, what follows are some key elements to consider.

Brand Identity and Values

Brand Identity
Careful planning prior to creating and photo or video content is essential. Key to the planning process is identifying how the content producer will produce visual imagery that reinforces the pillars of Anderson University.

These are:

- Great Academics
- Great Faith
- Great Hospitality
- Great Purpose

The audience of any visual content produced by Anderson University should therefore be able to identify at least one—but preferably all—of these brand pillars.

University Values
Further, visual multimedia content should convey emotion and messages consistent not only with the University's brand pillars, but also its principles.

Content producers should produce visual imagery—especially those of human subjects—that illustrate joy, community, collaboration, innovation, inclusivity, social responsibility/service, and appreciation.

Consistency

Maintaining a consistent visual style across all visual multimedia content is necessary to reinforce brand recognition.

University brand guidelines for color schemes, tones, and moods that should be present in all visual multimedia content.

The Anderson University Office of Marketing and Communication has established specific presets in photo editing software that can be provided upon request.

Photographic Composition

Industry standards of composition generally fall into three categories to which most photographs should adhere.

Rule of Thirds
This compositional guideline is accomplished by dividing the frame of an image into nine equal parts consisting of two horizontal and two vertical lines. This creates a grid of equally sized squares.

The key elements or points of interest in the image are then placed along these lines or at their intersections. The rule of thirds is often employed to create a more visually appealing and balanced composition. It encourages the viewer's eyes to move naturally across the image and can enhance the overall aesthetics of the visual work.

Symmetry
This compositional best practice refers to the balanced arrangement of elements within a frame, creating a sense of harmony and visual equilibrium. Symmetry is achieved by aligning similar or identical elements on either side of an imaginary central axis. It often results in a visually pleasing and organized composition. Photographers use symmetry to draw attention to a subject, emphasize patterns, or convey a sense of order in their images.

Lighting

When possible, photoshoots should take place outdoors using natural light. However, care should be taken to avoid direct sunlight. Outdoor photoshoots should be conducted under cloud cover or in the shade of trees or buildings.

Subject Matter

In the absence of a specific purpose or scope that determines otherwise, human subjects should be the focus of photographs and videos produced for University marketing and communication projects.

When capturing human subjects—whether faculty, staff, students, or guests—it is important they reflect the University's brand identity and values (as outlined above.) In addition to those principles, visual content creators should also produce work that demonstrates:

Authenticity
Unless the scope of project calls for a different approach, candid presentation of human subjects are essential. Generally speaking, human subjects (in photos, specifically) should not be camera aware (looking directly into the camera's lens.)

In both photo and video, human subjects should reflect genuine emotion.

Further, in both photo and video production, human subjects should not be over edited to the extent that a casual viewer can easily determine that editing software was used.

Diversity and Inclusion
Produced visual content should not inaccurately represent the cultural, ethic, and/or racial makeup of Anderson University. However, one of the University's institutional priorities is to intentionally create a more diverse campus community. Therefore, photos and videos should demonstrate that aspiration by presenting a welcoming atmosphere for all people.

Representations of Non-University Brands
Visual content that contain non-Anderson University brands should be avoided. For example, human subjects participating in a photoshoot should be directed to not wear conspicuously branded clothing—especially that of another college or university.

Modesty
Both prior to, during, and after the production of visual content, care should be taken to ensure human subjects are dressed in a manner consistent with the University dress code.

Review and Approval Process

The production of visual content should be undertaken only as part of an project plan established by the Anderson University Office of Marketing and Communication's Operations Team.

The resulting content must be approved by a member of the Anderson University Office of Marketing and Communication's leadership team prior to publication (in either print or digital format.)

Visual Content Legal Issues and Compliance

Videos produced for and/or by Anderson University are considered intellectual property; all rights under copyright law are reserved by the University.

When using assets or elements in the production of University visual content that are not created by the University (music, sound effects, stock images, b-roll, etc.), the content creator must ensure the final created work complies with intellectual property and copyright law and/or relevant state or local regulations.

Photography Resolution and Format

Produced images should be of the highest resolution possible to ensure quality standards for both print and digital use.

File formats (jpg, png, tiff, etc.) are dependent on how images are to be used. Photographers should work with the Anderson University Office of Marketing and Communication's Creative Team to determine the appropriate file format.

Video Length, Resolution and Format

Unless a project specifically requires a longer format—such as documentaries or long-form advertising—most videos produced should be short in length (especially those produced for social media platforms.)

As it is most used, presents in high resolution, and creates the smallest possible file size, MP4 is the preferred format for produced videos.

All videos should be produced at the highest resolution possible.

Video Music and Audio

Music that accompanies AU-produced videos should complement the University brand. While there is no preferred genre or style, musical accompaniment should likewise complement the video's audience and objective. For example, a narrative, persona video should not utilize high-energy, beat-focused, and loud music; however, a short-form promotional (hype) video to be posted on social media should.

Video Accessibility

Videos must meet all legal standards for accessibility, specifically compliance with the Americans with Disabilites Act (ADA.) In short, content producers must ensure that videos are accessible to those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing by providing closed captions.

These guidelines help Anderson University maintain a cohesive visual identity and effectively communicate its brand message through photography and videography in marketing materials.