

CAREER ADVICE

Are you planning on going pro and want some tips on where to start?

Have you got a career query for the Digital Photographer team?

Whether you're just starting out as a pro or you need to give your business a boost, we're armed and ready for your questions!

Email the team with your question at dphelp@dphotographer.co.uk or mail us at the following address: Digital Photographer Career Advice, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth BH2 6EZ

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Send us in your questions for some expert advice...

THIS ISSUE: Planning on going pro? Let expert photographer John Hicks guide you on your way...



Having extra hands on deck was an absolute necessity in this magazine shoot I did for US Men's Vogue

In need of assistance

Q I've recently set myself up as a fashion, sports and wedding photographer offering bespoke editorial-style packages in my local area, and my business is slowly starting to take off. But with the increased workload comes the need for an extra hand on deck. As I'm not based in London, I'm having difficulties trying to hire an assistant. I was wondering if you have any advice on how to go about finding a good one?

Tanya Evans

A A good photo assistant is absolutely invaluable for your shoots and, honestly, you will struggle without one. The internet is a great resource for finding people, and I've seen top-level professional photographers advertising on their Twitter and Facebook pages for local assistants, so it's definitely worth a try. Local photography colleges are probably your best bet, though, and you should get in touch with students and recent graduates looking to gain experience in the field. You should also put the word out at local camera stores, studios and photography clubs. Once you set the search in motion it will gather momentum and you'll find contacts who can recommend assistants to work with.

If possible, I would always advise doing a light test with any new assistant before the actual job so you can get to know each other and figure out if you will work well together as a team.

Last-minute lens hire

Q I've just got hold of a last-minute photo pass for a sporting event, but don't have the budget to buy a new lens in time. Can I hire one locally? What are the requirements for hiring in additional equipment? How does it work with camera insurance? Am I liable in the event of an accident or any damage to the lens?

Richard Jarvis

A Hiring equipment is a great way to complete a job and/or improve your personal portfolio without breaking your budget, and many photographers carry the most basic equipment and hire in as necessary as this ensures your gear is always up to date.

If you are located close to a big city then many of the major camera retail stores will also offer a rental facility, but it's just as easy to use one of the many internet-based companies that have sprung up in recent years, like LensPimp and hirecamera.com, to get gear delivered direct to your door.

Generally, you need to leave a credit card (much like you do when hiring a car), and this is debited once

the equipment is thoroughly checked on its return. While the equipment is usually fully insured by the hire company, it pays to take good care of it as you may be held liable in the event of any negligence on your part.



Many professional photographers choose to hire lenses rather than carry them in their kit



When hiring equipment either in the UK or abroad, make sure you customise the settings to your own personal preferences prior to the actual shoot day

Holiday hire

Q I've recently been commissioned to shoot a brief in Portugal and was wondering if it's possible to hire photographic and lighting kit abroad, or should I rent it in the UK and take it with me? How do I go about hiring gear in a foreign country?

Joseph Spencer

A These days, with the restrictions imposed on hand and hold luggage, it's almost always cheaper to hire local equipment. Also, many countries outside the EU require you by law to fill out a carnet of goods. This can be expensive and time-consuming – especially if you're bringing in a lot of gear.

For my commercial jobs abroad I'm lucky enough to always have a production company to help fulfil the brief, but I started out doing it all myself. I know that these days the internet can find you anything you want, so look there and also check out reputable companies like ProductionParadise and The Association of Photographers for contacts.

Remember that rental gear takes a real beating, so *always* check your gear prior to the job and make sure you've readjusted any menu settings to your own preferences before you start shooting.



This advertising campaign I shot for the RNLI was all done with a customised EWA marine soft underwater housing

A watertight option

Q I am currently planning an underwater photography shoot and want to use my own camera equipment but need to hire the housing. I'm overwhelmed by the options and want to be absolutely sure it's safe to put my expensive camera gear in.

Ben Atkinson

A Being overcautious by nature, my advice is to always hire a separate camera body and lens to put in your rented underwater housing. If you do the maths on a short-term hire, it's just not worth the risk to your own personal equipment. And the added peace of mind frees you up creatively to really go for your shots.

Having said that, there are great companies like Scubacam4hire, hirecamera.com and Camararent,

who guarantee the safety of your gear while using their housings.

Underwater housings come as either a hard or a soft casing, and it just depends on your brief which one you choose for the job. Soft housings are great if you are working around the surface of the water and you have reasonable control over the elements. I used one for an advertising campaign I shot for the RNLI and it worked perfectly. But if you're diving to any depth below the surface, or are in unpredictable conditions, you'll need a hard casing like the Liquid Eye or the Ikelite. You may also want to price up the GoPro – a fantastic little underwater camera at a great price that really nails shots in water, but be wary of its very wide-angle lens as it doesn't always flatter your subject matter.

“Always hire a separate body and lens to put in your rented underwater housing. It's not worth the risk to your equipment”

The BIG? Question

We ask John Hicks where he thinks the future of photography is heading...

I'm constantly asked what side I'm on (traditional or digital), and if I think the internet has improved the creative culture of photography. “When you leave everything to the crowd, where everything is democratised, when everything is determined by the number of clicks, you are by definition undermining the seriousness of the artistic endeavour,” says internet historian Andrew Keen in his forthcoming film *PressPausePlay*. The digital revolution of the last decade has unleashed creative productivity in an unprecedented way and opened doors for amateurs that were previously reserved exclusively for professionals.

But does democratised culture mean better art, film, music and literature, or is true talent flooded and drowned in the vast digital ocean of mass culture? While I'll admit that it can sometimes seem overwhelming to have your work pitched up against a 12-year-old's on YouTube, I have to agree with the curators of group photography show *From Here On*:

“Now, we're all a series of editors,” they say. “We all recycle, clip and cut, remix and upload. We can make images do anything. All we need is an eye, a brain, a camera, a phone, a laptop, a scanner, a point of view... We're making more than ever, because our resources are limitless and the possibilities endless...”

We all have to embrace the future because we just can't ignore it. Don't whinge about what's lost so much as go and find new toys to play with and amazing creative possibilities to explore and enjoy – that's my advice.



John working on location in Patagonia, Chile

SUBMIT YOUR CAREER QUESTIONS: If you are starting a new career in photography or you feel like your business is in need of a

boost, then get in touch with your questions and we'll answer them here. Email team@dphotographer.co.uk