



**By Al Sanchez**

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# 1—Introduction

Welcome to the amazing world of Stock Photography! Before starting, let me briefly state that this eBook is geared at taking great stock photos for micro stock websites. The information will, however, work for other stock photo companies. The basic premise is to learn how to take great stock photos that will be so great that any stock photo agency would accept them whether it is a micro stock website or a major stock photo company.

This eBook has a section based on “projects” that you should complete. They are designed to get you thinking, shooting, and taking stock photos. Ideas generate ideas and following these ideas and concepts will breed new ideas and those ideas will make even more ideas.

## Note

This eBook does NOT cover basic photography or composition. It assumes that you have a basic understanding and grasp of photography. If you are a beginning photographer then I highly recommend you get [Photo Techniques: Take Great Pictures](#).

Stock photography is not an easy type of photography. I’ve been through the phase of “artistic photography” where I’d shun any stock photos. I’d describe them as “generic”, “artificial”, and anything but art. I considered them really easy to take compared to

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“artsy” photos that had deep meanings. Let me state that stock photography can be extremely difficult.

The technical aspects of stock photography are very crucial. A nice photo that is even slightly out of focus will be rejected. Why? Because stock photos are sold to people that can use them for print and when the photo is enlarged that little focusing problem will turn into a very big problem.

Stock photos can usually be described as “generic”, “idealized”, “fake”, “artificial”, and many other words. Although many stock photos are what is described above, I will try to teach you how to take great stock photos that are not labeled these. You see, stock photography is a fluid subject and changes with society. A while back stock photos did look “artificial” and “generic”. Now, however, they are more down to earth and casual. They depict life as it really is people as they really behave. It is much more realistic now. Models aren’t “contrived” and extremely fake looking.

Does that mean you can go to Denny’s, take some photos, and have amazing stock photos? NO! You still need total control over everything that occurs within the borders of your picture. Although stock photos are more realistic now that does not leave room for sloppiness. Stock photos still are precisely executed to look very sharp and clear. Lighting from Denny’s, no matter how “homely” and “realistic it is”, will not be enough for a stock photographer.



## **Too Real**

Stock photos can end up being too realistic. This usually happens when photos are taken in real locations. Taking a picture of a couple in a park having a great time with a “creative” graffiti drawing on the bridge behind them will probably not be what your customer is looking for. Unless they needed a photo for their book “Romance in the Slums”, they probably would look for another stock photo more suitable.

## **Stock Photos in Thought**

Although this may seem obvious, but when you take stock photos make sure that you have “stock photos” in your mind. Try to make the photo as stock photo worthy as you possibly can. If you’re taking pictures of people and they’re wearing brand names ask yourself the following question:

“Is this Stock Photo Worthy?”

When you realize the answer is no then either hide the brand names or have the people change their clothing. If you’re taking a picture of a family eating at the dinner table and in the background is a massive supply of beer ask yourself the question, “Is this Stock Photo Worthy”.

With the advent of digital technologies you don’t need to worry as much about what is in your background and such. Many errors such as brand names can be removed in digital editing software. But don’t use this as an excuse to take un-stock worthy photos.

## **Pop Culture**

The Stock Photo Expert will need to be in tune with pop culture and what is happening in society. You need to be alert and in the know of what is happening and changing within the world you live in. Every year the market of stock photos changes. Even if it doesn't change much it still is changing.

Read magazines, books, popular websites, etc to stay in with pop culture. This can help you think of new stock photos that are not yet out there. More about this will be covered later.

## **Visual Impact**

As a stock photographer, your photos can be used in advertising, corporations, editorials, and many other venues. Nearly everything nowadays has a picture to go with it. This eBook even has a picture cover and it isn't even a hard copy book! Your photos could end up on greeting cards, shirts, websites, bags, products, and even poster ads!

Whether your photo ends up in some magazine or a website with 2 visitors a day your photo must CATCH THE VIEWER. If there is no visual impact then nothing will happen. Starting a sell is the top and highest priority of your photo. If your photo can make someone buy something and they don't even know what to buy you've got an extremely valuable photograph that can be worth loads of money.

Which reminds me of the belief that stock photos are "easy money". Before beginning I must cover this! Stock photographs are NOT an easy way to make money. Countless

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people are pouring their photos into micro stock photo websites. They believe that mediocre photos they took in France last year will make them a part time income.

There are three types of stock photos out there:

1. Assigned stock photos
2. Stock Photo Specific Photos
3. Personal Photographs

This eBook will teach you to take great stock photos with “stock photos” in mind. No more going outside on a sunny day thinking, “I’m going to take some pictures and I’ll submit the good ones to Shutterstock and see how much money I get”. That kind of thinking is for the average photographer that believes that he or she can make loads of money taking pictures of anything and everything. If you are that type of person then I hope that this eBook will change your way of thinking of stock photographs. Stock photography is a serious business and a seriously fun hobby as well.

Last note before beginning:

Try to be the best photographer that you can possibly be. Don’t settle for stock photos that are good enough for micro stock companies. Seek the best professional stock photographs you can. Don’t settle for average quality or anything less. Aim for professional photographs and set your standards high. Do this and you will see massive improvements in your photos.

Let’s begin!

Al Sanchez