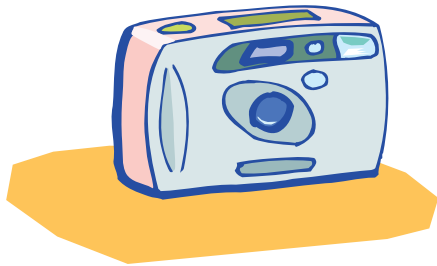


GRAPHIC

TRAPHIC

F r o m C o n c e p t T h r o u g h P r i n t

Photographs in Print: DIGITAL CAMERAS



The popularity of the digital camera has zoomed in the last couple of years and, as a result, many photographic files being submitted for printing are now being generated by these digital cameras. As with other new technologies there are

both benefits and drawbacks, but as long as you are aware of both, digital photography can be a helpful new tool in meeting your printing needs.

- ❖ **DEADLINE LOOMING?** - Digital is quicker. Take several shots of each subject to assure a clear image. After all, no film is involved, so you can just toss the extras later.
- ❖ **SIZE MATTERS** - Most digital cameras have different size settings available. The smallest size setting allows many photos to be taken and stored on one disk/memory chip. The largest size setting may only allow a few. The smaller settings are fine for photos you want to view only onscreen, or send in an e-mail to relatives, but **for printing purposes use only the largest size available to you.**

❖ **WHEN PURCHASING A DIGITAL CAMERA** - Digital cameras come in all price ranges, but if you have a choice:

- pick optical zoom over digital zoom (the quality is better)
- when choosing between 2 or 3 or 4 megapixel models, remember that more is better. You should look to buy as many megapixels as you can afford when high resolution photos are your goal.
- when choosing a price range, remember that you are going to save money on film and processing, so the camera will start to pay for itself with the first click.
- If you use a lot of black and white photos (or duotones) in your printing, pick a camera that offers black and white captures as an option.

❖ **EVALUATE FOR QUALITY.** Get as close to your subject as possible. And watch the lighting. Photos with faces in the shadows are frequently provided to printers. Whether or not your photos are generated the traditional way or digitally, there are some common traits that all good photos share. (See below.)

Photographs in Print: HOW TO MAKE THEM BETTER

Why does one print reproduce better than another? Here are several important factors.

- ❖ **FOCUS** - The need for sharp focus is so obvious that it seems unnecessary to mention. Yet every day printers receive photos that fail to meet this, the most basic of requirements. It happens sometimes because the choice was based on a 35mm or 2-1/4 contact sheet, (or a 1" window on a digital camera) which is too small to evaluate properly. A better approach is to order a working print that is near in size to final reproduction (or, if digital, significantly enlarge on a computer monitor). Then you can see clearly whether key details are really sharp.
- ❖ **GRAIN** - Unless you want special effects, the finer the grain (uniform background pattern visible throughout photo) the better, particularly when reproduction will involve major enlargement. If grain becomes noticeable, it distracts the viewer and degrades detail.

❖ **LOCAL CONTRAST** - Look for contrast within key elements. It's the juxtaposition of dark and light tones that creates profile, surface detail, and texture.

❖ **OVERALL CONTRAST** - The brightest highlight and the darkest shadow set the range of overall contrast. Overall contrast should be wide - giving the image punch as intermediate grays are set off by deep blacks and bright whites. But it should not be extreme. For if contrast exceeds what is reproducible by the halftone process, certain areas (principally, detail in the highlights and shadows) will suffer. Photos violating this rule constitute one of the most common problems in halftone reproduction. (Halftoning is an industry term for converting photos to printable images.)

❖ **HIGHLIGHT AND SHADOW DETAIL** - Because highlight and shadow detail are the most likely losers in the halftone process, choose photos in which these details are strong to begin with. Something is certain to be lost in the several steps from photo to halftone print.



Photographs in Print: DUOTONES

A duotone is a black and white original image (photo or digital capture) which is reproduced on press using two colors of ink. Although a greyscale can display up to 256 levels of gray, a printing press can reproduce only about 50 levels of gray per ink. This means that a grayscale image printed with only black ink can look significantly coarser than the same image printed with two or more inks.

Sometimes duotones are printed using a black ink and a gray ink – the black for shadows and the gray for midtones and highlights. More frequently, duotones are printed using a colored ink for the highlight color. This technique produces an image with a slight tint to it and significantly increases the image’s dynamic range. Duotones are ideal for two-color print jobs with a spot color (such as a Pantone ink) used for accent. You can, if already printing in full color, simulate duotones and mix them in with full color images.

Duotones can add emphasis, richness and clarity to photos, as well as help them achieve such artistic effects as “warmer,” “colder,” or “bolder.”

❖ **BEGIN WITH A GOOD GREYSCALE PHOTO** - Make sure your original photo is of the highest quality available, paying particular attention to focus, contrast and detail.

❖ **GIVE CLEAR DIRECTIONS TO YOUR PRINTER** - Unless you are accomplished with Adobe Photoshop it is best to give your printer instructions and have his staff create the duotones for you. The most common instruction would be to indicate what colors you wish to use and which of those colors you would like to appear dominant in the completed duotone (see examples below),

If you prefer to create your own duotones, keep in mind that rarely is the amount of each color equal in a duotone. Generally one color is dominant over another, depending on the subject choice. There are endless variations which can yield a wide range from subtle to stunning color effects. Creating your own duotones can be tricky but rewarding.

❖ **CONSIDER YOUR SUBJECT MATTER** - A color decision that works well for product shots, may not look so good on skin tones.



Greyscale



Black with Warm Grey 6

So what about tri-tones or quadtones? All of the same quality issues exist regarding the original photo, and the selection of the three or four different ink colors can be even more challenging than with duotones.



Black Dominant Duotone



Color Dominant Duotone (Process Blue shown here)



Equal Curve Duotone (neither color dominant)



Black Not Required (2 Colored Inks)

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