



Photo Tips

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You can get good quality photos using your cell phone or an inexpensive camera, but it takes some effort and thought. Remember to set your camera or phone for the highest resolution possible and share photos for publication at high resolution.

Permissions and Judgment – Unless you are taking photos at an event where a blanket permission is in place, ask permission before taking photos. Some groups require written permission, so if this is the case, have release forms available. Depending on the organization, showing people with drinks is not a good idea. Don't take photos of people doing anything embarrassing or obviously intoxicated. If you get pictures with bad expressions, closed eyes, etc., trash them. Let people know if you intend to post on social media.

Lighting – Outside daylight photos are the easiest. Just don't shoot into the sun and watch out for shadows, including your own. If you must shoot in the sun, try to get it at a angle and use your hand to block that glare. At night, it will be very difficult to get a good photos without flash. A tripod helps, but you can stabilize your phone on a railing, a coffee pot or whatever is handy. Shooting a photo with a window as a background will cause problems, as will shooting an image with bright lighting in the background or nearby. Try indoor shots with and without flash and see which are most pleasing.

Composition – The best photos are 1-4 people doing something interesting. When you ask people to take their photos, they tend to line up in a row and smile. Try to get them to continue their conversation or whatever they were doing. The best photos are casual and natural looking. You can, however, pose photos and that is often the only way to get what you really want to achieve. Room shots can show the size of the crowd, but generally include backs of heads. Shoot them from the front of the room, not the back.

Names – You should attempt to gather names of the people in the photo if a small group shot. Nametags are helpful, but often people want to remove them for photos. You can carry a small notebook, collect business cards or record the names and spellings on your phone using the record feature.

Edits – After shooting photos, you will often find that cropping and changing exposure can do wonders. Watch for red-eye and use the appropriate tool to repair it. If you are

uncomfortable doing edits, that is fine, but you should expect that someone will need to do this prior to publication.

Positioning Yourself – Select a seat near the lectern where the speaker will be speaking. This will allow you to take photos without disruption. If you must stand up to shoot, don't get between the projector and the screen. Move around the perimeter, then come in close to shoot. If you are taking photos of someone who is speaking, do it early in the talk. This is less disturbing to the speaker. Best to pose the speaker after her/his talk if possible. This includes awards presentations.

Large Group Shots – Use a blank wall as a background (never a window or mirror or open room). Stairs also can work well. Place the taller people in the back row. Consider a front row of people in chairs. Check the lighting. Is the area bright enough? Take a number of shots with some very short breaks. Make comments to the group to make them smile. Take shots with and without flash. Check your shots if time permits.

Portraits – Have the person stand about 18" from the wall. Avoid distracting backgrounds or lighting. Often an overhead light can be helpful. Take a number of shots; vertical is best. Fill the image with the person's head and shoulders. Take some shots with and without flash.