FARMER STUDIO — RESOURCE

Photography Shot List for Small Businesses

The definitive shot list for a small business brand photography session — covering everything you need for your website, social media, and marketing materials.

PHOTOGRAPHY TEMPLATES MARKETING

Photography Shot List for Small Businesses

A photography session without a shot list wastes time and money. The photographer works through what feels instinctively interesting; you get back a gallery of duplicates and gaps, missing the specific images you actually needed for your website hero banner or your Instagram grid.

This shot list covers the core image types every small business needs. Adapt it by removing categories that don't apply and adding specifics that are unique to your business.

Before the Session

Preparation checklist:

- [ ] Clean and stage the space (remove anything that shouldn't be in frame)
- [ ] Prepare any props, products, or materials ahead of time
- [ ] Brief anyone appearing in photographs on what to wear (coordinate with your brand colours, avoid patterns that distract)
- [ ] Test the natural light at different times of day — pick the session time accordingly
- [ ] Review the shot list with the photographer before you start

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Category 1: Hero and Atmosphere Images

These are the large, full-width images used on your website homepage and social media banners. They need to communicate the feel of the business before anyone reads a word.

- [ ] Wide exterior shot showing the building/frontage in best light
- [ ] Wide interior establishing shot — full space, ideally without people
- [ ] Atmospheric interior with depth of field (background blurred, foreground sharp)
- [ ] Team or individual in the space — working, not posing
- [ ] The space in use — busy, active, doing what it does

Category 2: Products or Services

For retail or hospitality businesses, the product photography is often the most commercially valuable.

- [ ] Clean product shots on a simple background (for e-commerce or catalogue use)
- [ ] Products in context — being made, being used, being enjoyed
- [ ] Close-up detail shots — texture, craft, quality
- [ ] Range or collection shot — multiple products together
- [ ] Product with people — being held, being consumed, in use

For service businesses:

- [ ] The work being done (hands, tools, process)
- [ ] Before/after if applicable
- [ ] The deliverable or output

Category 3: Team and People

Headshots are not enough. Buyers want to understand who they're buying from — the people shots tell that story.

For each team member (or just the founder for solo businesses):

- [ ] Clean headshot — simple background, professional but not stiff
- [ ] Working in their environment — natural, not posed

- [ ] Interaction shot — with a colleague, customer, or the product

For the team collectively:

- [ ] Group photograph — the full team, usable on About pages
- [ ] Team in action — working together, natural conversation

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Category 4: Process and Behind the Scenes

These images are disproportionately valuable on social media. They show craft, care, and authenticity in a way finished product shots can't.

- [ ] Materials or ingredients before they become the product
- [ ] Key moments in your process or workflow
- [ ] Tools, equipment, or workbench
- [ ] Preparation stages
- [ ] The moment before completion

Category 5: Detail and Texture

Small details can be used as background images, section breaks on websites, or to provide variety in a social media grid.

- [ ] Close-up of a distinctive material or surface
- [ ] Branded elements — packaging, labels, signage, stamps
- [ ] The tools or implements of your trade
- [ ] Any distinctive visual texture associated with your business

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Category 6: Customer Experience

If your business has customer-facing elements — a shop, a café, a service appointment — the experience itself is marketing content.

- [ ] Customer arriving or being welcomed
- [ ] Customer engaged with your product or service
- [ ] The transaction or handover moment
- [ ] Customer reaction or satisfaction (genuine, not performative)

Category 7: Seasonal and Contextual

These are planned additions to your library over time, not necessarily all shot in one session.

- [ ] Exterior in different seasons if seasonality affects your business
- [ ] Relevant local context — the surrounding area, the community, the street
- [ ] Special occasions relevant to your business (seasonal menus, annual events, etc.)

Formats to Capture for Each Key Shot

For maximum flexibility across platforms, ensure you get each important shot in multiple crops:

FORMAT	USE
Landscape 16:9	Website hero images, YouTube thumbnails
Square 1:1	Instagram grid, Facebook posts
Portrait 4:5	Instagram feed (optimal reach format)
Portrait 9:16	Instagram/TikTok stories and Reels

Ask your photographer to leave enough space when framing to allow cropping into these formats, or capture the same setup in both landscape and portrait.

Quantities to Aim For

A well-planned half-day session (4 hours) should produce:

- 5–8 hero/atmosphere images
- 10–20 product or service images
- 5–10 team/people images
- 10–15 process/behind-the-scenes images
- 20+ detail images

That's approximately 50–75 usable images — enough to populate a website completely and provide 3–4 months of social media content.

After the Session

- [ ] Back up all files in at least two locations immediately
- [ ] Organise into folders by category (mirrors the structure of this shot list)
- [ ] Select and edit your top 20 priority images first — these are the ones your website needs immediately
- [ ] Build a structured library for ongoing use — organised by category, with clear file names