How to Use Visuals to Strengthen Your Marketing Copy
CAMPUS BASED DESIGNS

We acknowledge that you may be tasked with creating communications for various campus events that may not directly involve the Marketing Department. This presentation will provide you with some useful criteria to consider when developing visuals for those materials.

Much of this information is particularly relevant if used in conjunction with our template system. Keeping these basic aesthetic criteria in mind will help you get the most out of your key visual.

The Office of Marketing and Brand Management is currently developing updated and improved templates that will be available in January 2015.
“A picture is worth a thousand words,” the saying goes. No matter what you’re designing, an image can grab a viewer’s attention and deliver your message better than just carefully crafted text.

With the affordability of high-quality, royalty-free imagery—wherein one fee grants you unlimited usage for promotional purposes—you have no excuse not to use imagery in your designs, even if you can’t create it yourself. Here are the kinds of images to look for and how to use them for greater impact.
You have precious few moments to grab someone’s attention, so use unusual, powerful, and colorful imagery (and when appropriate, humorous imagery). If you can’t snag a person’s attention, they won’t read your text.
PAIRING THE RIGHT IMAGE WITH YOUR TEXT

If you’re promoting an event, person, place, or thing, you’ll want to anchor that key image prominently in your design. For example, when you’re promoting a speaker for your computer club, feature that person’s photo. When you’re touting a course or event, pair a “themed” image with a clear headline explaining what it is and why they should attend. This visual and verbal juxtaposition ultimately helps your audience visualize what and why they’re attending, which boosts attendance.

Save the Date!
Thursday, February 12, 2015
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Sullivan Gym, Falmouth St., Portland Campus

As part of our mission as Maine’s Metropolitan University,” the USM Job Fair offers networking opportunities for students and employers. As a participant you’ll enjoy meeting prospective employers and delivering your resume into their hands.

Whether you are a first year student, a senior, a graduate student or an alum, this event could help you find a job or internship. Come dressed to impress and have your photo taken for your LinkedIn account. Attend a cover letter/resume workshop and enter your name for various raffles.

Industries attending the 2015 Job Fair include Consumer Products, Government Agencies, Healthcare, Insurance, Museums, Public Safety, Social & Human Services, Technology and Textiles, with more registering each day.

To learn more visit: usm.maine.edu/job-fair
Questions? Contact Stacy Stewart,
Community Engagement & Career Development:
(207) 228-8156 or via email at careers@usm.maine.edu

We look forward to seeing you there!
CHOOSING & USING PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography and graphics are an essential element to many of our communications materials. Our goal is to have all of our public-facing materials consistently present USM as a professional and quality institution. In addition, photography or other graphic elements must support or strengthen the written message. To achieve these goals, it’s important that we use the clearest, most-relevant images in our materials. The following guidelines are important to reference when selecting images to use: **It’s essential we use the best images possible to support the main message of any communication.**

As a general rule, we prefer not to use stock images. If the appropriate image isn’t in our library, and a stock image must be used, don’t use “posed” or unnatural images like below.

A few good examples

*Note no one is looking at the camera*
A FEW THINGS TO AVOID

In the continuing effort to create professional looking communications, there are certain criteria to consider if an image is usable. When choosing an image, ask yourself:

- Is it in focus?
- Is it over or underexposed?
- Is it remotely interesting?
- Do people look like they’re enjoying themselves?
- Has it been badly photoshopped?

<—Note the flopped text
EDITING IMAGES

Sometimes the right photo is “within” an existing photo and must be edited to get the most out of the image. Editing can be achieved in a variety of ways.

Many times a truly impactful image is hiding within one that isn’t. **Cropping** can help create a better overall composition by focusing the viewer’s eye to the main point of interest by removing the less interesting elements from the image. Here are a couple of examples how this works:
EDITING IMAGES

Cropping can also be used to change the overall shape or "aspect ratio" of an image.

Original

There are several free online services where you can modify your images. pixlr.com is one good example
EDITING IMAGES

Another way to edit a photo, while also reinforcing our brand is to use colored filters/overlays to stylize the photography and give it a “USM flair”. See the university's color palette options on p.8 of the USM style guide at usm.maine.edu/marketing

This technique is extremely effective when using black and white or “vintage” images.

This is the original image used for the cover of the Brand Book. To the right is the “treated” version.
COMBINING IMAGES AND TEXT

When preparing artwork for an event, keep in mind the purpose of the communication - to pique interest and compel attendance. Don’t try to squeeze in every possible detail into something that gets scanned for a second or two. Otherwise, your communication can end up looking like a crammed Sunday circular – certainly not an image we as a university want to present!
BEST PRACTICES

A good rule of thumb is to keep it simple. Keep the information clear and easy to read.

When promoting events, the most important elements for people to see are:

• What the event is
• Why they should go
• When it is taking place
• Where it’s taking place.

The examples below were visuals created to be inserted into the posters on our online template system.
PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

As you’ll see in the below examples, stock imagery was used. It was cropped, the color was altered to “USM Blue”, and additional graphic elements were used in the layout to highlight key information.
QUESTIONS?

Thank you