



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS ASSOCIATION

Photography Standard

BSA Standard 04-12

Effective Date: October 1, 2012

Table of Contents

- **Purpose**
- **Goals and Objectives**
- **Proposed Standard**
- **Technical Specifications**
- **Best Practices**
- **Implementation**

A. Purpose:

The purpose is to establish a common standard for creation of product images thereby creating value for members of the industry.

The intent of this standard is to define the industry's best practice as it relates to the creation and usage of images within a specific company and / or among multiple supply chain member companies for a common project. The primary benefit of this project is increase the overall quality of product imagery as compelling content drives product sales and company revenue. Conversely, if product imagery is poorly crafted, it can silently cost business and market share.

B. Goals and Objectives:

This material is intended for members of the supply chain who wish to create and/or use photography in their printed media, on their web sites and/or other applications.

The goal is to provide:

1. Reference for technical standards and guidelines to facilitate the best quality photography of each item to drive efficient cross-media publishing.

2. Best practices to ensure consistent execution of product photography which will result in more compelling product imagery and decreased image processing timeframes.
3. This common standard will be adhered to by the supply chain including the wholesale community, independent dealers, buying groups, product manufacturers and other interested parties.

C. Proposed Standard:

The proposed standard is to move all new image creation to the .tif or .eps format with a minimum size of 1800 x 1800 at 300 DPI. The .jpeg format for existing images will continue to be accepted until deemed unacceptable by the BSA Content Management Task Force (with the understanding that all new images must be created as .tif or .eps formats).

D. Technical Specifications:

The following technical requirements must be adhered to in the creation of product images:

Image	
Size	The minimum standard is 1800 x 1800 at 300 DPI. Images should not be upsized through interpolation from a lower resolution.
Aspect Ratio	1:1 aspect ratio for primary product standard image of sku
Preferred File Format	.tif or .eps
Clipping Path	Photos must contain a clipping path that accurately outlines the product. The outline path must be named "Path 1". A second outline path around the product and shadow can also be included provided that this path does not cut into or enter the shadow.
Color	CMYK certified for print, 8 bit color depth for print
Preview	For the high resolution shot a preview should be enabled. For lower resolution variants supporting web or mobile applications previews can be removed for speed in loading the images.

F. Photography Best Practices:

1. Product Shot

- a) Minimize white space, good crop
- b) Send as many images that you have – designate the primary and alternate
- c) Shoot products on a white background. For products that are physically white or of very light color it is suggested to make sure tone is present in the highlights, and quarter tones of the product. Use of shadows or subtle lighting can also aide in bringing out the detail of the product without having it get “lost” against the white background.
- d) Shoot products in and out of package.
- e) Main shot should be on a $\frac{3}{4}$ angle and may be facing to the right or left of camera or straight ahead.
- f) Some products appear more natural when they use props (e.g., a pencil cup). Feel free to prop products at your discretion. If you look at a product on your table and think to yourself, “what is that?” then it probably should be propped.
- g) A minimum of two shots are required for every product.

2. Naming the Image

- a) The “.TIF” suffix should always be included at the end of the image.
- b) Image names should not include spaces or other non-alphanumeric characters (with the exception of dashes or underscores).

3. Image Lighting and Color

- a) Products should be evenly lit.
- b) Studio strobe lighting or hot lights should be used if available.
- c) If strobe lighting is not available, other options are:
- d) Photo flood lights with daylight balanced bulbs.
- e) A white tent around the product can diffuse the light source you’re using and reduce glare on the product.
- f) A flash, if used off the camera, should be bounced onto a piece of white foam core or poster board, or diffused through a clear material.
- g) Natural light - a cloudy day would be the best so it diffuses the light.
- h) Do not shoot in direct sunlight.
- i) Do not use direct flash.
- j) The image’s color should be rich, vibrant and accurate.
- k) Shadows should be realistic.
- l) Products should not be blown out in the highlights and pitch dark in the shadows.

4. Photography Notes

- a) Never shoot plain brown boxes.
- b) Whenever possible (as appropriate) take stickers off products (barcodes, item #, etc.).
- c) Clean products before shooting and remove any dust from product.
- d) Use a quality tripod on all shots.
- e) Put your camera in aperture priority mode if applicable to the highest aperture possible.

- f) Set your camera to the highest maximum megapixel mode for the best quality.
- g) If using flash, set your camera to flash mode in your white balance menu.
- h) Get as close to the object as possible (have the product fill the viewfinder).
- i) Make sure your image is sharp and in focus.
- j) If the images are too light or too dark, see if your camera has an EV (Exposure Value) and try adjusting that to the correct exposure.
- k) It is strongly suggested that all image editing be done in Adobe Photoshop and that current versions are used. We suggest upgrading software within 120 days after the software is available through wide commercial release.

G. Implementation:

Implementation of the new photography standard will commence on January 1, 2013, or sooner, with all users becoming fully versed and engaged in the implications and technical specifications of the new standard.