



A Guide to Getting Promotional Photos for Your Comedy



Version 1

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Why This Guide?

A Laugh And A Half has been receiving applications from comedians since 2015 and, for numerous reasons, our applications require specific photographs from applicant comedians.

We explain clearly on our application form that we require photos to be:

- ✓ Portrait Orientation
- ✓ Colour Photos
- ✓ 300 dpi resolution
- ✓ Professionally photographed

yet we still regularly* receive photo submissions that are:

- ✗ Landscape Orientation
- ✗ Black and White photos
- ✗ Low resolution – usually 72 dpi or 96 dpi
- ✗ Amateurishly photographed (and obviously so)

**More than half of photo submissions fail at least two of our criteria.*

This is a waste of our time and the time of the comedians submitting applications to us (these applications go straight in the bin).

So we have put together this guide to explain what is required so that:

- 1) You don't waste your time or ours by submitting photos that don't meet our requirements.
- 2) You don't waste your own time applying to us if you're not prepared to invest in some quality, comedy promotional photos of your self.
- 3) You can take this guide to a professional photographer, so that even if you don't understand everything we are asking for, there's a pretty good chance that your professional photographer will!



Why Have Good Promo Photos of Yourself?

1. A Good Photo Gives You a Competitive Advantage

Comedy is a competitive market. You need to stand out. A lot of shows are poorly marketed with poor quality materials. One way to stand out from the crowd straight away is to have quality photography in your marketing.

As a comedy promoter, I see rubbish 'headshots' every week and they get binned immediately along with the applications that accompany them. Good promo photos stand out straight away. Good promo photos get you noticed.

2. A Good Photo is Fundamental to Your Comedy Promotion

You may be aware that there are many excellent comedians out there who don't get the opportunities they 'deserve' because their marketing is of a very low standard.

In contrast, there are some comedians who are not the best at what they do, but they generate more opportunities for themselves with the professional image of themselves that they create and promote.

Your promo photos are a foundation for you to promote yourself – and have others help to promote you. Both you and others can promote you to:

- Venues, room bookers and comedy promoters
- Festivals
- People who buy tickets to your show/s!

3. A Good Photo Shows That You Invest In Yourself

If you can't demonstrate that you think you're worth investing in, why should anyone else?

There are some comedians who are waiting for someone else to 'discover' them and do everything for them. It's a bit like saying to an empty fireplace "Give me some heat first and then I'll put some work in and bring in the firewood".

For most people who are going to spend time, money and effort helping you, they want to see that you are already doing something for yourself, before they invest their time and money in you.

4. You Are Ready Faster When Opportunities Come Up

Imagine, at short notice, an opportunity comes up, for example, the opportunity to:

- Enter a comedy festival.
- Put on a show in a venue that came up due to someone else cancelling.
- Get some good publicity with a media outlet, for example they want to publish an article about your upcoming show.

If you already have professional photos ready to go, you get to continue with those opportunities. If you have to spend a couple of weeks getting professional photos done, you will miss a lot of those opportunities. If you don't have professional photos, you can miss a lot of those opportunities completely.

Invest in Yourself

1. Don't Get Your Mate with a Nice Camera (or phone) to Take Your Photos

You can't assume that someone holding a good microphone is automatically a good comedian, so why assume someone holding a good camera is a good photographer?

- Do not send a photo taken by a mate with a nice camera.
- Don't even think of sending a photo taken on a phone.

2. Prove That You're Serious About Your Comedy. Invest in Good Images.

We get two types of photos submitted. Generally, they either convey one of these messages about the sender:

1. I am serious about my comedy career, or;
2. I couldn't be bothered.

3. If You Want to be a Professional Comedian, Hire a Professional Photographer.

You know who has amateur photos? Amateur comedians.

It doesn't even matter if you're not a professional comedian yet. Look like a professional and act like a professional and you're well on your way to being treated like a professional.

In their marketing training each year, the Sydney Fringe Festival say that quality images are the most important thing for marketing your show. They urge artists to invest about **half** their marketing budget for the festival in quality photography because it will instantly put their marketing in the top 20% of quality for the festival.

Your photo will be:

- Seen by thousands of people.
- Used to promote you and the shows you are in.
- Used by you for publicity and media opportunities.
- If you aren't ready to invest a few hundred dollars in your own career to get good images of yourself, you are not ready to perform with us.

There are some people on the comedy scene with poor quality photos and, in my experience, they are often frustrated that they don't get more opportunities.

If Your Promotional Image is Less Than Premium (or Even poor Quality) , What Does It Say About Your Comedy?

What We Need

1. Colour Photos, not Black & White

We will be using your photo in colour printed programs and colour pamphlets, and on colour websites! Your photo must be colour.

If you want black and white photos for your own projects, you can easily convert colour photos to black and white. So get colour photos first.

2. Portrait, not landscape

We want photos that are portrait format, not landscape format.

[What is portrait format?](#)



✓ **PORTRAIT**



✗ **LANDSCAPE**

3. On a neutral background – white or light grey

So, ideally this will be shot in a studio or with a professional portable backdrop.

We will be cropping your photo for various purposes to promote you in our shows and a white or light grey background makes my job easier and faster. Thank you.

4. Photo must be 300dpi resolution in .jpg or .jpeg file formats

There are multiple ways to play with resolution, but for the number of photos we work with, we want to keep this simple, so we just ask everyone to submit their photos at 300 dpi resolution. We can resize it and change resolution (down) at this end.

How do you determine the DPI of a photo?

<https://www.google.com.au/search?q=How+do+I+determine+dpi+of+a+photo%3F>

What We Need (continued)

4. Lots of croppable area around you.

I use the photos lots of different ways.

I will crop and/or resize your photo multiple ways to a range of sizes and formats, so I need lots of croppable area around you in the photo.



✓ LOTS OF
CROPPABLE
AREA AROUND
SUBJECT



✗ LITTLE OR NO
CROPPABLE
AREA AROUND
SUBJECT

Note: Photos don't have to be full length head-to-toe. A waist-up shot is fine too, as long as there is lots of croppable area around you.

5. Follow This Guide. Don't Copy Other Comedians Assuming They've Nailed It.

Please don't copy photos of comedians who already work with us* because:

- Many of them joined our group years before we developed this guide.
- Many of their photos are now completely unsuitable and we will be getting them to upgrade their photos, based on this guide.

***Important Note:** The exception is the photos on the link on the last page of this document. We have published there some examples of the best photos we have received.

Some Other Key Tips

1. Get At Least One Image Per Purpose.

Don't get one photo to try and fulfill multiple purposes.

Some comedians make the mistake of getting one photo of themselves to use as:

- Their comedy profile photo and;
- Their headshot for acting jobs and;
- The corporate headshot for their day job and;
- Their corporate LinkedIn profile and;
- Their profile photo for dating websites and;
- The framed photo of themselves that they give their family for Christmas

If you need photos for purposes besides comedy, before your photo shoot, make a list of the various photos you need and discuss them with your photographer.

For Example, I wanted photos for:

- 1) My solo comedy show poster – I had a very specific idea of what I wanted.
- 2) An assortment of different poses and styles to promote my comedy and for other comedy projects.
- 3) My corporate training business.

I made a list and explained in writing to my photographer what I wanted the photos for and how I would be using them.



COMEDY PHOTOS



CORPORATE PHOTOS

As you can see, my comedy photos are not suitable for corporate use and my corporate photos are not suitable for comedy use.

Naturally, if you only need comedy photos, just get comedy photos shot, but if you need photos for multiple purposes, get photos taken for each purpose.

Hopefully, this (getting images specifically for comedy) seems obvious to you, but we receive dozens of photo submissions each month that are completely unsuitable for promoting comedy.

Some Other Key Tips

2. If You Have Things In Mind, Give Your Photographer Examples Before Booking

Photography is a visual art form so it helps if you can **show** your photographer what you want, as well as tell him/her. Two ways to do this are:

(A) Show Photos That You Like

If you see photos that you like the look of then:

1. Show them to your photographer before you book the shoot.
2. Explain to the photographer what elements of the photo you like and want to re-create for your own photos. For example, some things you might like recreated in your own photos:
 - a. the pose or stance of the person in the photo.
 - b. the facial expression of the person in the photo.
 - c. the angle of the shot – maybe that it was shot from above the person, or below the person, or side on, etc.
 - d. the lighting.

(B) Sketch Out Your Ideas

If you need photos for your own comedy projects, think of how you'd like your photo to look, and you could sketch it out with a pencil.

In the example below, I had a very specific idea of how I wanted my solo show poster to look, so I sketched it out and the photographer took multiple shots of what I needed and I picked the one I thought was best.



1. The rough sketch I gave my photographer



2. The photograph he took



3. The finished poster

Some Other Key Tips

3. Your Comedy Photo is to Get People Interested in Your Comedy

Don't make your photo a solemn, serious shot. You're a comedian so have some fun with it! Several comedians have sent us photos that could have been taken immediately after a funeral. There is plenty of comedy in death but these photos did nothing to catch people's interest in the comedian.

As well as any ideas you have, ask your photographer: "How can we make me look like someone that people would want to come and see perform comedy?" A good photographer will probably have some suggestions for you.

At the very least, you should be smiling (unless your comedy persona needs an exaggerated scowl or something similar, but make it funny).

Some things to play around with to make your photo interesting and enticing for prospective comedy-goers are your:

- Facial expression
- Mood
- Stance and 'body language'
- Clothing and accessories
- Optional Props (whether you use them in your act or just for the photo shoot)
- Make-up (if you wear make-up)
- How You Style Your Hair (if you have any)

During my comedy photo shoot, my photographer told me jokes and got me to tell him jokes. We were both laughing a lot and he captured that fun in my photos.

An Excellent Example

One of the best comedian profile images* I have received was from the comedian **Ben Willshaw** (below).

As well as perfectly meeting all our technical requirements, this image of Ben has:

1. Ben leaning forwards (a sign of eagerness, interest, and readiness).
2. Ben with his hands in his pockets (a sign of restraint, keeping something back).
3. Tension. The conflict of 1 and 2 above creates tension. Ben's ready to go but there's still something holding him back - but he's ready to pounce.
4. If you know Ben's comedy persona, he is really cheeky, energetic and highly engaging on stage and this image gives people a really good hint of that.



**NOTE: image of Ben shown here has been cropped and reduced in resolution dpi for this document.*

Some Other Key Tips

4. Do It Once. Do It Well.

Some comedians waste our time and their own by starting with low quality photos, usually trying to spend no money or as little as possible. If you're serious about your comedy career, carefully plan what you need from your photo shoot and book a professional photographer.

From the start, aim to get the **best photos possible** to promote you and your comedy.

5. Ensure That You Own the Copyright

Before committing to a booking, ask the photographer if YOU own the copyright in the photo. If the photographer retains ownership in the photo, it can create unnecessary complications in how and where we use the photo. We will not use your photo unless you, the comedian, own the copyright in the photo and can prove it in writing.

Also, if you don't own the copyright, the photographer can legally sell your photos to other people and organisations and your photo could be used in advertisements or sold on photography websites without your permission.

Ask your photographer to confirm that **you own the copyright** on the copy of the job sheet they give you for the photo shoot and/or on their invoice to you for the photography.

6. Format for Your Photos

Your photographer will want to know what format you need your photos in.

We want 300 dpi resolution files in .jpg or .jpeg file formats.

Your photographer can probably give you your photos electronically on:

- a CD or DVD (old school, but it works)
- a USB thumb drive
- a file sharing website like Dropbox.

All of these are fine and you can easily copy your photo from any of these and send it to us via our website application page.

7. Don't Send Your Photos via Facebook / Messenger

When you send high resolution photos via Facebook / Messenger, they are automatically compressed /rendered down. For example a comedian sent me 300 dpi promo photos via messenger and they came through as 96 dpi. There may be other apps and social media channels that do the same.

Send photos to us via (1) our website forms or; (2) via email or; (3) via dropbox.

Please see the next page for important resources

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Again, to save you time, we have put together some important resources for you. Please use them.

1. Recommended Photographers

We want to help you find a professional photographer. So we asked the comedians in this group with the best photos who their photographers were.

You can see the photographers' names, locations and website links at:

www.alaughandahalf.com/photography/

2. A Checklist Brief to Give Your Photographer

You don't brief a professional photographer every day. To make it easier, we have put together a 'brief sheet' to download, edit and give to your photographer.

You can download an editable example brief for your photographer at:

www.alaughandahalf.com/documents/Photography-Brief-For-Your-Photographer.doc