

Sell Stock Photos Online

49 Tips For Success



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A free stock content resource for webmasters.

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Introduction - About

This eBook has been developed to help you sell more photographs using the internet. There are no fancy videos, or spectacular graphs, just bullet points of tips which you can work through at your own pace to give yourself the best possible chance of success in the stock photography industry. How successful you will be depends on your skills as a photographer and how much time and effort you are willing to put into your work.

This eBook is not one of those super secret packed, magic wand, big promises, guaranteed wealth types of ebooks - it is simply tips on ways to promote yourself and your images, if you don't put them into action you will get nowhere, so remember to read it to learn, but ultimately its down to you to act.

We recommend you don't skip thru sections of this ebook, and take it steadily so you absorb as much information as possible.

Chapter 2 - Presumptions

The presumption is taken that you already have a level of photography skill and have the equipment with an adequate level of capability. This ebook will not teach you how to take photographs, it will help you sell them. If you are only just beginning and can't even take a good photo, it is recommended you do that first before revisiting this eBook.

It is also presumed you are somewhat of a newbie at selling your work. However, if you already an established seller looking to expand your sales there is still plenty of stuff to wrap your eyes around that should help you.

Chapter 3 - Requirements of Uploads

Before we get into the tips, be sure that you are able to meet the requirements of the websites that allow you to sell your images on their website. If they reject everything you submit you will never sell anything, so first things first - ensure you can meet the requirements.

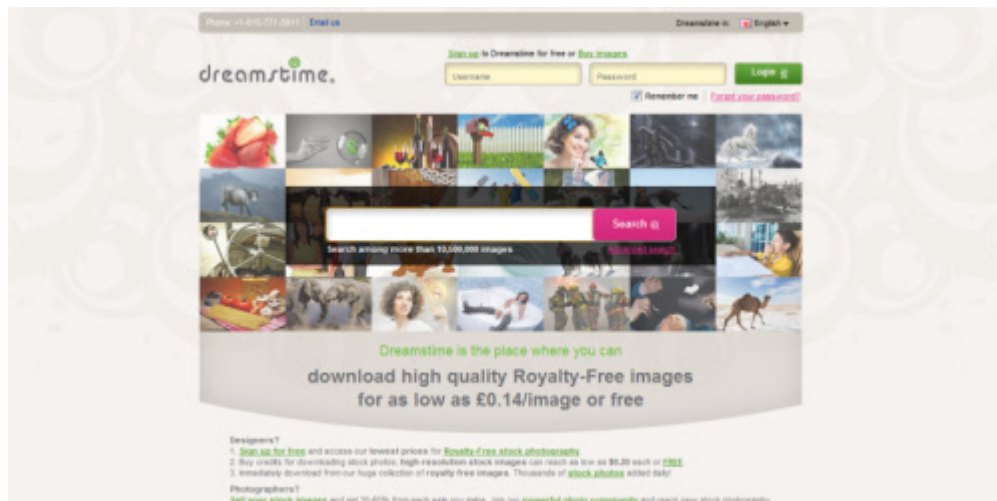
The exact requirements do vary between stock photography websites. So you will still need to take a look at individual websites, but here are what you should expect to meet:

- at least 3 megapixels (some ask for 4MP)
- saved at maximum quality
- minimum 300 DPI
- JPEG images
- RGB color formatting
- normal aspect ratios
- no technical imperfections at full size

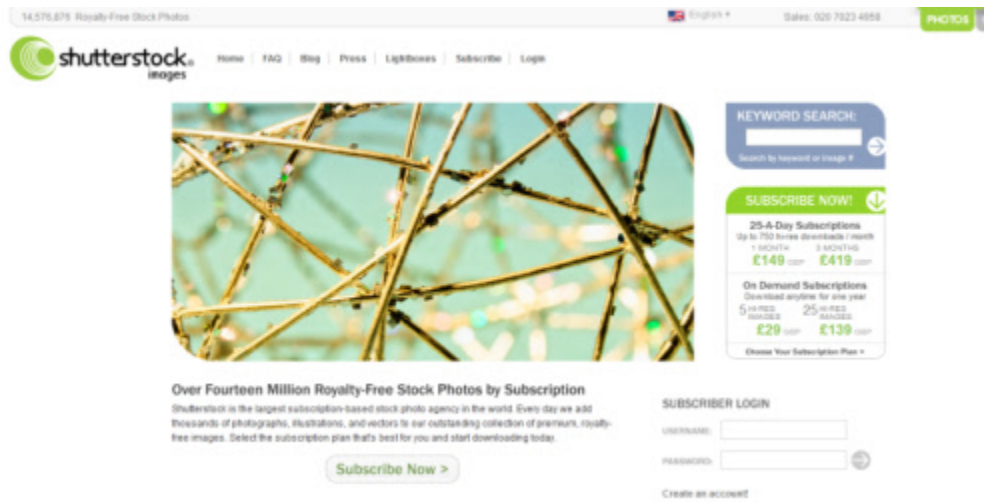
Chapter 4 - Where to Sell

There is a good choice of stock photography websites to sell from, and if you don't want to go exclusive to one you can choose to sell your work using more than one service. You will receive lower royalties per download that way but if you are able to sell more it may mean higher revenues for yourself. Check them out to see what you think. *Click titles to visit in your browser.*

Dreamstime

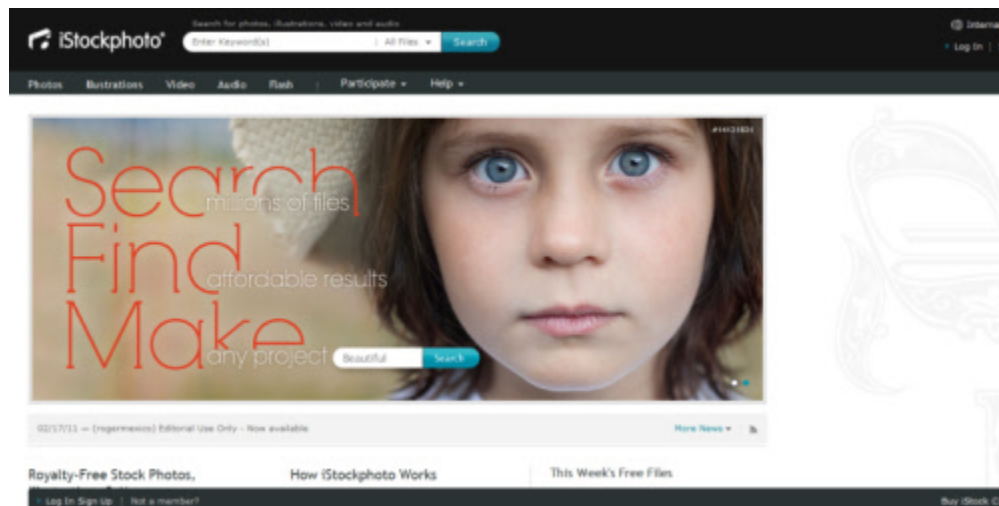


Shutterstock



The screenshot shows the Shutterstock website homepage. At the top, it displays '14,576,875 Royalty-Free Stock Photos' and navigation links for Home, FAQ, Blog, Press, Lightboxes, Subscribe, and Login. A large central image features a close-up of golden, tangled branches. To the right, there is a 'KEYWORD SEARCH' box and a 'SUBSCRIBE NOW!' section. The subscription section lists two plans: '25-4 Day Subscriptions' (up to 750 images/downloads/month for £149 or £419) and 'On Demand Subscriptions' (download anytime for one year for 5 images/25 images for £29 or £139). Below the main image, text states 'Over Fourteen Million Royalty-Free Stock Photos by Subscription' and includes a 'Subscribe Now >' button. A 'SUBSCRIBER LOGIN' form with fields for Username and Password is also visible.

iStockPhoto



The screenshot shows the iStockphoto website homepage. The top navigation bar includes 'iStockphoto', a search bar, and links for Photos, Illustrations, Video, Audio, Flash, Participate, and Help. The main content area features a large image of a young girl's face with the text 'Search millions of files', 'Find affordable results', and 'Make any project Beautiful'. Below this, there are links for 'Royalty-Free Stock Photos', 'How iStockphoto Works', and 'This Week's Free Files'. A 'Log In / Sign Up' link is also present.

These are some of the biggest stock photo communities, but if you don't like any of these you can search the web for others.

Chapter 5 - 49 Tips

Here we go, with the meat of the ebook! They are in no particular order.

First off are tips about the photos themselves and uploading.

- **Quality** - they won't get accepted if they aren't of a high-quality in the first place. The cream always rises to the top, quality will get recognized. People pay for quality.
- **Quantity** - the more you have the more available to sell. Important to focus on quality first, but long-term aim for a good quantity.
- **Multiple similar photos** - sometimes people are searching for an exact image. They want it at the correct angle, zoom, brightness etc. So if you are capturing something static, like a decorative candle, take a wide range of photos from different angles so a potential buyer has the choice. Don't go overboard though so the images are very similar or there is a huge amount of them, otherwise they will be rejected.
- **A little bit of editing** - often a bit of a touch up with photoshop can help increase sharpness, or remove glare or blur. Worth doing to get the absolute max out of images even if they already look good.

- **Focus on niche topics** - this may help build loyal downloaders, if you focus on taking photos related to fitness and a fitness blogger finds your photos they may keep using you in order to maintain consistent images in their blog posts. Mastering a niche will generally be more successful than taking all sorts of random photos in different niches.
- **Something different** - think outside of the box, you may take photos on a similar topic, but perhaps you can capture the magic of a subject better than everyone else? Different stands out.
- **Lots of tags** - make sure you attach plenty of tags to your photos once uploaded. These help searchers (who have to search thru millions of images) find your work.
- **Tag on topic** - although lots of tags are important, relevance is also key. There is no point tagging words unrelated. If you are struggling for words try using thesaurus.com to find related words. Be broad and very highly specific. Also remember different regions can spell words differently (for example, it is 'thru' in the USA, 'through' in the UK).
- **Good description** - another chance to use keywords. Describe the image accurately and be efficient with your words, don't mumble. Talk your work up, for example say; "*A fantastic capture of a gorgeous little kitten happily playing with a soft ball*" rather than "*Kitten plays with ball*". Do yourself justice.
- **Focus on location** - be location specific, EG 'canadian wilderness', some people search for location specific photos so say where it was taken, especially on landmarks, landscapes etc.

- **Topics people want** - no point taking photos of things people don't want. Look into categories and sub-categories to see what is popular.
- **Topics currently unsaturated** - things such as flowers are easily done and there are already millions of pictures out there of them, so avoid such saturated topics as it is likely to be a waste of time. Go for topics unsaturated where competition is lower.
- **Trends** - find what is currently popular. Using the news is a good way to do that. Some stock photo websites also have a 'popular' section where you can see images selling well.
- **Push what sells** - if you have a particular image, or few images, that seem to be selling particularly well (good conversion rate) then try and focus on it to see how you can push it further, perhaps more keywords, better description, to get even more sales of it. Take what is successful and run with it!
- **Price accordingly** - most people have budgets, if a downloader is on a very strict budget of \$2 and needs one image then that is what they will stick to, if yours cost \$5 at the cheapest they may go for an image slightly less perfect but adequate and within budget. So, pricing your images lower may result in higher sales meaning a higher total revenue. This is something to test though and see what you have most success with.

Now we have tips on the promotion of your own profile and individual photos. It is all about building a web presence so links to your profile get clicked by real people. A few of the tips do require money to put into action, the rest require your time but no money.

- **Use multiple stock photo websites** - you do get lower royalties for not being exclusive, at Dreamstime they pay different percentages based on exclusivity, upto 30% less for non-exclusivity if you are new. But if you are able to get higher sales it may work out you generate more revenue. More websites means more profiles, more potential customers, and more communities to join in with. Do the maths to see what you feel is best for you as it may not always be more profitable to use multiple sites (also remember the extra time it takes to maintain multiple profiles).
- **Join in the stock photo website communities** - some of them have forums, or hosted blogs which you can join in, get yourself involved so more people are aware of you.
- **Distribute freebies** - some websites provide photos to users for free, by uploading to these you would receive no financial benefit. But you are normally able to link to yourself in your profile so it can help you be seen by those looking for stock photos. Good ones are SXC and Flickr.
- **Offer paid images for free to authoratative sources** - you could contact powerful bloggers who have many readers and offer to let them use any of your photos which normally have to be paid for, but you will let them have it for free, provided

they put a very clear link saying thanks for the photo with a link to it for others to see your work. To find powerful bloggers to contact you can use Technorati or search the web with targetted terms.

- **Be active on stumbleupon** - if you haven't yet created an account there it is free to join, you then stumble other peoples work and can submit your own for others to either give the thumbs up or thumbs down. Don't spam though and only submit a select few of your best photos, and join in the rest of the community by commenting and voting.
- **Other social media sites** - there is a range of other social media sites such as Digg, Mixx and Reddit. These are all places you can join in the community, and then also submit a link to your own work. Once again don't spam, be active in the community for the best return on your time.
- **Facebook groups** - there are groups you can 'like' and comment on and get involved in, then include a link to your profile or a particular image. Once again; don't spam and be an honest contributor.
- **Twitter connections** - ever growing popularity, you can connect with other stock photographers and strike up conversations to help build your reputation. Tweet when you upload new sets of photos. To tweet images you can use services such as TwitPic, Yfrog, Plixi and Twitxr. All are quick and easy to use. In your image descriptions don't forget to put a link to your stock photo profile!

- **LinkedIn profile** - LinkedIn is basically a social network for business people. You create your profile and list your experience, skills and what you are looking for. You can link to your profile and show people your expertise and what you can offer to them. You can also join groups as in Facebook.
- **YouTube videos** - it doesn't have to only be galleries, you could even create a slideshow of amazing photos you've taken. Or the 'top 10' of a region you've visited. In the video description you can include a live link to your profile. It is yet another place to build a profile and connect with others.
- **Comment on photography blogs** - when you comment (only ever leave genuine comments and join in the discussion) there is often a field called 'URL' which then puts a link from your username to the URL. If you leave good comments displaying good knowledge people will be intrigued to see who you are and click on your link. Search the web and the blogosphere with highly targetted terms, "photography blog" is always a good place to start, to find relevant blogs.
- **Guest post on photography blogs** - as well as commenting some also allow posts by guests. Write something interesting and submit it to the blog owner to see if they will publish it, in return you get a short bio spot to link to your own work. Once again; search google and the blogosphere to find relevant blogs.
- **Join photography forums and message boards** - as well as expose your own work, you will find great information from others and learn a lot. So well worth doing for the array of

benefits, not just promotion.

- **Submit press releases** - it is better to use paid websites as the free press release websites don't have as much reach. Make sure with your press release it is genuine news, as the hope is real reporters pick your story up so it has to be something they can report on. As well as using mass distribution services such as [Prweb](#) and [24-7pressrelease](#) it is also good to submit your press release manually to targeted niche publications. If you can't write them yourself you can pay professional writers to do it.
- **Contact your local press** - if you live in a reasonably small area you could contact local press to see if they are interested in covering you. As with press releases you need news, so create a slant on your story. Perhaps you could be trying to beat a downturn in the economy, or the first person in your area to be selling photos to people around the world! Local press love to find good stories about local people so it is worth a quick phone call or email to see what they think.
- **Go to events** - You should be able to find photography events in your country, or regional area. Whether shows, events, or just groups it is worth getting involved to see what you can make happen and if you can get yourself out there more. Remember to hand out business cards.
- **Craigslist listing** - For each region, under 'community', they have an 'artists' section, there you can post about yourself and a link to your work.

- **Create a Squidoo lens** - on squidoo you could either create a profile page all about yourself and your work, including a slideshow. Or alternatively you could create informational pages and include a short bio about yourself with a link to your work. You can create as many lens as you want to.
- **Hubpages Page** - somewhat similar to squidoo you can create dedicated pages of information and once again link to yourself.
- **Contribute to Yahoo Answers** - helps others out by answering their questions. Once you have reached enough points you are able to include live links, when you help people out you can include a link to your profile so they see you are a professional and to be trusted.
- **Contribute to other 'Answers' websites** - As well as Yahoo there are others such as Answers.com and AolAnswers, similar to Yahoo they allow you to include links as you help others out. As always; be genuine, don't spam.
- **Publish articles** - there are lots of article directories you can submit articles to. Examples are Ezinearticles and Goarticles. At the bottom of the articles you are able to add a bio. Once again the aim is getting readers to see you so make sure what you create is top quality so they know you are trustworthy and worth looking at your work.
- **Testimonials / reviews** - some websites like to have testimonials to show how good there service is, if you are a regular customer of any in the photography niche see if they will accept a testimonial from you in return for your name being linked to your profile. Alternatively on some review websites

you can submit reviews of products and sometimes include a link. Perhaps review your photography equipment and show some photos taken with the equipment?

- **Submit your RSS feeds** - if you get supplied with an RSS feed of your photos on the stock photo website you use, there are sites (search the web for things like 'RSS directory') that let you submit your RSS feed to. Each time you upload new images this RSS feed will update and the directories will link to it, this will mean it gets indexed by the search engines and may increase the chance of people finding it by long-tail searches.
- **Email Signature Link** - create a signature link so all of your emails sent out to people have a link to your profile.
- **Have your own blog** - this is a lot of effort, you can set them up quickly and get a few links instantly from social media sites, but in terms of properly building the blog up so you have loyal readers takes many months of hard work posting content and promoting it. However if it goes well it can be well worth it and give you a real platform to promote yourself off and really stand out. But please bear in mind the amount of work, if you can't commit to it don't bother starting until you can commit. If you don't pay for the privilege early use a free service such as wordpress.com or [blogger](http://blogger.com).
- **Business Directories** - there are quite a few on the web, and some are free to list yourself in. Write about your stock photography services and put a link to your profile. Remember to put a good description and tag yourself well for maximum exposure.

- **Google Local Search** - when people search in google it sometimes shows results of local businesses. You can get yourself listed by visiting local.google.com and then on the left-hand side clicking the 'Put your business on Google Maps' link.
- **Google Adwords** - if you have the budget you could try paying to be at the top of google for certain search terms, the trick is to be highly specific and target long-tail terms so you only have to pay a small amount per click. For example you would NOT target 'stock images', but if you've taken photos of kitchen appliances you could target the term 'kitchen appliance stock photos', and if, for example, bloggers who write about domestic topics are searching for stock photos they may find you. You would get few clicks but they would be highly targetted so have a good chance of converting. Be careful though to monitor your money and ensure you are getting a good ROI.

Remember with the vast majority of these promotion techniques on their own they aren't going to get you oodles of sales, it is all about building web presence and getting your profile out there for the chance of people to find you. The knock-on effect may even be others are interested in working with you, or you doing a tailored job for them or other opportunities. So although many of these promotion tips may appear like they won't help much, if at all, they will contribute to your web presence and being found.

Here are a few other tips:

- **Never stop learning** - if you subscribe to blogs and join in forums you will be amazed at how you keep constantly learning more and more as time goes on. It also ensures you don't forget other important stuff.
- **Meet downloader needs** - you could offer your services to people who can't find the perfect stock image for what they need. They tell you what they want and you take those photos for them. You could promote your service via craigslist and other classified sites as well as your own blog, in business directories etc. To ensure you will benefit one way or another, make it clear to clients that you will take the photos to hopefully get the right one for them, and afterwards distribute them to continue to profit from them. This way your time isn't wasted should the client not accept the photos you take.
- **Offer other services** - if you have Photoshop or other photography related skills you could offer them on the site via your profiles (Facebook, LinkedIn, blog etc) to help people edit their own images or other stock images they've purchased. This may provide a bit of extra revenue for you and another person to connect with in the hope they may buy your stock images.
- **Collaborate with other professionals** - if you become friends (or already have some?) with others who work like you do perhaps you could join forces to work together creating images. 2 brains are better than 1 so you may come up with more ideas, share costs and bounce off each other.
- **Discounts for media firms** - if you build up a large portfolio of

stock images (thousands) you could try and contact firms who are likely to use a lot of stock images, let them know about yourself and if they wanted to use multiple images you could offer them a healthy discount to what they are regularly sold for.

Chapter 6 - Plan

Now you've read thru everything it is time to take your new found knowledge and draw up a full plan so you can start to expand your sales. As they always say "failing to plan, is planning to fail" so make sure you do come up with a plan of action.

Include dates in the plan for when you want to have completed certain tasks, be realistic but do push yourself to perform. Once each task is completed, tick it off and move on, you will soon see good progression - good luck!

THE END

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