

Take better presentation pictures with our simple hints and tips



Many of the publicity pictures we take are of presentation moments – often of cheque handovers, but always of landmarks for the organisations involved.

This simple guide uses a series of pictures borrowed from the internet to highlight the things to think about when taking such pictures, to make sure they're the best they can be, and that they're something that photographer and subject can be proud of. All of the advice can be summed up in two thoughts: Think ahead, and don't be shy in asking the subjects to do what you want – remember that the record you're creating will last a lifetime.

Pose your subjects: So often cheque presentation pictures are devoid of useful props – but here's one with a dog which hasn't been used to best advantage... How much better the shot could



have been if the adults had crouched, and the dog had been turned sideways and encouraged to sit. The cheque could have been much lower, maybe even touching the floor. The result would have been a far superior composition.



You haven't been framed: Make sure everyone is in the picture...



Don't snatch: Cheque presentations always involve some kind of speechmaking, however brief. Wait until that's finished before taking your picture, and then you can group the people involved as you want them. They won't mind.



No doubt what the man on the left was saying was important, but the other man in the picture looks worried about something. Both expressions lasted for only a fraction of a second, but were unlikely to have been representative of the reason for taking the picture.

Window worries 1: The strong light from that window dominates this picture. Moving to the right, the photographer could have changed the background entirely – and those three little words 'This way please' could have brought giver and recipient together with smiles and looking at the camera. If the man on the left needs to be in the picture, make sure he's involved too. If not, ask him to move. You're in charge!



Window worries 2: Strong daylight has fooled the camera into making the subject of this picture very dark. The photographer should have turned the subjects around, and stood with his back to the window. This would have lit the subjects much better. The picture's unbalanced too.



The man in the white shirt at the left would have been better at the other end of the line. And finally, the dark-shirted man on the left and Mr Pink Shirt have no reason to be in the picture. Ask them to step out of shot.

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Very dark: Worth switching on the flash; even phone cameras have them. Or how about going outside? Moving that coat on the left would have helped, too.

Happy lady: Who says a presentation picture needs any more than a delighted recipient? This lady's smile says much about the outcomes being sought through the gift. Might have been good to move the notice board, and pose her away from that wall light, though. These are often things not noticed until afterwards. When looking at the shot before you take it, try to imagine you're looking at a finished picture; you'll see things differently.



Great backdrop: But if the subjects had been closer to the camera, they would have featured more strongly in the photo.



Too many people: There are so many people in this shot that half of them will be unrecognisable unless it's reproduced quite large, and that may well put newspapers off using it. Had the photographer stood on a stepladder (seriously), the angle would have been more interesting, and revealed more faces.



That's better 1: Just a big cheque (left) but notice how the subjects are close together, the way props are used, and the angle the photographer has chosen, achieved by a slight crouch. The frame is full of interest, the shot is well lit and sharp, and everyone is looking happily at the camera.



This way, please!: Don't jump in whilst other photographers are taking their shots (above). This one's well-enough composed, but the main subjects are looking at another photographer. Wait until they've finished, and get the subjects to look at you. Saying 'this way, please' will do the trick. Take more than one shot; lots of people involuntarily close their eyes at the moment the picture is taken.

That's better 2: Tricky one, this (below). With only a small cheque available, and no other props, the photographer has made sure that everyone's smiling, and they're close together, filling the frame. The hand of the lady in blue on the donor's arm is a nice touch.



That's better 3: The smiles, the hand on the shoulder, and the inward-turned heads 'sell' this picture, even though the background is cluttered. It's included because there were about 100 other people in the room, but the photographer stepped in for a few seconds to capture a moment – and no-one minded the wait. Be bold!

Nice shot, but...: They're smiling for the camera, but the background would have been better if they'd both stood in front of the red curtain or the plain wall...



AND FINALLY: The best presentation picture ever taken is useless without the names of the people in it, what's being presented, and why. Without it, the picture can't be used.