

shutterstock®

Contributor Success Guide





This is Shutterstock

We are proud to support a global community of talented contributors who create the content our customers rely on.

- + 550,000 contributors
- + 800 million paid to contributors
- + 245 million images
- + 13 million footage clips

And growing. There are more than 1.5 million new assets added weekly.





Who are our contributors

Our contributor marketplace is powered by photographers, videographers, illustrators, and composers around the world.

Whether you are an aspiring photographer who just purchased your first camera, or an agency specializing in creating content for stock, there's a place for you at Shutterstock.

Earning money is fast

High-quality standards, with a fast and simple upload, submission, and approval process.

Keep your freedom

The content you create is yours. Enjoy the freedom of a non-exclusive partnership.

Innovative technology

We are always looking for ways to improve the experience of our contributors. That includes our apps for iOS and Android.

Valuable tools for success

We share what our customers are searching for, so you can be ahead of the latest trends. Check out our [Keywording Tool](#) and [The Shot List](#).



What is Stock?



What is Stock?

Stock refers to any type of content, including photos, videos, audio clips, or illustrations that are ready for customers to purchase and use.

Whether you create content specifically for stock, or choose to upload archived content, stock provides an outlet to license your content.

The best part?

Content can sell over and over, so the stock you create can earn you money for years to come.





What customers are searching for

Through search data and listening to feedback, we know what customers are looking for. They are searching for stock content that includes these qualities.



Authenticity

Images that illustrate the everyday. Images that illustrate the everyday, as life happens. Real moments, captured.



Diversity

Diverse content that includes people of various ages, abilities, genders, sexualities, and ethnicities.



Locality

A business meeting in London may look different than one in Japan. Showcase local culture.



Variety

Shoot distinct and unique variations of the same scene to give customers options.



Creativity

Images that can't be found anywhere else. Your unique content has value here.



Finding inspiration

Here are six places to get your creative ideas started.

1. Social media

Trending topics are a great place to start.
Find us @ShutterstockContributors on Instagram.

2. The news

What are the latest headlines? Trending destinations, events, or even people.

3. Fashion trends

What colors are popular? What clothing are people wearing?

4. Technology

We're always looking for new images of that latest and greatest in tech.

5. Holidays and celebrations

What are the popular events happening in your area or where you travel to?

6. Arts and culture

Keep an eye on what's happening at galleries and museums.
Take cues from the old, and the new.

Creating images that actually sell

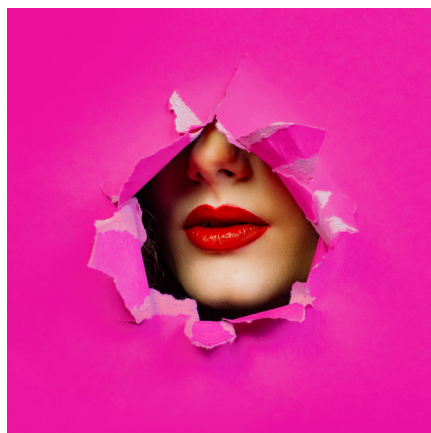
We're breaking the mold of traditional stock. Shutterstock is interested in images that tell and sell stories.

Content that earns money has the following characteristics.

Quality: Your image is sharp, and high-resolution.

Versatility: Content has the ability to be used for a wide variety of purposes.

Unique: You've created, and uploaded a unique scene unlike anything else.



Creating illustrations that sell

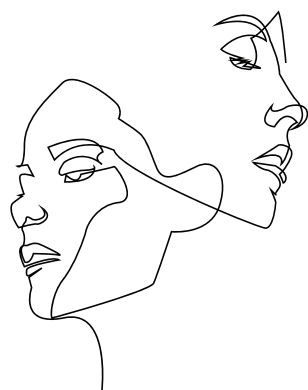
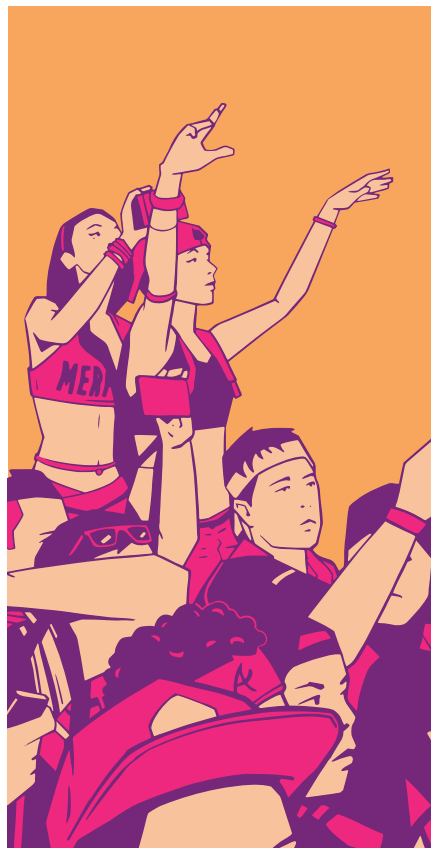
Our customers are searching for illustrations that can be used for a wide variety of business and creative purposes.

Here's how to create ones that sell.

Adaptability: Content can be used in different designs, telling a variety of stories.

Stylised elements: Consider uploading textures, scrolls, background, text, and frames.

Be a trendsetter: With a little talent and inspiration, you can set the trends.



Creating videos that actually sell

While creating stock video requires an investment, there is a higher price-point for video, which could earn you more money. Here are some tips on creating video that sells.

Quality equipment:

DSLRs will give you more control and options for filming. The ability to purchase 4K and above is what customers want.

Aspirational everyday:

Film the everyday. The morning coffee. The dog walk. Tell a beautiful story.

Use what you've got:

Live somewhere unique? Film it. Unique situations and locations give creators an upper-hand.





The Ingredients of Top-Selling Stock

1. **Commercial value**

The more usable an image is for a variety of buyers, the more it's considered to have commercial value.

2. **Diverse locality**

Images that show the diversity of specific locations. For example, Japanese farmer harvesting salt on the coastline of Suzu.

3. **Room for text**

Customers frequently purchase content for ad usage. Consider creating imagery with negative space for the purchaser to do text overlays.

4. **Emotional**

Images that showcase emotions. The happy, the sad, and the in-between in real moments.

5. **Aspiring real moments**

A lifestyle that may be desired, but balanced in real-life, authentic images and videos. Create content that feels realistic and achievable.



Submitting to Shutterstock





How to upload your first submission

1. Read Shutterstock submission guidelines

These guidelines explain appropriate content to upload, legal rights and responsibilities. submit.shutterstock.com/guidelines

2. Evaluate your content

Does your image have commercial value?
Would it be used for an advertising or editorial purpose?
If your content fits this description, upload!

3. Check the quality, then upload

View your images magnified. Ensure there are no noise or defects before upload.

4. Include appropriate metadata and keywords

Better keywords = better sales. Make sure your keywords are accurate to each individual image.

5. Submit

Once you are satisfied, submit! Upload your content at submit.shutterstock.com

Once you've finished uploading, keep an eye on your inbox for acceptance. If you have rejected content, don't get discouraged. Keep improving, and try submitting to Shutterstock again!





Keywording

Keywords are words that customers may use to search for your images with. Here are a few tips on writing successful keywords.

25-45 accurate keywords

Per image. Include multi word keywords such as “sandy beach” or “organic lettuce”.

Think like a customer

Picture the person most likely to download your image. What do they search?

Unique titles and descriptions

Be punchy and descriptive. They should be as accurate as possible. Don't batch title!

Don't spam

Irrelevant keywords will bring your content to the wrong customer, resulting in a loss of potential sales.

Accurately describe people

Don't use generic terms to describe people. Be descriptive to your models specific ethnicity, gender, and age.





How to work with model and property releases

A model release is a document you provide a model to obtain the permission and rights to license content to Shutterstock. Property releases are required for any location that is privately owned. You can find releases to download in your Shutterstock profile.

Working with models

Don't simply rely on friends. Look to agencies, street castings, social media, and friends and family to find the right people to work with. Always have a model release in case an opportunity arises.

Working on location

If you are shooting on location, ensure you have property releases available. Be aware of locations that are not allowed to be photographed, before you waste your time and money on content that will not be accepted.

Content cannot be accepted without appropriate releases for recognizable people.



5 reasons images get rejected

Our reviewers are responsible for quality control and enforcement of legal and editorial standards. Here are some top reasons content gets rejected and solutions to remember.

1. Releases: Incorrect or missing model and property releases

Solution: Always have model releases on hand, and fact-check before you submit.

2. Quality: Content with focus, composition, lighting or noise issues.

Solution: Check our blog for educational tips before you shoot, and magnify your image before submitting to check for flaws.

3. Footage Quality: Clips that contain visible noise, pixelation, or compression artifacts.

Solution: Go to our YouTube Tutorials for video educational material. Check the quality on mobile and desktop before submitting.

4. Metadata: Keywords that are irrelevant, and non-English metadata.

Solution: Use our Keyword Tool before submitting, and ensure all keywords are accurate.

5. Copyright and IP: Images and clips that include intellectual property or copyrighted material

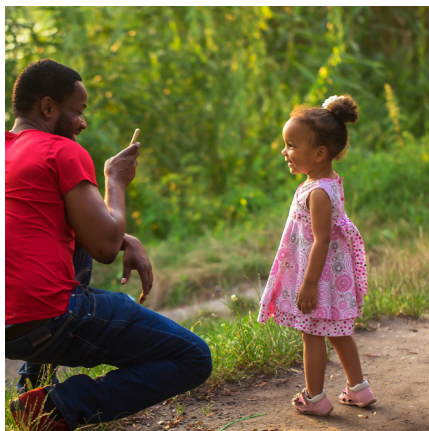
Solution: Familiarize yourself with the Known Image Restrictions. Ensure there are no distinguishable cues referencing existing commercial properties.



Trademarks and copyright

When uploading to stock, you cannot include any distinguishing clues that reference an existing brand, corporation, company or famous design. This may constitute infringement and your content will be rejected.

- Familiarize yourself with our list of [Known Image Restrictions](#)
- Avoid submitting images of isolated objects that may refer to a specific product or service.
- If your image has questionable elements or copyrighted characters, remove them in post-production. Check out our [blog](#) for educational tips on how to do this.



Royalties explained

Technically, customers don't "buy" your images. They "license" them. You still own the rights to distribute and display your content, but a license gives the customer permission to use your work.

Each time a customer licenses an image from Shutterstock, you are paid a royalty fee.

You can see each of our license types and associated royalty amounts on our earning schedule at submit.shutterstock.com/earnings_schedule





Glossary

Contributor

This refers to you! A contributor is a photographer, videographer, composer or illustrator who creates and contributes to Shutterstock.

Royalty Free (RF)

When a customer licenses an image from you, they can use the image multiple times without multiple fees.

Subscription

Our customers can sign up for a monthly subscription, which allows them to download content daily. Each download generates revenue for you.

Stock

The industry term for stock collections. Imagery can come from anyone, from high-end professionals to the general public.

Commercial Use

Refers to images used in advertisements, product packaging, and other marketing channels to promote a good or service. Releases are required.

Editorial Use

Depicts a newsworthy subject or event and will not be allowed to be used for commercial purposes without the permission of the subject.

Copyright

A form of legal protection that gives the authors of a creative work the exclusive right to display, reproduce, distribute, and financially benefit from the work they create.

Metadata

Information about an image. For example, keywords used to describe an image are considered metadata.



Ready to start submitting to Shutterstock?

Start earning money as a creative artist within minutes by joining our contributor community.

Visit submit.shutterstock.com to start earning money from your creative work.

Need more tips?

- Signup or Login
submit.shutterstock.com
- Contributor Support Center
shutterstock.com/contributorsupport
- Contributor Blog
shutterstock.com/blog/contributors
- Shutterstock Tutorials
youtube.com/channel/UCKyVN7fBTaQ3np4W007IK9A
- The Shot List
shutterstock.com/explore/the-shot-list
- Download the Contributor App
shutterstock.com/explore/contributor-mobile-app

