



7 CHARACTERISTICS OF GREAT PRESS PHOTOS

Press photos are probably the greatest weakness of most artists' marketing. Everywhere you look, there are screens. Big screens, small screens, tall screens, short screens, attached screens, detached screens. Before my inner Dr. Seuss takes all the way over... I want to be clear that high-quality photos are often the difference between one artist filling all of that digital real estate over another.



1

HIGH RES

This means that your photo has at least one side greater than 1000 pixels and a print resolution of at least 300 DPI. The higher the number, the higher the resolution. When in doubt, just ask a photographer; they will know. And be careful with some email apps that automatically resize attachments before mailing them.



There is too much data supporting the idea that a visible face increases your chances for engagement. You want your audience to inspect further, comment, play the song, or add you to the playlist. Logos, fonts, colors, and other trends may change, but your face is the only consistent brand you own. Use this to your advantage. Both you and your fans will have a better experience if people know what you look like. Otherwise, it's just a stranger performing a familiar song. Of course, you can still post artsy silhouettes and the like on Instagram. Just make sure people know what you look like.

2

SHOWS YOUR FACE



3

SIMPLE BACKGROUND

Keep the background of photos simple. I'm not talking about a JC Penney photo shoot, single-color backdrop. Just make sure the focal point of the photograph is you and not whatever is going on in the background.



4

UNIQUE

&

UNUSED



Press photos should be updated regularly. When any form of media asks for photos, they're hoping for a visual no one else has seen before. In other words, not your cover art or a photo that you've been using for the last 10 years. For every photo shoot you do, hold back a few photos that you like for potential playlist covers. This way you're always ready to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way.



5

SQUARE



The most common use of photos will be for playlist covers and social media posts. It's always a cool opportunity when someone is willing to feature you. The best way to make sure you aren't sent scrambling—or miss out all together—is to plan ahead. Make sure your photographer understands that you need some shots where all of the band members can be seen once the photo is cropped into a square.



6

NO
TEXT OR
LOGOS



Media seeking press photos wants only a photo. They do not want any text, logos, or other graphic design elements. You may have a logo, but that isn't what this opportunity is for—it's for people. If you have a moment, go take a look at playlists featuring artists on the cover. Some of these artists may have a logo that is more famous than their faces.



7 ON BRAND



A photo is a great way to show your brand or personality. When Dolly Parton's team started rolling out her record in early 2023, all of her social media and images shifted from her normal girly, rhinestone persona to a darker, more rock-like image. She still kept key components of her overall brand by keeping rhinestones, big hair, and heavy makeup. Twenty years from now, we'll be able to look at those pictures and recognize the release they belong to. Match the photos to the music, mood, and personal brand.

