



TRIGGER. FEEL. BUY.

**Neuroaesthetics, Neuromarketing & the Hidden
Power of Product Photography**

A COMPLETE GUIDE
FOR ENTREPRENEUR AND BRANDS

by
**SHOOT
SHOOT**

Team

COINIT

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A B C U T

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WHERE PRODUCTS BECOME ICONS
because we don't just shoot what looks good,
we shoot what works.

Founded by Valentina Leardi, a photographer and entrepreneur with a strong background in Neuropsychology, Neuro Aesthetic and Communication.

Our mission is to create a new point of view in product photography that helps brands and start up delivering a brain friendly message that drives sales.

Connect

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WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS FOR AN IMPACTFUL IMAGE?

In our competitive digital world we are overexposed daily to visuals. Only strategically created photographs stand out and are truly persuasive.

Have you ever realized how many ads you have been exposed to that you skip or do not notice at all?

And then, suddenly there's an ad that catches your attention, even though you are not interested in the product at all.

What makes that photograph persuasive and catchable?

It's not only about aesthetic or brand messaging. Persuasive images have specific characteristics and principles from psychology, neuroscience and visual communication to impact directly the audience subconscious.

There are **seven key characteristics** that define persuasive visuals and help brand photography to connect, engage and ultimately convert more sales.



C A P T U R E A T T E N T I O N Q U I C K L Y

The first impression happens in 13 milliseconds and it's fundamental to proceed to the next level of elaboration of information.

If you fail the first impression, there's no going back. This means that your photograph has one shot and must grab the attention of the target immediately.

**“hierarchy,
contrast, clear
focal point,
unusual element
to disrupt visual
habits.**



WHAT CAPTURES ATTENTION?

According to science, the best way to capture attention is using high contrast between subject and background, having a clear focal point that guides the eye toward the subject, and last but not least using unusual or unexpected visual elements that disrupt the visual habit.

WHAT FAILS?

It is important to avoid low contrast and the subject blending with surroundings, a cluttered composition with no hierarchy, and generic stock photography that lacks artistry.



“Are my visuals standing up among others?”

HOW TO TEST FIRST IMPRESSIONS?

A great way to test it is to put your photographs in a pool of others. If your photograph stands out in a group it means that that shot is able to capture attention even on a bigger scale.



2

PHOTOGRAPHS WITH EMOTIONS, INFLUENCE DECISIONS

According to neuroscientific research, emotions drive 95% of human decision-making.

Photographs must make you feel something, positive or negative, in order to activate persuasion and actions. Positive emotions lead toward the stimuli, facilitating decisions for reaching a desired state.

Negative emotions on the contrary, try to push us away from the stimuli, forcing a decision making to avoid or reduce the negative feelings or fear. Fear that can be real or strategically chosen. That is the reason why pain points of a product are so effective in selling.

**POSITIVE =
ATTRACT!**

**NEGATIVE =
REPULSE!**



HOW TO CONVEY EMOTIONS?

One of the best ways to directly convey emotions is to use color psychology to trigger specific emotions. For example, red for urgency, green for calmness, blue for trust. Another way to reach directly the heart of the audience is to use facial expressions that match a brand's emotional messaging.

WHAT DOESN'T TRIGGER EMOTIONS?

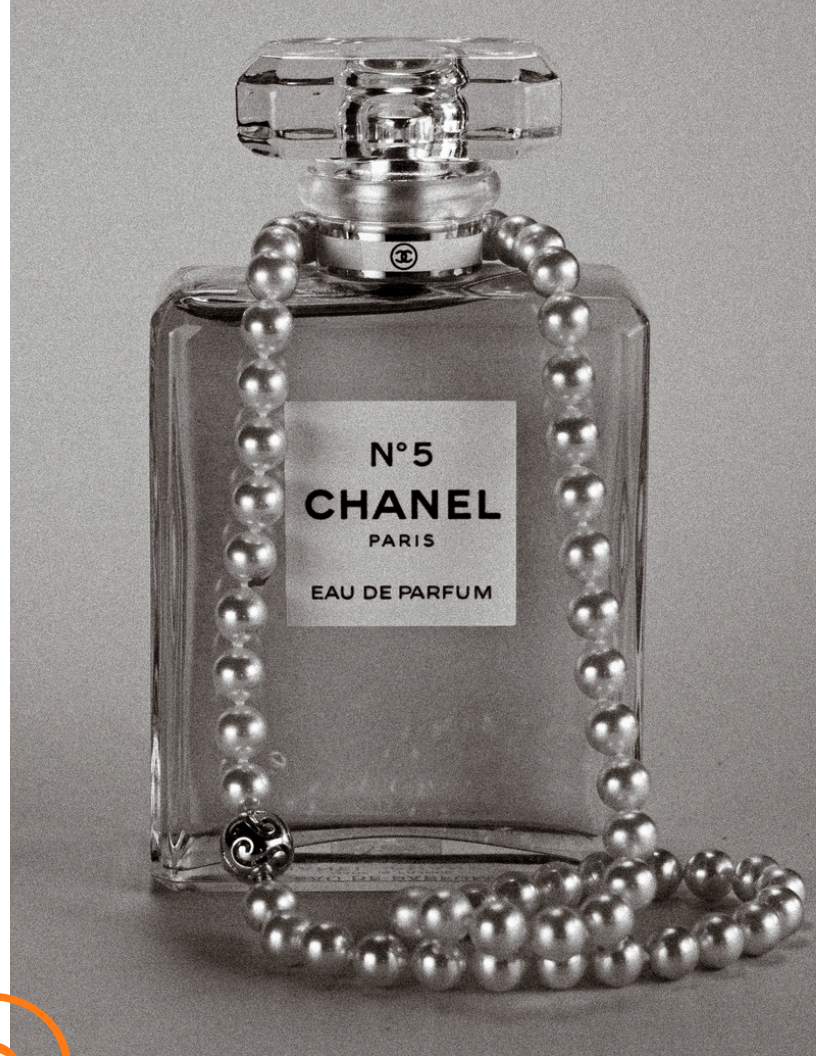
Neutral or emotionless faces do not connect with the audience. Facial expressions are extremely powerful and should drive emotional connection in the audience. Secondly, an unmatching mood between the brand's message and industry could lead to unexpected feelings and emotions. If the photography looks fake or too artificial could also trigger unwanted emotional responses that might harm the brand.



“How do you feel when you are looking at your brand's visuals?”

HOW TO TEST EMOTIONAL RESPONSE?

Show the image to multiple people and ask directly “what emotions does this image make you feel?” and understand if the response matches your brand image and industry.



3

A CLEAR NARRATIVE

Human beings' brains are wired for storytelling and able to recognize a story even in a static two dimensional photograph.

Visual storytelling is significantly more engaging than other forms of visuals, as its perception is subtle and often implicit.

Every person in the audience creates a different story based on their experience, expectations and interests in just a few seconds after the elaboration of the visual stimuli. It reaches directly the subconscious mind, moves deeper feelings and it's extremely efficient to convert potential customers into customers. It is important in fact to create strategic intentional stories, plan them right in the marketing strategy to amplify the brand's message.



HOW TO CREATE A CLEAR NARRATIVE?

Think about action driven imagery that suggest movement or purpose, it can be as easy as hand movements, model using the product, lifestyle shots in a natural environment. Great planning for props is really essential and can tell a story without stealing the scene to the main characters.

Another example is creating interactions between people, objects and the environment. The visual storytelling is always subtle and implied. So interactions can automatically create a new narrative in the audience's mind.

WHAT TO AVOID?

If your goal is to deliver a story, avoid static images that create a sense of solidity and trust but are not ideal to create a narrative story, generic product shots with over complex compositions that are disconnected from the natural environment or actions.



Which actions do your visuals trigger?

HOW TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF THE STORYTELLING?

Analyze your visuals and try to identify what kind of specific actions, events or experiences they make you think about. If you have a clear answer for that, it means that the photographs have good storytelling.



THE PRINCIPLES OF COGNITIVE COMPOSITION ENHANCE PERSUASIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Following the principles of cognitive composition and consequently using predictable cognitive patterns are the fundamental for creating great persuasive visuals and photographs.

Composition patterns like the rule of third, using aum section, or triangles helps viewers find the photograph naturally more appealing.



BASIC ELEMENTS OF COGNITIVE COMPOSITION

Rule of Third - a simple grid of third equally divides the images in three parties. When key elements are aligned with these grids create a naturally appealing visual.

Leading Lines - use shapes and lines to guide the audience's eye to recognize main characters and key elements of the visual.

Gestalt Principles - Gestalt perception theory defines how the human brain perceives and interprets visual stimuli. For example, multiple objects are primarily categorised by colors and shapes instead of functions. You c

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

For sure composition is fundamental, and poor framing or misalignment of key subjects create confusion. A clear foreground, middle-ground and background are also very important to make the subject stand out. So avoid unclear lighting that does not flatter the subject. Also the usage of too many props and too many colours can create an overwhelming distraction.

“toward what your eye is attracted to?”

HOW TO ASSESS COGNITIVE COMPOSITION?

The best way to assess cognitive composition is with the use of eye-tracking. If the eye movement does not stop on specific elements of the photograph and gaze randomly the composition is definitely not clear.



5

VISUAL SEMIOTIC THE KEY TO PERSUASION

Communication very often happens through symbolic association.

The meaning is then conveyed with symbols and colors and interpreted by the audience. All interpretations happen at an almost subconscious level and are directly influenced by cultural associations.

A skilled photographer creates visuals with semiotics to intentionally reinforce brand identity and message.



WHAT WORKS WELL FOR VISUAL SEMIOTIC?

One key element is the use of symbols that are almost universal among all cultures (hearts, emoji, green leaves), it is also extremely important to consider the final audience to select the right colours.

In different cultures, colors have different meanings and are related to different concepts. For example, a wedding dress brand starting selling in China might not use white as the main color for marketing as it is culturally used during funerals.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

It is always important to pay attention to cultural differences among the audience and the countries your visuals will be targeting as there could be misinterpretation. Symbols must also be aligned with your brand messaging and not contradictory. Another interesting point is about abstract visuals, these ones should not be too abstract because they can lose meaning and symbolic interpretations as well.



“which is the symbolic meaning your visuals convey?”

HOW TO ASSESS THE VISUAL SEMIOTIC?

In order to assess visual semantics quickly you should be able to describe your images in one line and check if the answer matches your brand's identity.



SIMPLICITY AND MINIMALISM ENHANCE PERSUASION

According to the cognitive load theory by John Sweller, the brain prefers simple and clear information over complex and overcrowded visuals.

If the photography is not clear enough the viewer disengages as there are too many details to process.



HOW TO APPLY THIS THEORY?

The best way is to use a minimal composition with a clear subject that stands out from the background.

The use of colors must be simple and do not overwhelm the eye. It can be with strong contrast of different gradients of the same palette.

Another element to consider is negative space, which is a powerful way to enhance visual clarity.

WHAT TO AVOID?

As we have already mentioned before, overcrowded photographs with cluttered backgrounds, soft lines and busy color combinations create an overwhelming sensation of confusion.

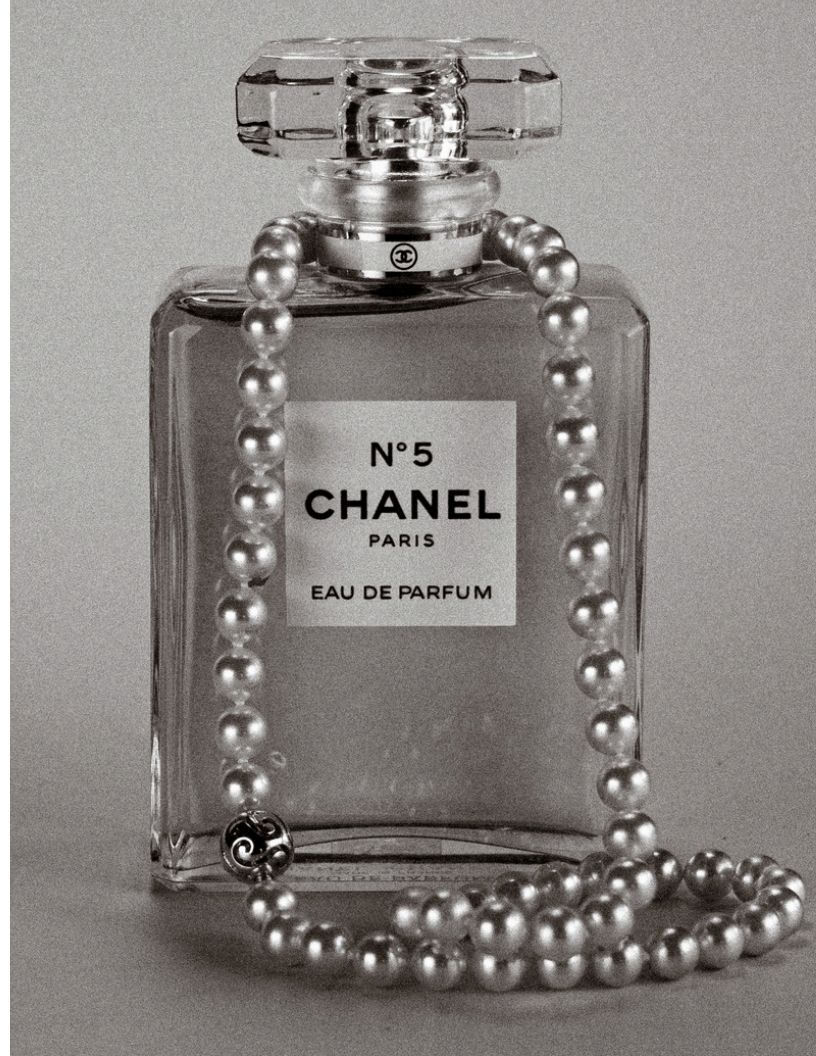


“how many focal points do you have?”

HOW TO ASSESS SIMPLICITY?

Your image should have no more than 2 focal points.

If the focal points are three it's simply too complex. Try to simply and reduce elements to improve clarity.



BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSE DRIVEN BY PHOTOGRAPHS

A persuasive photograph generates actions: a marketing purchase, a sign up for a newsletter, engagement on social media.

Behavioural responses are triggered by different characteristics of the images like eye gazes, resolution of the image, color palette, and consistency all over the “8-14 touches”.

Good product photography seems to minimize decision fatigue.



WHAT DOES WORK GREATLY?

A great way to generate an action is to have a kind of motion that suggests urgency or direction toward an action.

This sense of urgency can also be achieved with a subject looking toward the camera.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK ?

If the product photography is unintentional, without clear scope or too cluttered to be distracted from reaching the CTA button.

“*Are my visuals converting?*”

HOW TO ASSESS?

Make A/B tests for different photographs you are using and analyse your conversion sales, engagement or other goals. Do you have different results for different photographs?



STYLE STRATEGY



White background

Uncluttered, familiar, and free of distractions. By simulating the mental "unboxing" moment, this approach provides the brain with a distinct sense of shape, size, and purpose. Particularly for e-commerce, it promotes trust.

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Coloured background

A potent technique to add personality and brand identity. Colours affect how a product is viewed; warm hues evoke assertiveness and vigour, while cold hues imply elegance and serenity.

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Lifestyle Shots

Narratives take place here. You may generate aspiration and emotional relatability by contextualizing your goods in the real world. "This is who you are with our brand". The audience feels an illusory perceived ownership of the products that works as if the product was experience in real life.

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Hero Shots

Impactful, focused, and bold. Hero shots, which are frequently the first or last frame a buyer remembers, are meant to create a statement. They inspire presence, worth, and confidence.

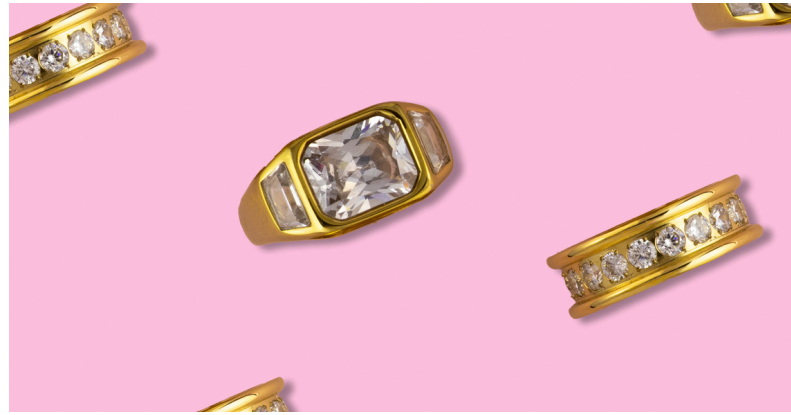
[LEARN MORE](#)

STYLE STRATEGY



Flat Lays

Ideal for brands that value structure and content. Through composition, flat lays present a tale while expressing harmony and order. Additionally, they are scroll-stoppers on social media sites like Pinterest and Instagram.

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Pattern and group shots

A visually appealing and full of subliminal cues, such as repetition, variation, and abundance. These designs work well for packages, campaigns, and generating the "can't choose just one" vibe.

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Macro Details

The intimate shots that use the phrase "Look closer" are the luxurious macro shots. Focusing on quality, texture, and craftsmanship, they evoke a visceral reaction that evokes desire and recall.

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Swatches

Convey a sense of luxury and activate a tactile sensation in the brain of the audience.

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LET'S CREATE
TOGETHER!

We are looking forward to create outstanding visuals for
your brand!

Book your discover call with Shoot Shoot Team today!

Contact

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