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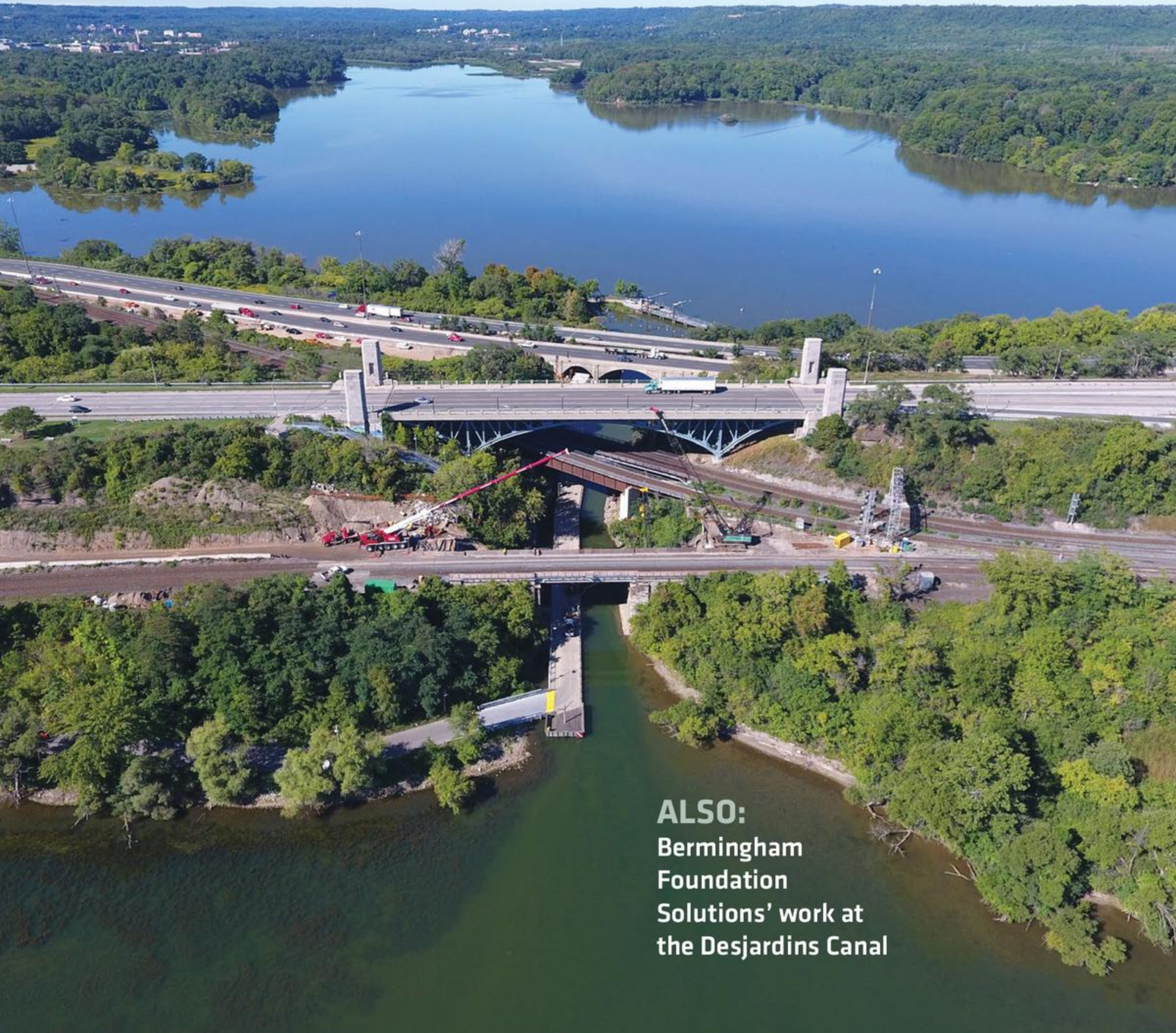
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## BUSINESS STRATEGIES YOU MAY NOT HAVE CONSIDERED



**ALSO:**  
Bermingham  
Foundation  
Solutions' work at  
the Desjardins Canal



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# PHOTO READY

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Be sure to brief your photographer on your goals for project photography, and tell them any safety rules or concerns for the site



# Construction photography is not as easy as it looks, but it's worth the effort

By Heather Hudson

Sometimes, you have to see it to believe it.

In a world where YouTube is the second most popular search engine, photos and videos are king when it comes to gathering information. Whether you're showcasing your work on your website, advertising your services or prospecting for new clients, photographs tell a compelling story in the deep foundations industry.

Joel Price, director of business at Doublestar Drilling in Alberta, says professional photography has become an important tool for the company.

"The idea of using photography took root about five years ago when we were looking to expand our market share and

**"When we have a project that we think is significant, whether it's the project itself or the techniques required, we capture it."**

– Joel Price, Doublestar Drilling



Professional photographers know how to frame a shot to avoid it looking cluttered

OPPOSITE PAGE: MIKE CRANE PHOTOGRAPHY | www.mikecranephotography.com  
THIS PAGE: LATITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY/DOUBLESTAR DRILLING





LATITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY/DOUBLESTAR DRILLING

Doublestar Drilling invests in professional photography for any project they deem significant, whether due to the project itself or the techniques involved



DOUBLESTAR DRILLING

A still shot from one of Doublestar Drilling's drone videos



BERMINGHAM FOUNDATION SOLUTIONS

Birmingham Foundation Solutions prefers to capture the full job perspective in a photo and supplement with equipment shots

service offering. We decided to take images to prove we can do certain jobs on a large scale and to showcase our capacity and the equipment in our fleet," he said. "When we have a project that we think is significant, whether it's the project itself or the techniques required, we capture it."

## Why take photographs?

There's no question that photography is ideal for creating a stunning website that speaks volumes to customers, but there are other important uses for images.

"We use [photography] in print media as well. All of our brochures, mail-outs and event handouts include high-quality photos of what Doublestar has done lately," said Price.

Photos are also exceedingly helpful for training and internal purposes, according to Mike Crane, owner of Mike Crane Photography, a sought-after industrial photographer in British Columbia. He's often called out to job sites to

photograph new techniques or marquis projects that don't come along every day.

"I've had companies use images for lots of different purposes, like association photo contests, conferences and calendars," he said. "It's also surprising how much of it gets used internally on employee databases so engineers and contractors can discuss techniques using the images."

Ontario-based Birmingham Foundation Solutions uses professional photography in their marketing efforts, but have also found the photos to be helpful in keeping staff in the loop about projects.

"We have weekly meetings for office staff and it's nice for everybody to see what's going on in the field," said sales representative David Zanchetta. "It's a lot easier to explain to others the scope of the work that you're doing when you have photos to help tell the story. A picture's worth way more than 1,000 words."

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**“It’s a lot easier to explain to others the scope of the work that you’re doing when you have photos to help tell the story. A picture’s worth way more than 1,000 words.”**

– David Zanchetta, Bermingham Foundation Solutions

A photo from Bermingham Foundation Solutions work on Dam #37 at Bolsover project. On the far right, the photos displays how well the sediment curtain worked.

Doublestar also uses the best photos as art in their offices.

“We try to hang the latest and greatest images in our hallways and offices ... it helps instill pride and a greater sense of accomplishment in the staff. Past projects are our legacy of hard work and need to be remembered,” said Price.

But perhaps one of the most lucrative uses for great photos is when submitting a tender.

“We have a repository of photos we draw from... if we happen to have done a similar job, even if it was six years ago, we pull those images to include in our bid documents. That’s a valuable piece of the puzzle,” said Price.



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# TIPS ON TAKING YOUR OWN PHOTOS

Professional photographer Mike Crane says taking photographs on site isn't as easy as it looks.

## What to focus on

Crane says one of the biggest mistakes a photographer can make is to rush in without thinking about what you want to capture.

"A big thing I see with a lot of amateur photos is a completely packed photo where you can't get across the process or technique being used because the image is so cluttered. Maybe you want to wait until people are on break to capture the equipment when the scene is more open or maybe things need to be moved around a bit."

He advises photographers to take a few moments to consider what they want to capture and why before they click the shutter. This will help you decide what the focus of the photograph should be and which vantage point will show that in the best light.

If you're simply looking to take photos to show an overview of a job, consider

aspects of the job that might tell the bigger story of the project.

"Keep an eye out for unique things happening on the project and capture images that show the whole scope of it," said Crane.

When composing photographs, you'll want to pay attention to things like company logos and people who may not want to be in the image. Programs like Photoshop can help you remove unwanted components from a photograph, but it's much easier to avoid capturing them in the first place.

## Camera tips

While a high-quality camera often makes all the difference between a great photograph and a mediocre one, there are things you can do with your smartphone or point-and-shoot digital camera to make the most of what it has to offer.

- Use a tripod for photos and video to ensure a steady, even shot.
- Choose one thing to focus on in each photo and get in position to show that off in the best way.
- If you have a choice, take photos on an overcast day to avoid long shadows the sun will produce. On sunny days, don't shoot into the sun.
- Don't use the zoom button on your smartphone. The quality of your photo instantly decreases. Instead, get closer to your subject.
- If you want your viewer to focus on one thing, frame it in the centre of your photograph. Keep backgrounds simple.

If you're not sure you want to occasionally hire a professional photographer, consider investing in a good SLR camera and sending a couple of staff members to a photography class to learn how to use it. A manual camera will help you harness shutter speed, lengthen the aperture and make the best use of lighting.



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## Why hiring a professional might be worthwhile

A professional brings knowledge of lighting and photo composition to show off your project's best angles. They also use a camera that is capable of providing high-resolution images that will transfer to print and the screen in rich technicolour.

When sourcing photographers for his company, Price likes to ask for industry referrals and then pores over portfolios to ensure they have relevant photography experience.

"You want someone with a construction photography background. They have to have a flair for knowing what the customer wants to see and the ability to capture, edit and be safe on a job site. Not every photographer will be confident

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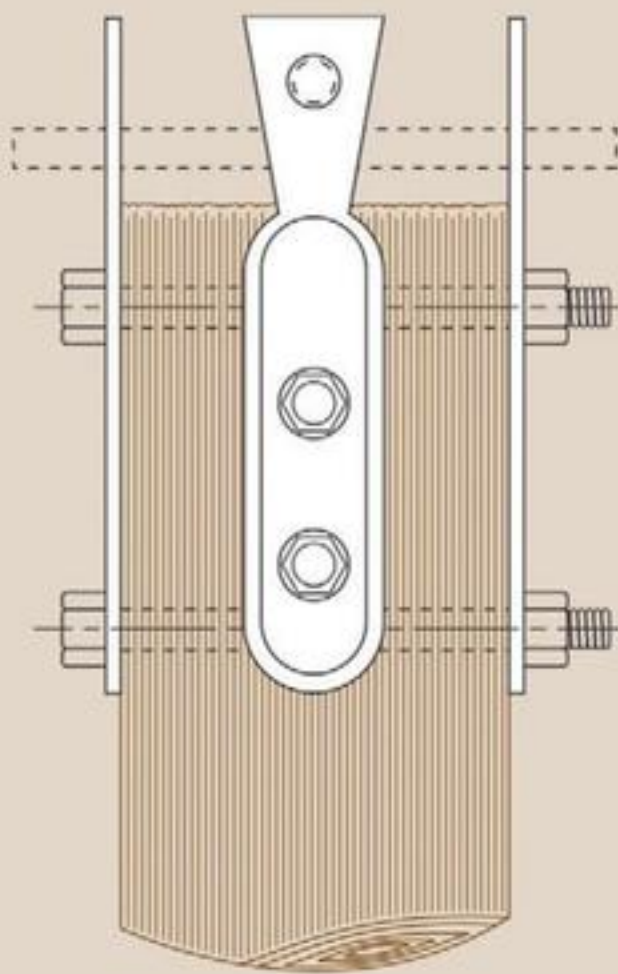


Doublestar Drilling uses project photos in their bid process, attaching photos of similar projects they've completed

LATITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY/DOUBLESTAR DRILLING



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and safe on the job site while having the ability to capture the best images portraying the scope you are looking for," said Price.

One of the most important parts of ensuring you get the photos you need is to clearly brief the photographer at the outset of the job. Crane says communication is critical to the photographer-client relationship.

"You want to communicate the exact process or parts of the project that you want documented," he said. "While the photographer can usually do a great overview of a project, they may not know industry-specific components to capture. That's up to you to share."

In Crane's pre-shoot briefs, he ensures he understands how the photos are going to be used, what processes or stages need to be captured and the proper timing of each of the actions being documented. This helps him maximize his time on the job site and select the composition of the photographs, like whether he chooses to shoot more vertical or horizontal images, for example.

"Flexibility is a big thing in capturing the best images possible," he said. "Communicate a timeline of when things are happening and have a bit of window to choose the best time of day for photographing."

When it comes to safety, hiring a seasoned construction photographer can make your life easier. Crane says he arrives on site with his own personal protection equipment, including high-visibility vest, safety glasses, hard hat and steel toe, chemical-resistant boots. You'll need to build in time for a safety briefing or training tailored to the needs of your job site.

Typically, a photographer charges a day rate to photograph on site and the price will include photo editing. Crane says industry rates range from \$1,200 to \$1,500. If the photographer uses drone technology, the price may be slightly higher.

"I'd say \$1,500 is a safe budget for capturing any job site we go onto, and I get a good ROI. You now own that project, from an image point of view, forever. From a print media and web-based perspective, we definitely get bang for our buck," said Price. 📸





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