



## Examples of Lifestyle Copywriting

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### Contents

#### **Photography Blog:**

'So, You Want To Do Your Own Product Photography?' ..... Page 1-6

#### **Beauty & Bridal Blog:**

Our Top 2020 Bridal Hair and Make-up Trends ..... Page 7-11

#### **Camping Blog:**

Can You Take Your Dog Camping? ..... Page 12-13

As a total novice photographer myself, writing for a photographer's blog means I am extremely thorough in my research. It is very important to me to be giving the advice a professional would. In addition, my client has a very natural and personable way of communicating on paper and so I have tried to emulate this, as well as his gentle sense of humour. It is one of the many joys of lifestyle copywriting, that I get the opportunity to learn a subject thoroughly enough to be able to dispense professional advice, undetected.

# So, You Want To Do Your Own Product Photography?

2 October 2020

Great. Give me five minutes and let me share with you some of my experience and most prized advice. Whether you're just starting your business or whether you're established but want to take the reigns of your product photography, then you'll need to take some time first to make some key decisions. Because these WILL directly affect your brand and ultimately, your product sales. If a picture paints a thousand words then the importance of how your product appears in images can not be underestimated.

So, firstly let's dispel the myth that anyone with a camera phone can take a decent photo. Actually, wait - that's true. But, it doesn't mean that just anyone can create a great image. And that's what we're doing with product photography. You're selling a desire for your product through the lens.

Awesome. Now we accept how important this is then, let's deconstruct what it takes to build the perfect picture and hopefully, through this process I can help you to make some key decisions regarding how you approach capturing your products in their best light - that's a little photography pun there for you. I can't promise it'll be the last!



## Style By Association

Ok. Pick a random object! A pen perhaps? Now imagine a host of different people of differing ages, interests and walks of life, standing in front of the W H Smiths stationary section. Which pen does each of them choose? Probably the pack of value biros will be snatched up quickly by someone in scruffier clothes or a uniform possibly because they are practical - style doesn't matter. Only function. However, the woman with the perfect hair, high heels and suit jacket will be more likely to select the rose gold parker pen. For her, appearance is important. She understands that to be taken seriously it is important to create the right impression. Then you'll get the kids who go immediately for the smelly gel pens because they are far more fun. They have an enviable joy for such things. What you don't do here is try to get the kid to buy the posh parker pen, or get the scruffy guy to care about whether his pen is blueberry bubblegum scented.

The right product for the right person, right? So who's the right person for your product? Having a clear idea of this is going to help you make choices about backdrops, colours, lighting and - well - everything really! Nothing wrong with creating a mood board at this stage.

The point is, if you're going to shoot your product against a backdrop what colour will it be? Perhaps bright pink if your product is likely to be purchased by the bold type. Or black maybe, if it's for a professional person or traditional business environment?

If you're going to shoot your product in use, then knowing your customer is even more important. For example, let's say you have created an eco-friendly, all-natural bath oil and you want to shoot it in a bathroom setting. That makes sense, that's where it's likely to be used. But, what does your likely purchaser's bathroom look like? If they're environmentally conscious then they probably don't have a load of plastic kids bath toys in the background. More likely they'll have a few plants and a filter shower head. Don't underestimate the effect of seeing a product in a setting that is either familiar or aspirational to the target consumer.

You also need to be realistic about your target audience. If you're selling a home security system, for example, then I'm sorry but it's more likely to be used by a middle-aged couple with

kids, than a hot photogenic 20-year-old. This is not to say you can't give your target customer a slight upgrade. Advertising is about offering your target market a silent promise that their life will be better with your product. So show an airbrushed version of their lives. Disclaimer alert - not actually condoning airbrushing here! I mean, if they're likely to own a green velvet sofa from made.com, then give them the John Lewis version for the purposes of creating a slightly elevated version of their reality.

## Consistency Is Key

Why are you still reading this and not shooting your products? Because you're smart, that's why! You know that if you don't get this right the first time it's going to require a hell of a lot more work to fix it. Did you know that when Richard Branson created Virgin he used a red biro to write the name upon a restaurant napkin during a meeting, and that became the logo they still use today? Ok, so that might sound like an example of winging it and getting away with it. But actually it's a classic example of keeping it simple and getting it right. In Virgin's case - elegant and accessible. So they've been using this same logo for years and years. It's never changed, even though their products and services have been through many changes, their style never has. Timelessness sells because it's a good investment.

So, allow me to walk you through your next choice. To your right, a door labelled 'static studio shots'. To your left, a door labelled 'products in use'. These are the two types of product photography you'll most often see.

Studio shots are the product by itself, usually against a white backdrop, although simple backdrops that represent the tone of your brand can be used. This is an approach suited to great design where the detail or simplicity of the item calls out to be showcased. The iPhone, for instance, has always been shot this way because it underpins the brand's claim that they are the leaders in design. Which is odd, when you think about it. Because surely technology is more about function? Or, is that extremely smart because, amongst the raised voices of numerous tech companies arguing over who has the best performing product, Apple simply said - 'see how cool our product looks'. And many will argue that Apple products also are superior in performance, but note, they've never tried to sell anything that way. Almost as if leaving it unsaid was more powerful. The image of the Macbook that was slim enough to fit in a handbag felt futuristic. Instead of listing its many many futuristic features, it went for the simplest UPS - 'Look, it fits in your handbag. Now, can't you imagine owning it?' The point here is that static studio shoots allow your products to speak for themselves, without distraction.

Products in use can also be very influential but they can be a bit harder to achieve. Not least because people and settings may be involved too. It gives you a hell of a lot more to consider. And you really need to know your target audience too. There are more opportunities to make mistakes but you'll also be more in control of the brand here so if you get it right you'll have a strong streamlined sense of identity.

Make sure that your product is still the focus. If you're selling bridal jewellery, for example, don't show a photo of a bride in full because people will generally focus on the dress, not your product. There are, however, techniques you can use to sell your product through association, which we explored a little above. For example, you'll often see art prints pictured within a room setting, usually above a sofa. It seems a peculiar thing to do with art, doesn't it? Because art should stand on its own. What the seller knows though is that they aren't really selling art, they're selling style. The person who attributes their style with that of the feminine 1950s style chaise lounge will wonder if that means the art print on the wall above that sofa is also for them. It's a very effective method - to place your product besides other products your target customer would admire. This works with activities too. There is a jewellery seller whose products are made from sea glass and shells. So she pictures her products being worn by surfers. She's found a market she wants to sell to and created images like a calling card - 'dude, this jewellery is for your tribe'. Of course, long-distance shots of girls riding waves do not emphasise her products, so what you'll see is a ringed hand holding a surfboard, or fingertips skirting waves, the colours of which bring out the colours of the stones used in the rings.

Whichever style you use, consistency is key. For static studio product photography, I highly recommend using a tripod to keep your photographs uniform. Picture them beside one another on your Instagram feed. See how it can feel more creative to make each photo unique, but it doesn't work when you look at the bigger picture?

If you're going to invest in a tripod then it makes sense to choose one that tackles another problem at the same time, and that's light. So, you've placed a light somewhere out of shot to brighten up your product, but your pictures still don't look like the ones in the magazines and on Amazon. Right, so yes you've done the right thing by using light to brighten up and highlight your product. But it needs something to bounce off, or else it's too harsh. The shadows are too strong and distract from the item you want to present. There are many ways to tackle this problem, but if you're not wanting to invest in a load of pricy equipment that's a bugger to store, then you might want to consider a ring light. These diffuse light evenly and some, such as the Uphotnis below, are built into highly practical iPhone tripod stands.



Uphitnis Ring Light Tripod

Even with 'products in use' shots, it is important to standardize them. You can absolutely NOT use a filter on one picture if you're not going to use the same filter on all of them. And if you're going to use a background then use the same one or a couple of versions of the style at the most. Backgrounds can be created from really simple items, such as two pieces of coloured card.

Ah - and here's another secret. You don't have to choose between static studio shots and products in use. You can do both. Double down, baby! Only be selective about where and when you use each. For Etsy perhaps you go with all studio shots so your consumers can see your products really clearly. On Instagram perhaps you mix it up. Create a grid that showcases both and makes your profile a bit more interesting.

### **Creative Does Not Mean Complicated**

Great - you're still here. I realise there's a lot more theory here than practical advice, but that's because there are many gadgets out these days that can help you take a cool, well lit, well-composed photograph. What it doesn't buy you is the mind of a photographer. So, if I can share with you a bit of the theory behind product photography then you can perfect your technique next.

So, is a product photographer a creative or a marketer? Well, the truth is that they have to be both. Here's why. Effective marketing has to have both impact and persuasion to lead to sales. The photograph has to be strong enough to make an impact as someone scrolls through their Instagram feed, or flips through a magazine (side note - hire a professional if you're going to have your product pictured in print). If it doesn't make an impact, it's not going to get noticed. Then it has to communicate use or purpose. This is easier to do with products in use photographs, however, the purpose of a product on a white background with nothing else can

simply be - it's shiny. Or it's bright pink and that makes me happy. So, to consider all this you'll be screwing on your marketing head. To deliver it though, you'll need to be creative. And creativity is most effective when it's simple. Let's take the below images. They couldn't be simpler, so why are they so cool? Because this is the subtext: This product is so bold - that it stands out - even when the background is the same colour.



If your image is too complicated it's so unlikely to be effective.

So here is my ultimate advice. Your reward for having read through all my rambling.

Ready?

Here it is: Start with the subtext.

One sentence that is the unconscious thought you want to project in your image, then work backwards from there. That's how you create an image that sells a product.

Incidentally, I'm a product photographer and I'm not too shabby, I have to say. So if all the above sounds like a major faff then let's chat about how I can relieve you of this hassle, and create a visually stunning album of your products that'll have your sales skyrocketing!

I wrote a series of blogs for a bridal hair and make-up company. The blog was a great tool to bring traffic into the website and also to bring back subscribers each month through an email marketing campaign. In fact, over 40% of website traffic was acquired through the blog. This directly drove bookings for bridal hair and make-up services.

## Our Top 2020 Bridal Hair and Make-up Trends

Fashion and styling over the years have evolved, changed, seen many trends come and go and sometimes come back again and bridal hair and make-up style is no different.

As bridal hair and make-up artists, Betty Lou knows the most important aspect of any part of any wedding is that it is personal to the bride and groom and representative of their relationship past and future together. So what's 'in-fashion' is not necessarily going to be a high priority. We also advocate for timeless style for your wedding so that your photographs and memories always make you feel great and do not become dated. However, when considering the look you want to aspire to you on your wedding day, the internet has been a haven for brides-to-be. So we have researched and found some of the hottest trends 2020 [bridal hair and make-up](#) that we believe are not only fabulous but will remain stylish and fresh for years to come.

### Natural Coverage

The natural look will never go out of style. A powerful and perhaps controversial statement for the culture of structured selfies, fake tan and heavy make-up trends such as we see on TOWIE and across the media. Yet, most of us aspire to be beautiful in a way that eludes minimal effort.



Achieving this, however, is not always as easy as it may seem. Make-up is designed to minimise flaws, not mask them and applying make-up in a way that does this is a real craft. Consider a [professional make-up artist](#) to bring out your skin's genuine luminosity.



Above all though, the advice that all of our make-up artists will give first, no matter what look you are going for but particularly if you want the natural look, is take care of your skin. In the lead-up to your wedding make your skincare regime a priority. It's not just what you put on your skin either. Your skin will love you for eating your greens and keeping it hydrated with plenty of water.

### Crown Braids



This one was just waiting for a comeback. With up-dos always being classic and with the bohemian trend having been flowing strong for a couple of decades now, crown braids have fused the two. Pretty without being too girly, intricate without looking at all fussy, this loose looking up-do is soft, romantic and timeless. Perfect for outdoor weddings where you want to look a bit boho but want to keep your locks out of reach of the wind.



Want to try out crown braids? Book a [Wedding Hair Trial](#) with Betty Lou.

### Talking Straight

We're pretty sure that curls will never go out of fashion for bridal hair. They're soft, feminine and romantic. However, straight hair is set to have a big year (at least). We're seeing more and more straight hairstyles in the magazines and on the runway.



Straight hair is smooth, shiny and sophisticated. Simple, yes, but simplicity is also natural beauty. So if you are lucky enough to have hair in good condition, consider the sleek straight look. As it's natural, it also means it's not ever going to be out of style.

### Ribbons and Bows

That's right bows are back. The catwalks are laced with ribbon and bows and there's no getting away from them in 2020. In fact, padded, velvet and big are the preferred choices. Get it wrong and you could end up looking a Harajuku girl, but get it right and you'll pull off classic feminine

style with a taste of showstopping.



Betty Lou loves a bride with a hair accessory or two and can style your hair around it. [Book a trial with us](#) and we can experiment with what you've got or even help you choose based on the hairstyle you're after.

### Think Pink!

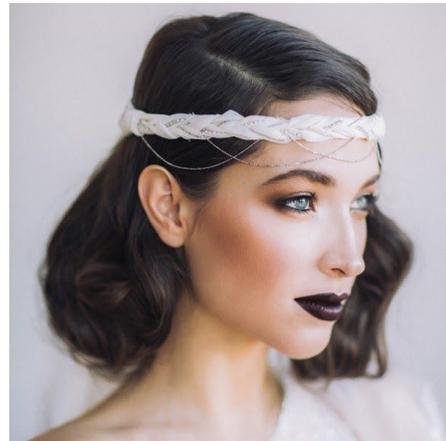
Ok, so this one's not new but that's a good sign. Pink in the past has gotten a bad reputation of being overtly girly or 'young', but thanks to some real experts in the beauty world pink have seen a well-deserved comeback and have been rebranded. The right shades of pink for your skin tone can bring out your natural glow, highlight the blush in your cheeks and be both subtle and striking, depending on which style you prefer.



Finding the right shades for your skin tone is key to getting it right with the rose glow look. [Book a trial](#) with Betty Lou so we can help you find the perfect tone for your [bridal make-up](#).

## The Bold Type

It's an old misconception that a bold lip is only for the most outgoing. Strong lipsticks are everywhere right now but they never really go out of fashion. What's changing this year is that people are realising that red is not the only option. Dark styles are in and they include burgundy and plum. We are Betty Lou are celebrating the sticky glossed lip look of the 90s being left behind as somewhat a fashion faux pa and we are embracing this classic striking look.



One of the best things about a strong lip colour is that everything else can, and should be, minimal. So this statement goes great with the barely-there foundation look.

Perfect this look with help from Betty Lou. Book your [wedding make-up trial](#) today.

Copywriting for a Bell Tent Retailer, I was tasked to focus on bringing in traffic through writing

a series of blogs that would attract both seasoned and prospective campers. The goal was to produce articles that would answer some of the most camping related search enquires. The client left me to content plan, write and upload the blog articles with a large focus on SEO and building brand reputation as a family business inspired by a love of luxury camping. This is one of the shorter blog articles.

## Can you take your dog camping?

The short answer is yes. Although each campsite sets its own rules so it's important to check that the site allows dogs before you book.

The longer answer is yes you can take your dog camping, but should you? It's important to consider and be honest about your dog's personality and traits. If your dog is aggressive with other dogs or nervous around lots of people they might not be suitable for a camping trip. Also, a dog that barks through the night - won't win you any friends.

However, a well-trained friendly dog can make your camping or glamping experience even more wonderful. It's the perfect setting to spend time with your four-legged-friend, exploring the countryside together. Whether it's just the two of you or whether they're coming as an essential member of the family, it's quite likely that your dog may well enjoy the camping experience the most!



First time taking your dog camping? Why not give it a test run in the garden? That way, your

dog can experience sleeping in a tent before you commit to a full weekend away.

You'll also be in an unfamiliar place, so it may be a good idea to brush up on **key commands** such as 'heel' and 'come' since you might find your pup overexcited to have new scenery to explore. On which note, ensuring **chips and tags** are up to date is essential. It's also a good idea to check where the **nearest vet** to the campsite is based, and save the number. Just in case your dog decides to eat something they shouldn't or gets anything nasty stuck in a paw.

Consider where your dog is going to sleep. **Dog tents** are available but not right for every dog as they may prefer to be with you. **Bell tents** and other larger tents are great for dogs, because of the extra space and height. Some dogs also settle better if it's possible to bring their **dog bed** from home.



It can be tempting, when camping, to feed your dog what you're eating or spoil them with **extra treats**. It's their holiday too, right? But before you do, just consider - do you want to risk the scent of dog sick in your tent? It may best to stick to your dog's regular food.

Padding through the woods, over streams and rolling around in the countryside is a dog's dream and let's face it, having a dog with you on your walks just makes it so much better. So **make sure you make the most of this time** with your pal.

Just remember to bring **lots of towels** for all that mud. No matter how well behaved your dog is, they can't take their shoes off in the tent.