

Broadband helps Phil gain greater speed

Business and People

Phil has been a photographer for fifteen years and his business offers 'Creative Photography for advertising and design groups'. This includes photographs for advertisements and publicity material and still life fashion shots. Phil works principally for agencies and design groups and is mainly studio based but he also works on location for architecture and travel projects.

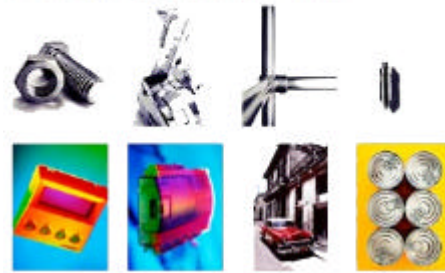
He moved to his present studio in

Ardwick, near Manchester city centre, seven years ago. It occupies about 2000 square feet and space can be hired out if it is not being used.

Phil is a sole trader and uses freelance assistants, stylists, set builders and model makers as and when he needs them.

There are some current challenging issues in this sector arising from clients budget cuts and the availability of free material from 'royalty-free image libraries'. There are, of course, always people who think of photography as a 'do it yourself job'.

phil cawley
PHOTOGRAPHY



Getting on to Broadband

Broadband and offered immediate advantages of speed, making it easier to search for clients and examine their web sites. A professional photographer, gains greater speed in the transmission of high resolution images, so you can set up a shot, and e-mail it to a client for their approval and save them making a visit to the studio. You can also involve more people at this stage – the studio, the agency and the client. Being on Broadband has saved money – compared with dial-up, it is now possible to do much more. It is always on, you can get constant e-mails, the capacity is greater and it is cheaper.

Doing the project has made Phil think about closer examinations of how other businesses approach marketing and business development

Learning Online

Phil joined the project for the broadband connection and the marketing training. He usually gets work from advertising agencies but there is now increasing competition with less photography being commissioned. He had thought about going direct to clients and getting new business over the Web. He enjoyed the material, particularly the video clip examples of how other businesses do things. He did have some doubts about the relevance of the course to the individual business and the sub-sector because of the way it does business; sales are mainly generated through agents – the advertising agencies meet the photographers' agents and decide whom to hire – and some photographers specialise in certain areas.

He would have appreciated contact with other participants. He would definitely have liked a face-to-face session at the start with electronic follow-up.

Marketing

Doing the project has made Phil think about closer examinations of how other businesses approach marketing and business development. The photographers agent system works well in London where it is quite usual. In Manchester, the more layers there are involved, the more there is the suspicion that too many lots of commission are being paid and that the client could save by going direct.

One idea now is to target businesses in specific sectors, search their sites and assess the prospects for business. For instance, to get lists of members of particular trade associations, do e-mail mail shots and refer them to the PowerPoint presentations on his site. Phil wants to build up international business and does not consider that e-mail is good for 'cold calling', especially to potential customers in the USA, so he would like cheaper international phone calls. It is felt that people want face-to-face contact, at least at the start of a customer relationship and it is not just a case of e-mailing images to them

A successful project,

"Improving Marketing Effectiveness of SMEs using Broadband"

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The Future

Phil is confident that it is just a matter of time before the project starts to pay off in terms of business gained. He would like additional help and advice on broadband use for dealing with international clients - phone calls, group meetings and conference calls – as it is sometimes better to be able to work for international clients here in the studio rather than going abroad and having to hire staff and equipment locally.

One big broadband advantage to be exploited in the future is in sending images to online image library sites (not royalty free); you get them loaded up, put in key words and monitor usage. You can also browse all the other images in the library and check their metadata, changing your own if you need to. It is a quicker way of generating income from your work than the old annual book system and although you do more work, you are more involved and you can exclude certain types of use.