

## 12 Reasons to Invest in Professional Architectural Photography

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As a professional photographer of spaces and places for twenty years, I'm frequently asked to explain the need for my services. After all, digital cameras are a dime for a couple dozen these days, and everybody's relative or friend seems to be a photographer. Budgets are tight all over and my clients legitimately need to know what they're getting for their money and why they should spend it.

**Following are a list of twelve reasons for professional firms and individuals in architecture, construction, design, and engineering to invest in professional architectural or interiors photography.**

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**1. Because some of your competitors do ...** and while following instead of leading is never a good business strategy, neither is producing great work but insisting that, "if I build it, they will come." Marketing and advertising are not luxuries, they are essential expenses that drive sales and maintain or grow your business. Did you know that viewers process visual data 60,000 times faster than text <http://subtlelightphoto.com/blog/eyeballs-to-phonerecalls-visual-marketing> ? Or that people generally retain 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they read, but 80% of what they see <http://subtlelightphoto.com/blog/we-live-in-a-visual-world> ? Professional photographers understand the power of great images and can help you work within a budget – of any size – to maximize your marketing dollars.

**2. Because you don't ask your nephew to frame a custom home ...** so why would you trust him with the photos to sell it? Let's face it, amateur photos look, well, amateurish. For more on that, read 6 Architectural Photography Mistakes to Avoid: <http://subtlelightphoto.com/blog/6-architectural-photography-mistakes-to-avoid> . A professional photographer is not just a hobbyist with a lot of expensive gear. We're trained to recognize what works visually (and what doesn't!), we follow current trends and techniques, and we have experience creating images that do the job they're supposed to do – selling your projects and services. Oh yeah, and we have lots of cool gear too.

**3. Because you need a translator ...** maybe you don't know it, but your eye and your camera don't see the world the same way. Ever brought home photos that were too bright, too dark, or had funny colors? Professional photographers spend years understanding how light interacts with film and digital sensors (and no, they're not exactly the same) and can more accurately "translate" how our eyes see light than someone who only does it occasionally.

**4. Because you don't walk into a room with a spotlight on your forehead ...** and your photos shouldn't look like that either. Yet that's the unflattering look you'll get from an on-camera light source no matter how good your camera is. Professional interiors photographers know how to light a space by placing added lights and reflectors to complement the natural light in the room, and we know when to leave well enough alone too.

**5. Because colors in real life don't all fit in a Crayola box ...** and all those colors need to look vibrant, true, and inviting to sell your projects. Did you know that your choice of camera, the types of lights in the room, other colors in the area, and even individual computer and mobile screens can influence the color in your images? Want to be sure that "Florida Sunrise Yellow" doesn't end up looking like "Swamp Monster Taupe"? Then work with a professional who understands how to capture and manage accurate colors.

**6. Because you can't "talk" a portfolio ...** and no matter how many times you gesture with your hands, sketch on the back of a cocktail napkin, or use the words "light-filled and airy", "mid-century modern", or "personal, reflective space", it's just not the same as opening up a portfolio of great images and watching the reactions of a potential client. Professional photographers understand the value of a great image to your business and we don't settle for less. After all, even your most qualified prospects need to be inspired to part with their money.

**7. Because your time is valuable ...** and so is access to your clients' finished projects and neither are to be wasted. Professionals plan ahead so that all the necessary materials are on hand and we make contingencies in case something goes awry. We bring back-up equipment, more lights than we'll need, and a choice of props. As they say, if you're worried that hiring a professional is expensive, wait until you hire an amateur.

**8. Because liability is scary ...** and an accident in your client's home, building, or property during a photo shoot could expose you to a lawsuit. Just like boy scouts and playboys, professionals always have the right insurance for everyone's protection.

**9. Because the world is made of shiny surfaces ...** that can wash out colors and add bright spots and reflections in photos where you don't want them. Glass windows, polished stone, stainless steel, washed concrete, varnished wood, even shiny fabrics or the leaves of plants can reflect light and dilute colors in photographs. Professional interior photographers know how to minimize the effects of surface reflections to let the beauty of your finished work show. After all, you don't whitewash the stainless steel appliances, so why should your marketing photos look like you do?

**10. Because drywall is not a structural material ...** and neither is a jpeg always a sturdy format for digital photos. Like drywall, a jpeg image is convenient, durable if you treat it right, and puts a finished surface up front to hide the rough interior. But also like drywall, if you bend a jpeg too much, it will crack and leave big ugly holes. Pros who work with digital images every day understand that different file formats are useful tools, and that not every tool is right for every job. Like any good professional, we'll ask questions to understand what you want and need, then use the best tools to create and deliver the best possible image.

**11. Because night shots aren't shot at night ...** life safety equipment is pretty ugly, parallel and perpendicular lines don't always start out that way, a shower curtain and some gaff tape can sometimes be better than a real window, HDR is not a substitute for getting it right in the first place, and other tricks of the trade. Go on a shoot with a professional architectural photographer and you'll understand.

**12. And finally, because many of your competitors don't ...** and just as in your work, don't you always want to do things that set you above your competition?