

Elevate your Brand!

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INTRO - My name is Elliott O'Donovan and I am a portrait photographer based here in Washington, DC. I'd like to try and be as helpful as I can today so the basis of my presentation is going to lead in to a few core methods that can be used to effectively further your brand. Some of the topics I'll be discussing include preparing and planning effectively, how to hire the right photographer, and the key components to communicating properly with your photographer to gain the best results possible. Now some of you might already use these methods, and some of you might already have a great photographer. My goal is not to teach you how to change what you're already doing, it's simply to show you a true and honest perspective coming from my experience as a photographer, and what methods have worked best for me in delivering the best possible outcome for my clients. Now before I move forward, I know some of you might be wondering how I ended up on this stage today. Well.... I recently had the opportunity to collaborate with fellow GW communicators, Alicia Grant, and Liz Field. I'll be showing you some of that work later on, but I figured I'd just start by letting you know, that I do indeed have some sort of knowledge when it comes to working in your realm!

STEP ONE – PLANNING, GOALSETTING & INSPIRATION

Now this is the first step before you even hire your photographer. From my understanding, as communicators, you are generally using a broad range of photography for things like, events, publications, donor brochures, admissions, social media, and let's just say, website portraits. Regardless of the type of shoot, I want you to start by thinking specifically about the message that you are trying to deliver. Context and relevance are key. So here are a few questions that you can start with. "What is your demographic?" "Who exactly are you trying to reach?" and "What is the overall message that you are trying to convey?" –

Let me start with a recent experience of my own. – A few months ago, I was commissioned by a pharmaceutical company to photograph a series of architectural elements and environmental portraits. The goal of the shoot was to show that this was an appealing place to work with sophisticated architectural elements, a diverse workforce, and a comfortable collegial work environment. So in this case, the message was pretty simple. "Come work for us, because our office looks cool, and we work with cool people". SO Let me delve into how I handled that approach. – Here are some examples of that particular shoot. //// SET THE SCENE /// /// PLANT THE SUBJECT /// CREATE THE MOOD //

STEP 2- HIRE THE RIGHT PHOTOGRAPHER

// COMMUNICATION

I know that in most cases, hiring the right photographer is really tough. Nowadays, everyone that owns a camera considers themselves a photographer, which means that finding a GOOD photographer is difficult. **“OK so what do we do?”** – Here’s the best advice that I can give you. Start with referrals - Combine forces with your colleagues, and reach out to as many people as you can with a simple criteria of the type of photographer you’re looking for. People that have had an amazing experience with a photographer are very likely to tell you all about it. Step #2 – **READ reviews.** When doing a simple google search for local a photographer, read through consumer reviews, and client experiences. – this is a simple part of the vetting process that can have a huge impact on your final results. #3–And to me, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP–**SETUP A CONSULT WITH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER!** It is critical that you meet your photographer in person. In my opinion, your common sense and judgement will have a huge impact on deciding whether or not this is the type of person that you will want to work with. You need a photographer with not only a great portfolio, but a great personality. If you’re unable to meet in person, **set up a skype call.** You need to find someone that connects with you, and that you know will be able to connect with your subjects because let’s be honest, MOST People hate to be in front of the camera! This is also an area with an added benefit of **hiring a local photographer** vs someone from out of town – I actually have a cover shoot planned with Gilien Selsby of USC Law school which validates my point exactly. Gilien contacted me with an inquiry to photograph an upcoming publication highlighting 4 notable USC alumni with the goal to shoot around notable Washington, DC landmarks. Because I’m local to DC, I was able to tell her about the

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necessary permits needed, as well as the key vantage points for getting the best composition. **This is something to consider in your hometown!**

“Ok Elliott, this all sounds great but it also sounds expensive.” “Our budget is limited for photography, so how can we still get great photos?” Well, here’s my suggestion. You have X amount of budget that is given to you every year for “Photography” – I think that you should focus your budget on high impact photography and minimize your budget on low impact photography. High impact photography would consider something like a cover photo for the publication, or perhaps a new banner image for the websites home page. **High impact = largest audience // low impact = smallest audience** - is going to be the typical low key faculty event that is unlikely to receive a large viewership. – Some schools that I’ve spoken with have gone as far as purchasing an in house camera to cover events that simply need to be documented, but aren’t necessarily happening to promote anything specific.

“how much should we pay? What’s the going rate for this type of thing?” – Unfortunately, there isn’t going to be a magic number that you can always rely on as a “standard” going rate for photographers. What I can do is suggest a few tricks to consolidate your photography needs into consecutive shoots that lower your photographer’s rates and effectively give you more bang for your

buck. Your most cost effective solution is to **hire your photographer under either a ½ day, or a full day rate**. Let's say you have 3 photoshoots that need to be covered over the the next month. You have updated staff headshots, a cover photo/feature for a publication, and maybe an event. – If you can hire your photographer for a full day to cover all of this, you're far more likely **to save on additional travel/setup rates for shoots that are spread out of the course of the month.**

“So how about usage rights? What terms should we discuss with the photographer?” – This likely going to vary from person to person so let me just give you my experience with usage rights. – INSERT DEFINITION – Some photographer's rates will increase drastically depending on what these terms are. Usage rights are often set on timelines for 1 year, 2 years, and up. After the timeframe is up, the client is required to provide additional compensation to the photographer to continue using the images. Additionally, images that are only being used for online usage may be less expensive than images being used for print as well as web use. --- All of this is really tedious for me as well as my clients so I typically set a standard ½ day or full day rate for my clients that includes lifetime unlimited usage rights to print and web. This is my method and I think you should push for that during the consultation process.

Alright so in closing, what have we talked about today? We've talked about Planning out your photoshoot and finding inspiration. We've talked about communication with your photographer to get the perfect execution in order to create HIGH IMPACT imagery, and we've talked about how to find the right photographer, and what the best way to utilize your budget to make the most out of your brand.

STEP 3 – GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER // EXECUTION

It's 2016 and we all have image fatigue. What do I mean by image fatigue? What I mean, is that in the current digital era, we are constantly being swarmed with hundreds, and even thousands of different images every day. This makes it extremely difficult to decide what images have impact versus what images mean nothing. --- By a show of hands – HOW many of you are sick of sifting through a gallery full of hundreds of grip and grin images? – ALRIGHT, Well so am I! I've shot dozens of events over the span of my photography career, and I have to tell you, that I'm also sick of sending my clients a gallery full of grip and grin photos, that simply document what was happening, without having a single truly compelling image in the set. Let me try to open your eyes to a new approach. Consolidate your agenda. "Huh??" Okay, so let's say you're planning on hiring a photographer to cover a cocktail party that includes a couple of very high profile, key speakers. Instead of giving your photographer 5 hours to wander around, take random group photos, close-ups of trifolds, and quick grip and grin snapshots, you instead, delegated a small window of time for your photographer to set up and stage a photo of that key person/persons. This is your opportunity to take advantage of the fact that you have a key speaker and a photographer in the same place at the same time. Your photographer is limited by the amount of space that they have to set up the necessary equipment while covering all of the different aspects of the event as it's happening.

You might be thinking, "What if there isn't enough space in the venue to set up a staged shot, what if the speaker doesn't have

time?” - There is always enough space!! I can tell you from personal experience that most photographers are used to working on the fly.

Feel free to contact me with specific questions regarding this presentation at info@elliottodonovan.com