

Shooting for Slideshows - Kelli Etheridge

Great slideshows begin when the photographer picks up the camera. Having a clear idea about your slideshow from the beginning helps it become a work of art. Use some of these ideas while shooting to help bring your slideshow to the next level!

1. Image Orientation

Shoot more landscape/horizontal images so that your frame will be full in ProShow. For maximum versatility shoot both vertical and horizontal images.

2. Shoot for Titles

Photograph with empty space for text in your slideshow. Images with negative space or very simple backgrounds work well for captions. Always make sure your text is easy to read on top of the image. Photograph signs that can be used as a title (or information from them can be used within your presentation). Think of possible end slides as well while shooting.

3. Background Images

Blurred images or simple textures work well for backgrounds with either text or images on top of them.

4. Sequences

Photograph a rapid succession of images of moving subjects with a tripod. Put them together for a movie-like effect. Examples: people running towards the camera, jumping, moving clouds or water.

5. Selective Focus

Using a tripod if possible, take two or more shots with a different part of the image in focus. This is a simple, but effective technique. Try a slow cross-fade between images.

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ProShow tips and tricks from Kelli Etheridge of Etheridge Photographic

As a family portrait photographer ProShow slideshows represent a growing portion of my sales as well as a powerful and creative marketing tool.

The way I photograph has evolved now that slideshows are a consistent use of my images. I shoot more landscape images so that they will fill the screen. I also shoot with negative space in some of the images to accommodate other layers of images or captions. I will often shoot sequences (with a tripod), a rapid succession of images of my subject in motion with the background stationary for a movie-like effect. Another favourite is selective focus; with my camera tripod-mounted I focus on the foreground then on the background with the subsequent image. This has a pleasing effect when one image is dissolved into the other.

Planning a slideshow begins before I even pick up my camera. I try to visualize the type of show I wish to create – will it be slow and moody or fast-paced and upbeat? The overall mood I hope to create with the slideshow dictates all subsequent decisions, therefore it's important to decide early and always refer back to the mood I wish to convey. We all know that emotion sells; if the slideshow can make the viewer laugh or bring a tear to their eye (or even better – both) then you have succeeded. Your show will be remembered if it touches the viewer emotionally, and if the viewer is also a client, then you will have success with sales.

Once the mood is decided, everything else falls into place. The first thing I do is make my music selection; the song is the backbone of your slideshow; it will help establish the emotional context more than any other element. The pace of the images, the beat of the music and the mood of the overall show should all be in harmony. I think of the combination of music and images as choreography – a powerful symbiotic relationship. Perhaps one of the best ways to create a professional looking slideshow is to choreograph the image and caption transitions, timing and effects to the music. Spending time here will enhance the quality and effect of your show. ProShow makes this task simple as each element can be finely controlled.

Another way add to the emotional content of the show is to personalize each show as much as possible. Some of the tools I use to infuse the slideshow with the character of my clients:

- Use quotations from famous people.
- Use quotations from the subject/s in the slideshow.
- Included some of the lyrics from the song you've chosen in the slideshow
- Include images from beyond the photo session such as ultrasound images, photos of the parents as babies...
- Create unique title slides, i.e. photograph the babies name in blocks, write the family name in the sand if you are photographing at the beach.
- Include personal details, i.e. baby's birth date, weight, how parents chose the name, baby's nicknames.
- Conduct a brief interview, ask the family (both parents and kids) fun questions and include the answers in the show.

Think of a slideshow as a story. It is your chance to share information about your subjects, to open a window into their world, and to help them preserve their memories in a creative and professional presentation.