

Australia's Best Value Publication for All Digital Photographers

# Better Digital

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Pro Feature:

**Shooting  
STOCK**

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Using  
**Vector tools**  
to make

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**Serif Home  
Creativity**  
to be won!

Understanding  
**Blu-ray**

# Stock Standard

US stock photographer  
**CHARLIE BORLAND**  
writes about shooting  
stock for a living...

Many aspiring photographers desire to market and sell their work. The ultimate compliment to photographers comes when someone pays for the use of their images. Many professionals consider selling stock photography an integral part of their business plan. They often make a nice supplemental income. Some even make a full time living. For those wishing to enter the market, careful planning makes for a smoother and more profitable entrance.





The stock photo industry has experienced massive change in the last 10 years comprised of agency consolidation, the emergence of many small startup agents, and more photographers than ever entering the business. This leads many of my workshop students to ask if they can “really make money?” The answer is a resounding “Yes,” as the markets are bigger than ever for selling photographs. However, the days of walking around looking for ‘pretty pictures’ are over. Those photographers earning the most income operate as a business, carefully planning what, where, and how to shoot their subjects. They have researched markets, analysed current trends, and produced photo shoots by using models, props and authentic locations.

### Getting started

Stock photography is extremely competitive. Being a good photographer is not enough to guarantee success. You have to be an **incredible photographer with good images, a good**



### marketing plan, and a great business sense.

The first place to start is to determine what your product is and where it fits into the market. Like all businesses, your image files are a product line that you must sell to your clients in order to have a profitable enterprise. To get started, ask yourself: What do I love to photograph? Who buys what I love to photograph? How will I sell these people what I love photograph?

Specialist or a generalist? Most photographers are generalists and enjoy photographing many different subjects. The nature, landscape, and travel photographer might photograph the mountains, lakes, and river scenery of a region, but also capture the river rafters, boating, and downhill skiing. Since photography is a creative pursuit where looking for the next great photo is the motivation, the generalist might also snap the neighborhood children, an antique car exhibition, and the local fair. The generalist has a few images of a lot of different subjects and this can make sales more difficult.





## Pro Technique

dating, hanging out with friends, or being active in school have multiple markets. Retired people living the good life are much in demand and could include subjects such as hiking, cruising, dining, sailing, tennis, and golf. A typical client seeking retirement photos could be an investment firm. They would use images of active retirees in their company promotions to make the point that if you invest with them early on, you will be comfortable in your retirement years.

Business and industry is another high demand subject. As technology changes on a daily basis, the need for people in business using these new tools is in constant demand. Business people using the latest cell phones, Blackberries, and computer systems will quickly find markets. In addition, people at work, business meetings, and employees working together are salable subjects. There is a continual need for images of industry showing different manufacturing processes such as automobile assembly, high-tech clean rooms, electronics manufacturing, clothing production, and much more. And when photographing industry, consider other angles such as photographing industry as

being 'green' or environmentally responsible. Clean air and water, land restoration, or planting new trees in the forest are all very marketable.

Sports and recreation subjects have many markets, including a magazine for just about every type of recreational sport and hobby. Snowboarding, kayaking, football, leisure walking, and many more all have a magazine dedicated to the activity. The advertising and marketing of companies and businesses also use sports and recreation images. An insurance company, for example, might use an image of a rock climber in an advertisement under the headline, "Reduce your risk, insure with us." There are many more very marketable subjects including: nature, wildlife, travel, medical, transportation, health care, homes and gardens, and technology. The subjects available for the stock photographer are limitless and making the decision as to what to photograph should be determined by your strengths and interests.

### Stock concepts

Stock photos are often successful because they

immediately. Full e-commerce sites will make the sale for you while you are exactly where you want to be, out shooting. Companies such as [www.ktools.net](http://www.ktools.net) and [www.lightboxphoto.com](http://www.lightboxphoto.com) create software that allows you to easily set up a stock photo website for convenient downloads and purchases.

The stock photo business is wide open for new talent and the digital world makes it easier. With the internet, the world is your market! There is still plenty of money to be made for all involved and at every level. Stock photography is not going to make you rich, but it is a rich vocation. It provides an opportunity to follow your passion for photography and make some money, rewarding you for your efforts. Success comes from your dedication, business planning, talent and vision, and your desire.

Do you have what it takes?

exclusively for established shooters and are always open to new photographers. They are as much interested in what you can photograph in the future as what you've photographed in the past. Their primary concern is how much you are going to shoot and how high the quality will be. If you shoot what everybody else shoots and you shoot it in the same way, you probably won't get in. You must have the volume of imagery for an agent to represent you and the ability to keep generating it. The agent's next consideration will be what subjects you shoot and whether they are subjects already well covered. So photographing a subject in a different way will increase your chances of being accepted. To search for a photo agency visit the website [www.pacaoffice.org](http://www.pacaoffice.org) for a global listing of photo agents.

Most photographers also market and sell their own imagery. This can be done the old fashioned way - selecting slides from the files and shipping them to the customer, or by using digital methods, such as shipping a CD, or even better, online delivery. A simple approach is to have a web photo gallery such as those offered by [www.webgalleryhost.com](http://www.webgalleryhost.com). These sites display your stock photographs, are easily managed and when a client calls, you can deliver the image and accept payment online. Full e-commerce websites are going to become more popular since speed means everything, and especially in the world of advertising and design, expediency is critical. Everybody wants it yesterday! A client may find an image on your site and want to purchase it

