

Here's Why You Should Never Use Free Legal Stock Photos



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The pictures on your law firm's website are often the first thing many prospective clients see. Whether they realize it or not, they'll draw many conclusions about your practice, skill, personality, and professionalism from those images. If you rely on free legal stock photos to make your first impression for you, you're missing a powerful marketing opportunity. That's true even if you have a great portrait and only use stock photos as filler on the remainder of your website. Here's why stock photos are never a good substitute for custom photography of your firm.

They're Generic by Design

Stock photographers have to cater to a wide, diverse demographic to sell their photos. So their work is generic by design. It's relevant to everyone, and therefore to no one. The generic nature of stock photography means that it's never the best option for presenting your firm in an accurate or flattering light.

Some of your competitors may even be using the same images. When this happens, it's easy for one law firm to blend into another, leaving clients to wonder what-- if any-- difference there is between the two options. Do you really want your clients associating you with bland and uninteresting images? Stock photography doesn't offer much improvement over having no photos at all.

They Create False Expectations

What's unique about your firm? Is it run by women, highly diverse, staffed exclusively by Ivy League graduates, or something else? That which makes your firm special will be lost in stock photos, which feature generic people and no clear message about your values or practice style.

They may even create false expectations. For instance, a young law firm may have an open floor plan, an aggressive litigation style, but a laid-back approach to professional attire.

Buttoned-down images that show lawyers in a huge conference room to little to convey this novel approach.

Even when clients know the images are generic, they still on some level expect to get what they see. So using stock photography sets clients up for dashed hopes before they even sign the retainer agreement. That's not a good marketing strategy.

Stock Photos are Easy to Recognize

Stock photos are easily recognizable to anyone who's ever built a website, used photos online, or worked with a photographer. Many potential clients will instantly recognize that your photos are generic. That tells them a few things, none of which are good:

- You're trying to save money.
- You don't want to invest in quality photos.
- You're showing images on your website that don't accurately represent your firm.

These messages can directly undercut messages about success, commitment, hard work, and professionalism. Prospective clients look to what you do, not just what you say. If you slap a few images on a lackluster website and hope for the best, they might assume you take a similar approach when writing briefs, preparing for oral arguments, or negotiating a settlement.

Custom Legal Photography is an Investment in Your Brand

Legal photos are an investment that pays significant interest. Your firm will be more attractive to potential clients, and may even begin closing higher-caliber clients. You'll have images ready to go for press releases and news stories, and requests for a headshot will no longer spur a panicked dig through company archives. Invest in professional legal photography. It's more affordable than you think. And you can't afford not to have them.

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