



Presented by
[MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)



Copyright Notice

Copyright © NAMS, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

No part of this material may be used, reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form and by any means whatsoever, including without limitation photocopying, recording or other electronic or mechanical methods or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission from the author, except for brief excerpts in a review.

This material is intended to provide general information only. Neither the author nor publisher provide any legal or other professional advice. If you need professional advice, you should seek advice from the appropriate licensed professional. This material does not provide complete information on the subject matter covered. This material is not intended to address specific requirements, either for an individual or an organization.

This material is intended to be used only as a general guide, and not as a sole source of information on the subject matter. While the author has undertaken diligent efforts to ensure accuracy, there is no guarantee of accuracy or of no errors, omissions or typographical errors. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional.

Any reference to any person or organization whether living or dead is purely coincidental. The author and publisher shall have no liability or responsibility to any person or entity and hereby disclaim all liability, including without limitation, liability for consequential damages regarding any claim, loss or damage that may be incurred, or alleged to have been incurred, directly or indirectly, arising out of the information provided in this material.

A PERSONAL INVITATION!

And a special 14 day \$1 trial to the best business training resource library available



1

Magnetize

Every business person must have the ability to persist until they prosper by training the right mindset...

2

Monetize

Making money is urgent and important for ALL businesses. It's the key to financing your growth...

3

Methodize

After mastering sales and marketing, creating your own products correctly adds zeroes to your business...

Click here to start today!

NAMS.ws/14trial



WHAT DO INSIDERS GET?

Weekly MASTERMIND Call - What's working

30-Day Challenges - 12 months essential topics

Insiders Facebook Group - active peer community

PLR Articles - articles, report and ecourse each month

Audio & Graphics Gallery

Micro Workshops - nearly 2 dozen training sessions

Tutorial Library - Tech tool & process tutorials

Custom Tutorials - 18 essential tools tutorials

Custom Marketing Suite Software including site builder, video management, tracking, quiz engine

And much more...



Table of Contents

Ultimate Guide to Blog Visuals	4
Textbook	4
Step One: The Science and Basics Behind Visual Content	5
Step Two: Expand Your Visual Repertoire.....	7
Step Three: Everything You Need to Know About Photographs	10
Step Four: Everything You Need to Know About Videos	15
Step Five: Everything You Need to Know About Illustrations and Graphics	17
Step Six: Get Out of Your Graphics Rut.....	21
Step Seven: Beware Over-Designing	23

Ultimate Guide to Blog Visuals

Textbook

Unless your blog has a strong voice, it's not going to catch attention and create return readers. Your blog depends on personality—just like real life friendships. If someone stands in front of you at a gathering and gives you a slick speech that sounds like a government website page or a TV sales pitch, you're not going to want to hang around. There's no emotional investment.

But if you discover that someone quotes from your all-time favorite movie, loves doodling while watching webinars (just like you), adores dark chocolate (and you're a chocoholic) and is as passionate as you are about animal adoption, you'll strike up a conversation with her. You'll both be eager to compare favorite chocolate brands and movies, discuss rescue strategies for animal shelters; perhaps talk about other personal things, and exchange email addresses.

That's what you want to do with your blog—get into a relationship with those readers who are passionate about your specific topic or area of business. And you don't do it with generic posts, or posts that read as if they were written by an English teacher.

But writing is only the first step in building that strong, unique voice. **Visual elements** will add many more layers to your blog's identity and readability—as well as capturing the attention of your ideal reader in the first place.

Visual elements add **value, life** and **impact** to your words.



This text will help you do more than merely add a photo to every post. It will help you kick your blogging up a notch in every visual area. While you can

do amazing things with graphics, never forget that it's about connection. It's about your reader. Blogs should entertain, inspire and make them want to tune in again—and here's how to get your visual content to be as unique and engaging as you are.

Step One: The Science and Basics Behind Visual Content

Humans are visual creatures. We tend to believe what we see. Visuals don't just engage our brains: They also engage the **emotions** and the **senses**. There's a tendency to treat visual content as "pictures", but it's important to remember that visual content is just that: *Content*.

We also tend to transfer our own emotions onto visuals that trigger those emotions. Look at a beautiful photograph of a morning on the lake, and your heart might flip back to that vacation when you were first married, sitting on the dock together watching the sun rise over the water. Watch an up-close video of an impressive thunderstorm in the mountains, and it will either trigger surges of excitement and adrenalin (if you have a thrill-seeker personality) or fear (if you lost relatives in a mudslide).

Visuals connect with the most primitive parts of our adrenal cortices, and they are also capable of connecting to the most sophisticated parts of our brains.

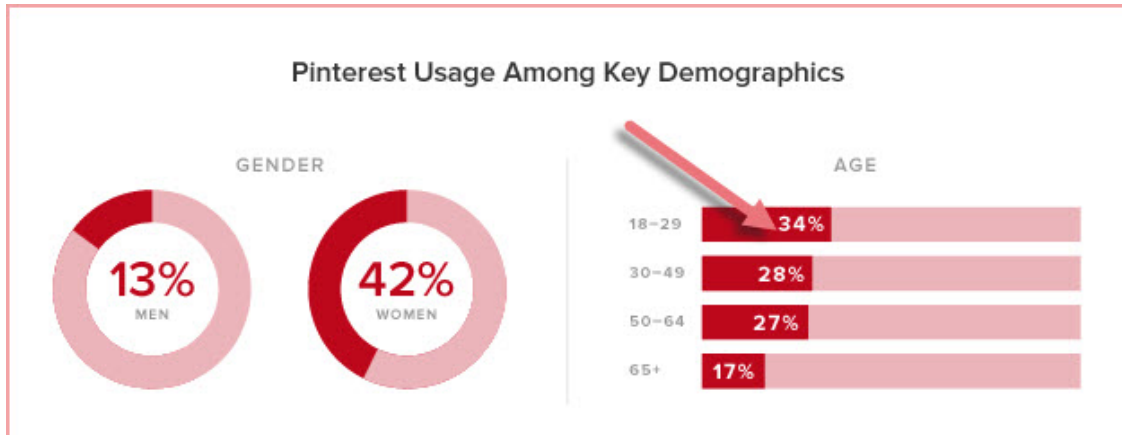
The old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words" really does have truth behind it.

Visuals can also **polarize**—witness the reactions of our two hypothetical viewers to the mountain thunderstorm video. One is triggered into euphoria; the other into fear. Polarizing can be a powerful tool to further qualify the ideal reader—but it only works if you know what polarizing elements you are using; and why.

So it makes sense that informed use of a mix of different media—visual, auditory and written—will pull in even more of your desired audience than if you stuck to just one content type. You can do this with even more impact, however, if you understand a little of the science behind the graphics.

The first place to start: **Examine current graphic trends**. Check sites like [SproutSocial](#), where you can help yourself to social platform demographics, stats on user numbers and more. You can check to see basic stats such as NAMS, Inc. [MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)

exactly which age group comprises the highest user base of visual sites like Pinterest or Instagram; if that group has a stronger bias toward or against female users; and more



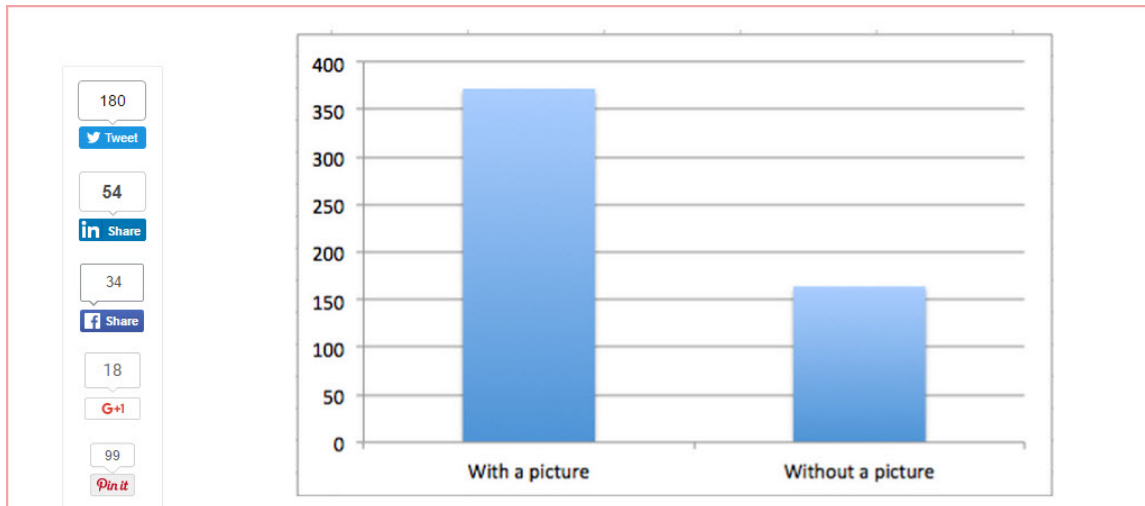
For example, Pinterest’s strongest user demographic has now shifted towards a younger demographic—the 18-29 age group. If you check out the 65+ age group, you’ll notice that only 17% use Pinterest.

This means that you might happily be able to ignore Pinterest if you are running a blog for seniors—UNLESS you are targeting that specific 17% user base; the one that dotes on Pinterest, and your blog is all about learning to use Pinterest, for example.

Demographics should never be the sole consideration when you are creating your blog target—but knowing empirical, concrete facts instead of relying on biased, hazy assumptions can really help you refine and target with confidence.

[Buzzsumo](#) is another stats-leaning authority blog you can follow, if you want to get the latest stats and insights into internet and social media trends. A perfect example is this helpful post, [How to Massively Boost Your Blog Traffic with these 5 Awesome Image Stats](#).

For example, you can see at glance how dramatically engagement increases, when you add a picture to a Twitter tweet:



Did you notice how fast that process was? How that simple graphic told you instantly—at a glance—what it might have taken you a few minutes to read?

Another of the facts in this post concludes, based on testing that neither you nor I have the time to do, that **the perfect ratio of graphic content to text equals one graphic every 75-150 words**—across ALL platforms.

Stats sites can take the guesswork out of using visuals for you ... platform to platform, as well as on your blog.

There are other scientific facts it's important to learn about visuals. No more stats, this time—just the basic principle of good design.

What is good design? For our purposes, it's whatever pleases your reader, makes it easier for them to view, understand and retain your content—and makes your blog stand out vividly in your reader's memory. It's what makes her prefer your blog over a more powerful competitor!

Step Two: Expand Your Visual Repertoire

There is so much more you can do than simply sticking a photo in a post. You can include all sorts of different types of graphic elements:

- ✓ Image quotes
- ✓ Cover photos for your podcasts (consistency; branding)
- ✓ Embedded videos

- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Illustrations
- ✓ Charts and spreadsheets
- ✓ Icons and avatars
- ✓ Branding elements
- ✓ Games, quizzes, polls (yes, these can count as visuals)
- ✓ Screenshots
- ✓ 3D images
- ✓ Cartoons
- ✓ Graphs
- ✓ Pie charts
- ✓ Diagrams

And more types of graphic elements—and tools—are being invented as we speak.

There are also apps and SaaS sites now to help you create different types of graphics almost instantly. What “SaaS” means is software licensed as a service—for example: Adobe design programs are now run under the SaaS model. You need to pay a monthly subscription to use them online.

Many SaaS tools are free; some are inexpensive; and others are high-end. The more exclusive a program is (without competition), the higher the price you can expect to pay.

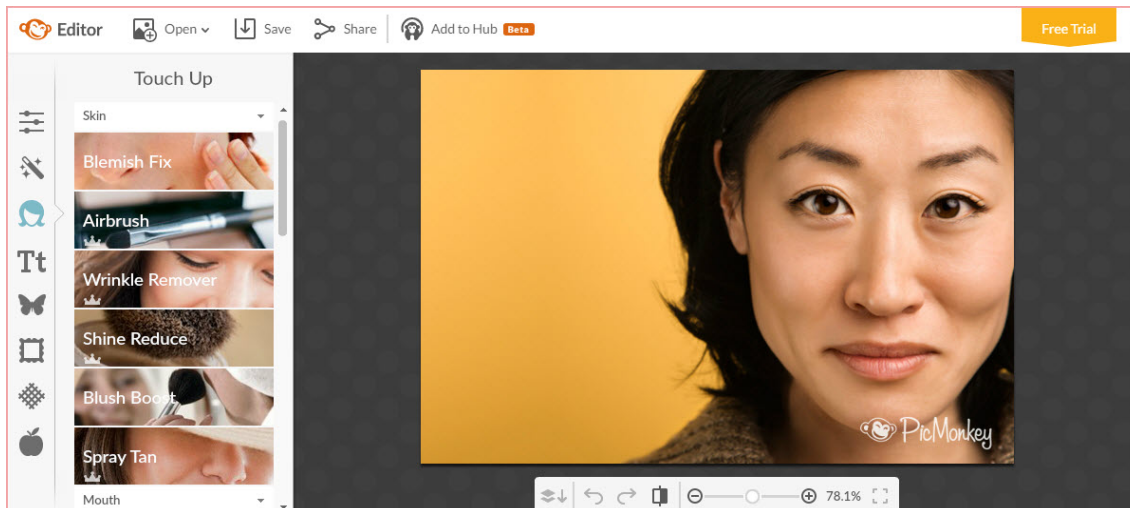
Let’s take a look at what you can do with these tools...

PicMonkey started off by giving people the opportunity to create simple image quotes and infographics. They became so popular, they expanded this repertoire to include a whole suite of software programs for one monthly subscription.

A PicMonkey Royale subscription gives you the whole user-friendly, image editing and creation suite for \$4.99 per month.

Here's a look at just one of PicMonkey's software programs:

[PicMonkeyPhotoEdit](#):



It's so easy, all you do is click on the function you want and press the "Apply" button from the drop-down.

PicMonkey Royale gives you four different graphics suites for one low monthly membership fee of \$4.99: Edit, Touch up, Design and Collage. (When you look for graphics programs, look for suites that include multiple tools and resources. What that does is save you from having half-a dozen expensive monthly subscriptions.)

So, write down your needs, then find the design SaaS that is going to provide you with the tools you need for your ideal budget.

It's important to remember that there are SaaS tools for every budget. For example, if you compare PicMonkey (\$4.99 per month) to Adobe Creative Cloud—at \$49.99 per month (with a year-long commitment: \$79.99 per month without). You have to keep in mind, however, that a graphic designer would probably prefer to go with Creative Cloud, which offers the ultimate in sophistication, while a blogger's needs are likely to be met perfectly well by PicMonkey Royale.

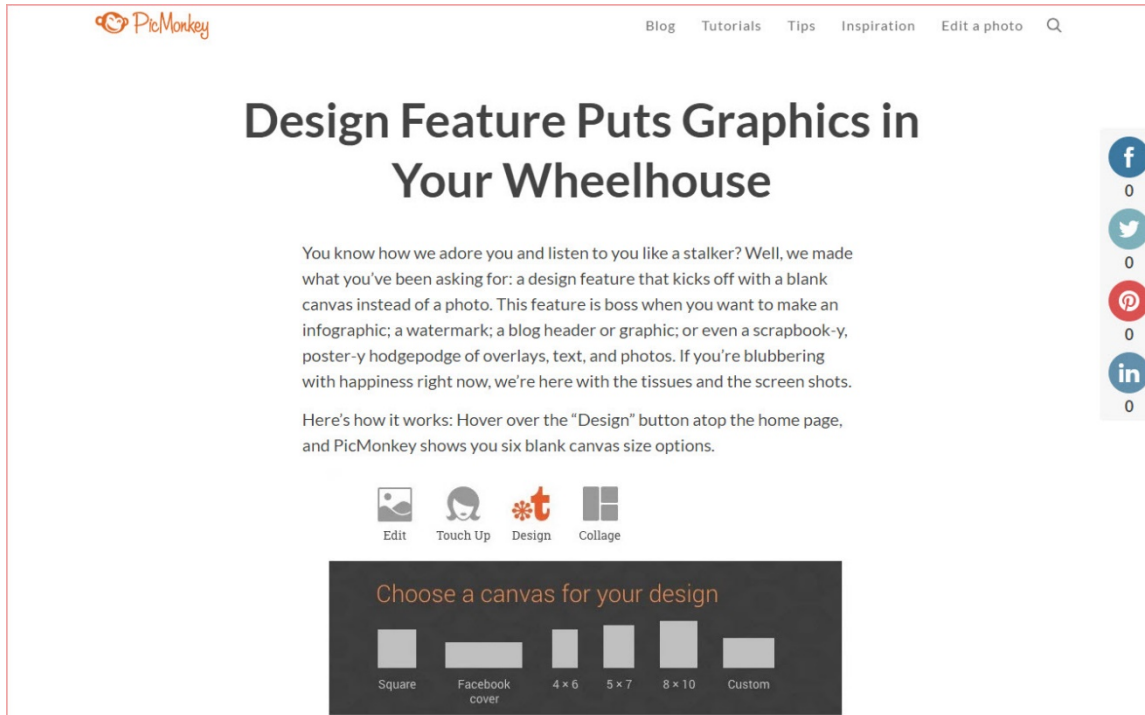
The SaaS suites you choose should also be informed by your specific visual needs. For example, if you use a lot of stock photos, but you also plan to

[MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)

embed multiple videos in your blog, go with a stock site that also licenses video content, like [Shutterstock](#).

And remember to keep on top of all the latest in graphic effects and design news, so you are at the forefront of using new features and effects.

To do this, check to see if any SaaS suites you are using publish their own blogs. That's where you'll see [all the latest graphic effects news](#).



Keeping current on the latest graphics and visuals trends will really help you expand your visual repertoire.

Step Three: Everything You Need to Know About Photographs

You probably already know the basics of blog design principles: Of making your blog more visually appealing.

- ✓ Lots of 'white space'
- ✓ Colors that "brand" your blog
- ✓ A strong focal point to your graphic

- ✓ At least one area of dramatic contrast
- ✓ High quality graphics
- ✓ Fonts that support your message and help your text stand out

This goes for all your photographs, too. They need to create impact and turn heads.

But in addition to tried-and-true design principles, what you also need to consider is newer design basics—such as making sure your blog displays properly on mobiles and making sure you use photographs that don’t “disappear” on mobile displays.

A “disappearing” photo would be one filled with small, multiple objects. Seen shrunk down, it looks like a mish-mosh of nothing. There’s no one bright visual to grab the eye. Here’s the danger: Photographs that look gorgeous when they are 1500 x 1200 pixels can look like nothing at all when you shrink them down to the size of the average mobile screen. People will be left saying, “What on earth am I looking at?” instead of, “Wow, what a visually stunning photo of a million frogs swarming”.

Another way to make one single element stand out, when you are considering how your graphic will look on a mobile screen: **Use strong color contrast.**

Here’s how Pixabay.com photographer, [Alexandra](#)—profile: **Alexas_Fotos**—has used color to make two solitary objects in a bunch of identical objects stand out:



So stay on top of visual and graphic trends and stats, be aware of the basic elements of strong design (especially as this applies to mobile) and above all, make sure your graphics are **relevant** to your brand and to your message.

Watch out for hidden elements in your graphics that undo your message. A by-now well-known example is that of a video put out by a top financial coach, to teach people about “financial freedom”—but all the time she was speaking, her entire screen was overlaid by the shadows of bars, probably from a reinforced window or screen door, or maybe even from railings. No matter: The “bars” made her audience instantly think of “prison”.

You can’t get much more opposite an intended message than that unfortunate visual!

If you ask these simple questions before adding a visual to your post, you’ll avoid drastic design mistakes like the one we’ve just mentioned. Ask yourself: “Is there anything in this image that contradicts my main message?”

Then ask yourself: “Is this the best type of visual to illustrate this post?”

There are also a few other important basics to know, before you get too happy with graphics. Watch out also for the **sources** of your photos and graphics. Make sure these are impeccable and legal.

An important source of resources to any blogger are **stock image sites**. There are a multitude of these, ranging from free to paid. Stock image sites can be a wonderful source of supplying images—almost instantly. Search your topic, click ... and select the best one presented.

The benefits of paying for stock photos include: No traveling for half a day to reach that perfect acacia tree. No flying to the Alps and shelling out a fortune to photograph the Matterhorn. No going up in a hot air balloon when you suffer from motion sickness and a fear of heights, just to take an aerial photograph of rural Idaho.

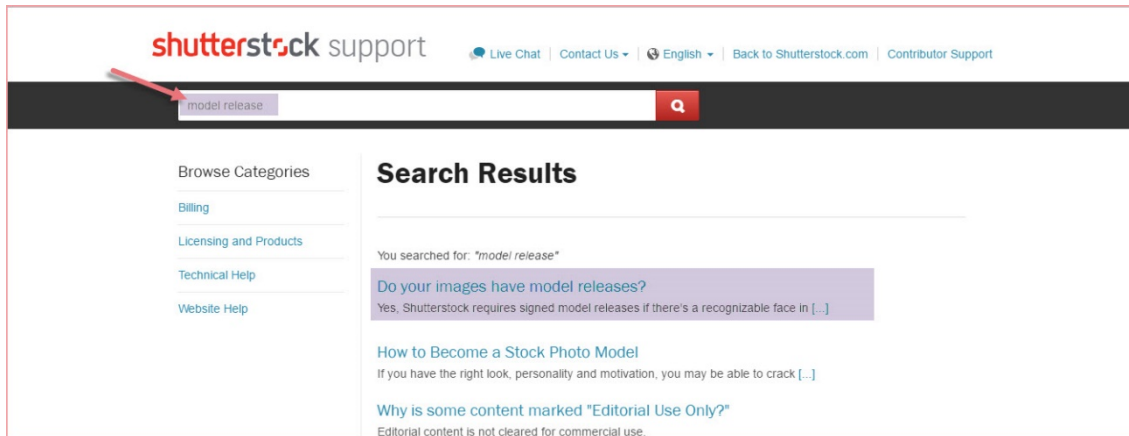
No matter what type of stock site you use, however, make sure you select a stock site that provides proof of **model release forms**, if you are selecting photos containing **people**. (Back views don't count—the face has to be visible.) Especially be cautious about photos containing children.

You will occasionally come across articles that say you don't need model release forms. In many cases, that is true. Editorial use and fair use are two conditions with a lot more latitude. And it is the photographer's responsibility to get a model release—not yours.

It is NOT true that there have been no lawsuits over a lack of model release forms, however: In fact, there have been many lawsuits. Usually, however, these occur when the photographer uses a photo in a way potentially harmful to the model's reputation—for example, using a stock photo of a girl-next-door type on the cover of an erotic novel would be a sure-fire way to find yourself sued.

Copyright law is ambiguous at best to the average layperson, so don't take a chance. Your best practice is to use a stock image site that is meticulous about its model releases, like Shutterstock.

(Just type "model release" into its [FAQ Section](#) and you will find clear, unambiguous answers to all your questions.)



If you wish to learn more about model releases, “fair use” and copyright infringement, go to a reputable site like the [Stanford University Library](#), where you will find excellent, clearer-than-usual-to-the-average-joe articles definitively covering all your general copyright and liability questions.

And if you’re going to take your own photographs, do make sure that you learn about model releases—and use them, if you include people in your photographs.

Best Uses for Photographs:

That takes care of the ‘quality and design’ end of working with photographs, but the most exciting part of using photographs is what they can do for you and your readers!

You can use photographs as:

- ✓ Proof you practice what you preach (you in action)
- ✓ Showcasing successful clients
- ✓ Verifying awards that you or your clients have won
- ✓ Sharing photos of scenes and topics clients can identify with
- ✓ Display information highlights

You can also mix mood and purpose in your photographs to produce:

- ✓ Playful photos

- ✓ Product shots
- ✓ Step-by-step “how to” diagrams
- ✓ Location (your retreat venue, your office, vacation destination, etc.)
- ✓ Personal shots
- ✓ Inspirational shots
- ✓ On-the-scene shots (events, awards)
- ✓ Viral shots (your dog doing something unbearably cute)
- ✓ Book cover shots
- ✓ Podcast cover photos
- ✓ Backgrounds (cover photos, ads)

Get into the habit of always looking at your photos with fresh eyes. Always say to yourself: “How can I kick this up a notch? What would give this type of photograph even more impact?”

And—again—keep in mind that many people will be viewing your photographs on mobile.

Step Four: Everything You Need to Know About Videos

Much of the information you’ve just acquired about photographs applies to videos too: But videos have one major edge that photographs don’t: Videos are not static. They feel **live**. They are **interactive**. They engage your blog visitor in an event—she is no longer just looking; she is **reacting**. And that inevitably involves the emotions.

Videos provide a wonderful way to vary your content: However, there’s a right way and a wrong way to display them.

1. NEVER upload your video directly to your own server
2. DO upload your video to a white-listed provider like YouTube or Vimeo, and embed the link into your blog

You can also make your video do double-duty, and attract two distinctly separate segments of your ideal audience:

- ✓ Those who read blogs
- ✓ Those who browse for videos

Create and/or brand your YouTube channel, and upload your videos directly to YouTube. You can optimize your video for sharing on YouTube—and embed the link that YouTube will supply you with on your blog.

You may have heard that there's no longer a need to embed video in WordPress 2.9: I would still embed it anyway—the reason being that many people report no longer being able to display videos or livestreams. Instead, they get a message like so:



So, follow the practice of embedding until WordPress (or Google) fixes this glitch.

You don't have to supply your own videos, either: You can use **videos from stock sites** like [Shutterstock](#) or [Bigstockphoto](#), who between them have over 1,000,000 video clips for you to choose from.

But what better way to connect with readers than to occasionally post a video showing you speaking to them face to face or demonstrating with your own products how to use your online self-scheduling app: Or sharing a proud clip of another client accepting an award.

Or even inviting your clients (and readers) to share **video testimonials** about your coaching and products.

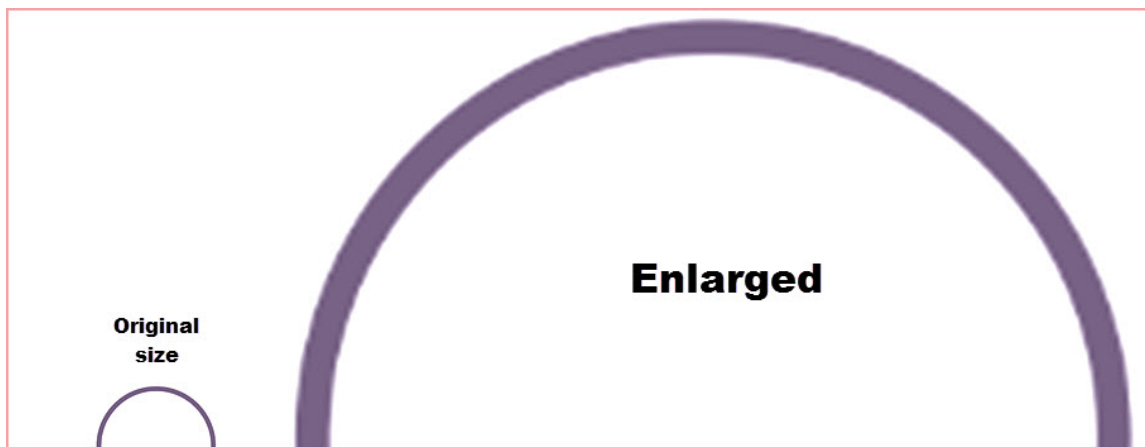
Step Five: Everything You Need to Know About Illustrations and Graphics

Illustrations and graphics that are not photographic in nature offer you another great way to step up the visuals in your blog.

There are two types of illustration:

- ✓ Vector
- ✓ Non-vector

A vector drawing is very precise. It's created mathematically using tools like Adobe Illustrator, and it results in images that retain their sharpness and shape no matter what size they are resized too—unlike the average graphic created with a pen or brush tool. Blow the latter up, and they lose definition. They become pixelated and lose edge definition.

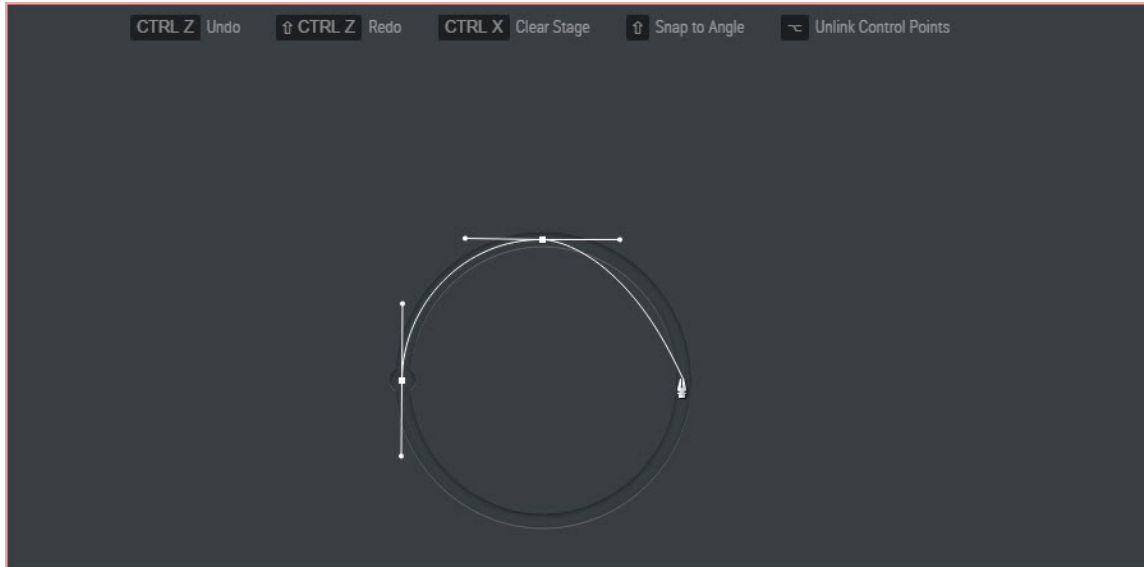


That's one reason why it's a good idea to **outsource diagrams, logos and freehand drawings** to professional illustrators or graphic designers. They will use tools like pens that create precise Bézier curves, so that your graphics retains its crispness at any size.

NAMS, Inc.

[MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)

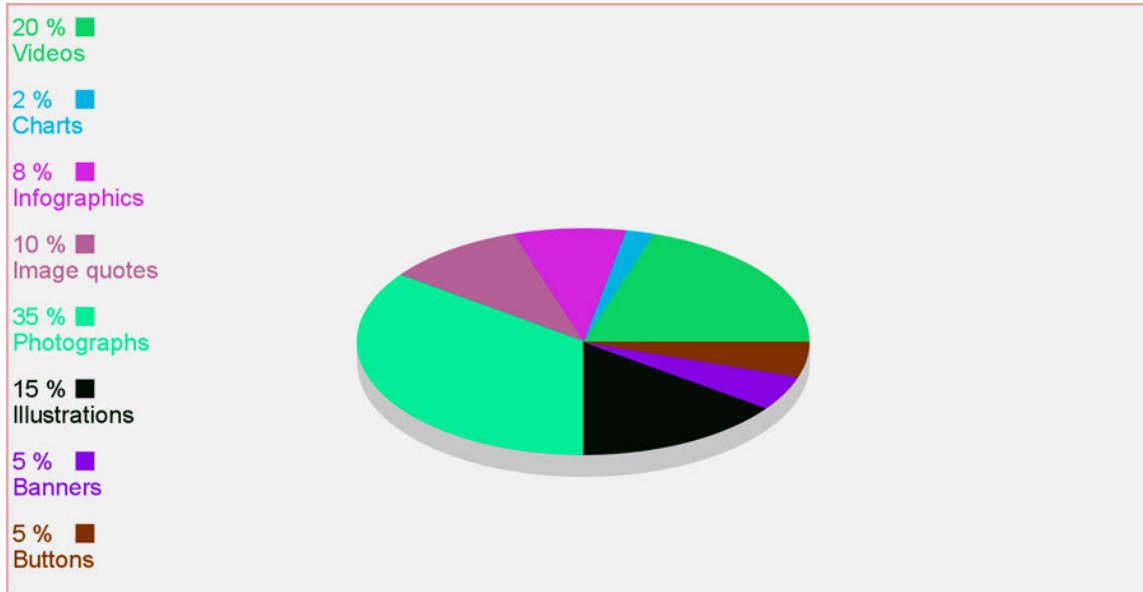
Working with Bézier curves is not easy. You click on a node and drag the resulting line to create another node. You can work in straight lines or curves. (If you want to try for yourself, go to [The Bézier Game](#) and practice.)



Download an [image and file types cheat sheet](#) from MODassic’s website, if you’d like to learn more about graphics terminology and types.

But no: You’re not necessarily stuck with bad graphics if you don’t hire an illustrator and you don’t have an art degree yourself. You can find many SaaS programs that will allow you to **create shapes, charts and diagrams**—these sites will do the heavy lifting for you.

For example, this particular pie chart was created for free, in less than thirty seconds, at [PieColor](#).



You can even create 3D graphics. Many of the paid SaaS suites allow this—but you can very quickly create 3D graphics using suites like [Boxshot King](#) or Canva.

Create Professional 3D Graphics Like These
In Just 2 Minutes – *Without* Photoshop

Adding professional graphics to your website has never been easier:

- ✓ Works with both Mac and PC
- ✓ NO creativity required
- ✓ NO "tech" skills required
- ✓ NO graphic design skills required
- ✓ NO additional software required
- ✓ Cranks out 44 different designs

GET STARTED NOW

You can also use apps like [Rafflecopter](#) to create graphics for contests, sweepstakes, giveaways, surveys and more to embed and display on your website.

So, you don't have to be a graphic designer to create professional graphics at all!

Finally, don't forget you can use **typography** as a design element too. You can break up large chunks of text with bolded sub-heads in your custom colors. You can choose types that suit the style of your blog—but if you want to use a particularly fancy font:

NAMS, Inc.

[MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)

- ✓ Make sure it is not a paid font that requires you to license it for commercial use
- ✓ Understand that not all visitors will be able to see your fancy font

If that font is not installed on their computers, their browsers will divert to basic fonts such as:

- ✓ Helvetica
- ✓ Arial
- ✓ Times New Roman
- ✓ Georgia

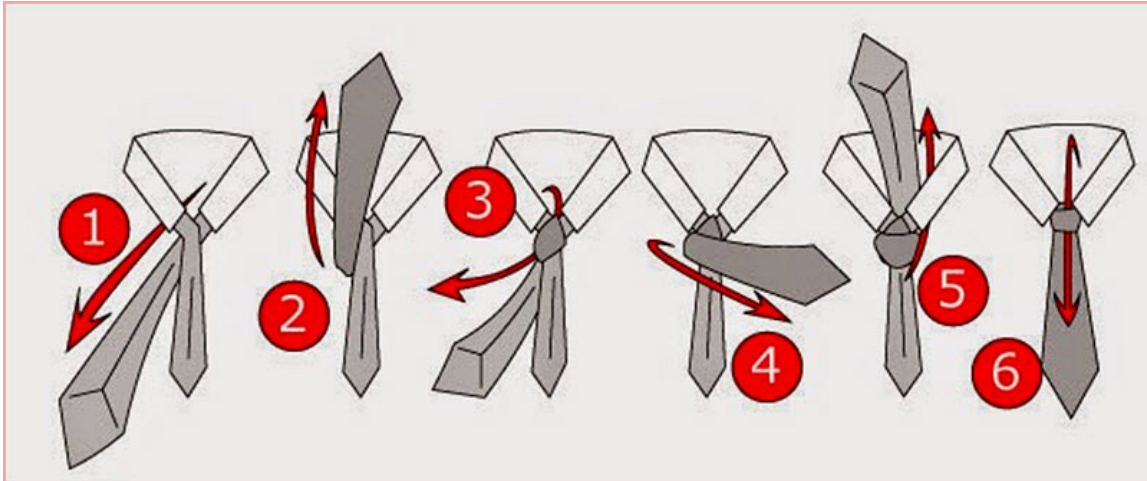
Placement, size and font choice all powerfully combine to reinforce your message. For example, let's take a look at [The Threepenny Editor](#) ...



Notice how the site name is presented in Courier—a typeface associated with old-fashioned, manual typewriters, reinforcing the graphic of one. And the menu tabs are laid out like cut-up pieces of newsprint.

Your fonts don't have to be clever or fancy, but they should be clean and crisp, with elements like heads and sub-heads large enough to stand out.

Graphics also make your blog more accessible. Even people who don't speak your language can glance at a step-by-step illustration, and understand what you want them to do.



(That's why we have **pictographs** on road signs.)



Open your mind to all the ways you can use graphics; all the ways you can add visual elements to liven up your blog.

But we're not done yet. We still have to discuss ...

Step Six: Get Out of Your Graphics Rut

How do you make your graphics? Always the same way with the same program? Keep your eyes and ears open for different graphics apps, membership sites and SaaS tools.

Spice your blog up quickly by trying new techniques and graphic treatments.

For example, use diagonal shooting, instead of your standard vertical or horizontal.

To use diagonals effectively, either tilt your camera diagonally or choose diagonal views.



You can also:

- ✓ Apply vintage or sepia effects
- ✓ Apply different filters
- ✓ Experiment with physical filters: For example, shooting through a plastic bottle, or draping a nylon scarf over your lens
- ✓ Use plugins and apps
- ✓ Feature kids' drawings
- ✓ Feature subscriber photos
- ✓ Share video doodles

You really are limited only by your imagination—and you can easily broaden this by:

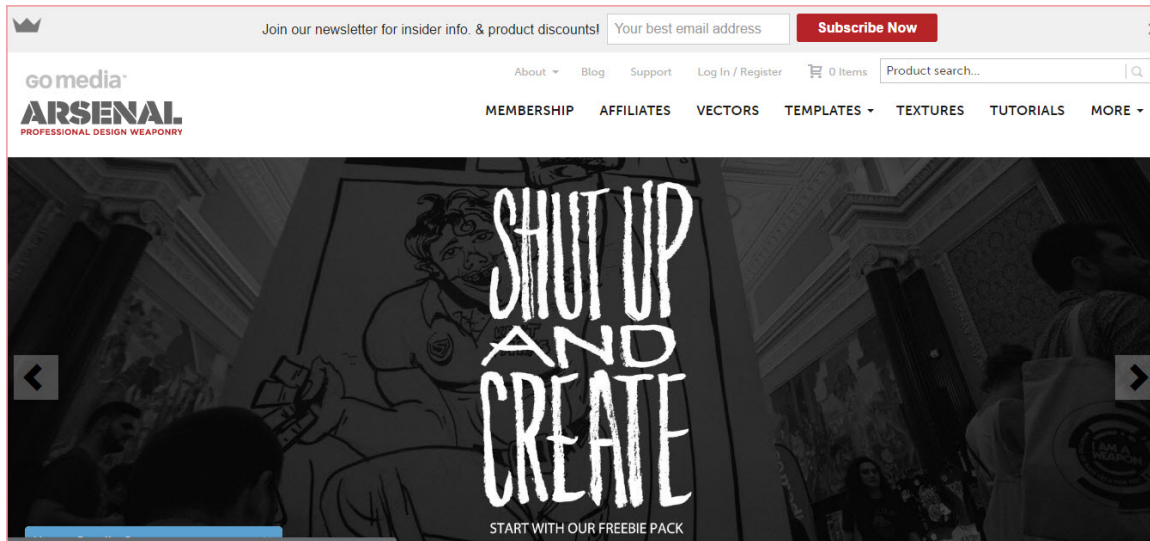
1. Reading photography or design books and magazines

NAMS, Inc.

[MyNAMS Insiders Club](#)

2. Taking graphics or photography courses
3. Joining a graphic image club

The best sort combines **member interaction, images and instruction.**



And if you really don't want to join, at least sign up for **graphics newsletters**. This is where you'll find news, tips and sometimes, even **free images and resources**.

Step Seven: Beware Over-Designing

There's a **balance** you need to strike between information and design.

A phenomenon known in the web design world, for example, is over-designing. That's where a designer loses track of the message—that all-important message—and goes overboard on creating a web page that is visually sumptuous and gorgeous ... but which leaves the visitor without a clue as to what the site is really all about.

On the extreme end, of course, is text-heavy blogs; the ones that are so dense, you feel like you've eaten five-year-old, gluten-free Christmas fruitcake (after you go cross-eyed, from all that text!)

So, **make sure that your graphics always support, represent and enhance your message** ... and vice versa.

One great idea: **Keep a Graphics Journal.** Yes, just like a diary. Buy a physical journal, create an MS Word folder, keep a spreadsheet listing sources and types—however you want to organize it.

Note down links to websites or blogs that grab you. Take screenshots of graphic affects you like. Note down links to graphics tutorials, or to cool new SaaS sites.

Make note of pricing too, if you're keeping track of new plugin, app and SaaS tools and services.

FREE REPORT

MAKE BIG MONEY CREATING SIMPLE ONLINE COURSE WITHOUT ANY EXPERIENCE!

Download Our FREE Report
Now And Discover:

- 1 Secrets to making big money creating your own simple online courses!
- 2 How to make killer online courses, even if you aren't an expert in anything!
- 3 How to create video courses without a lot of technical knowledge!
- 4 How to choose the right topic and price your course for the most possible profit!

And much more - all within this special
FREE report!



Download now

Get YOUR FREE Copy here:

NAMS.ws/DCP01

