

Eight tips for better Probus Club group photos

Rob Neary based on <http://www.albelli.co.uk/tips>

Thanks to our friends at **Abelli** in the UK for permission to use their text and images in this article.

Many of the photos submitted by Probus clubs are of groups of their members in various settings – indoor, outdoor, travelling, examining, listening, chatting and more. Trying to take a great photo of one person is difficult enough, so it's much harder with a group of restless, chatty friends! Photographing your Probus group is no easy task, so here are eight suggestions to get it just right.

1. Be creative when composing



Don't be in a hurry to shoot. When everyone gathers, let everyone settle down comfortably for a more natural variation. Alternatively, consider positioning each one in different ways including getting them away from sitting at a table. Make use of chairs, walls or a stairway to arrange your group. Allow variation in height and avoid perfect alignment.

2. Zoom in sometimes

You don't have to photograph the group from head to toe all the time. Zoom in to capture faces, feet, or hands. This will help you capture something unique about your group and add a variety of shots to your photo record. You can get better lighting results with close-up shots. Also, subtle details that are brought to life make for interesting photographs. Natural, in-the-moment shots can look great, so snap away when they're not looking! You're guaranteed a great set of group photos that way.



3. Make sure every face is visible



The closer to the group; the higher the chance that each face will be visible! Pay attention to the more camera-shy members of the group as they tend to linger further away and that's why it's important to arrange them for your photo so that they're not blocked or hidden.

4. Take photos from different positions

Most photos are taken with the camera at (or around) the eye level of the subject. Completely changing the angle of your shot can give your portrait a real wow factor. Stand on a safe chair, find some high ground or place to shoot down on the group (useful for large groups) or take a photograph from ground level looking up. You can also take a photo while standing at an angle from the group.



5. Take the group outside

There are three good reasons to go outside. Firstly, natural sunlight produces better photo lighting results in most cases. Skin colour can be affected by artificial lighting, but looks more natural in sunlight. A hard contrast can also be created by using a flash indoors, which can wash out faces or make them too light with a vague, dark background. Secondly, there's a wide variety of backdrop options to choose from. Lastly, you get more space to create distance between your group and the backdrop and allows you to use depth to fade out the background.



6. Take multiple shots



Observe your group to know exactly when to press the shutter release button. Don't be in a hurry to just start shooting. Each group is different but there's always one moment that's perfect to start taking pictures – pay attention and take the time to find it. Candid shots are usually better than ones that are staged. Posed shots can look unnatural and awkward. Photograph your subject at work, at play, or doing something that they love. This can put them at ease and you may end up with some special shots with them reacting naturally to a situation.

One of the best benefits of digital photography is the ability to take lots of photos without paying for development. You can just delete the undesirable images you don't want later. The more you shoot, the more relaxed your group will be and the higher the chance of capturing great pics. Check your shots for closed eyes or members turning away from the camera.

7. Timing is everything



8. Smile and make sure it's FUN!



This is the most important tip! Group photos can easily become stressful, which can deliver unfavourable results. So smile, crack a joke, and make your group feel at ease before taking photos.

Note: Using Flash with a small digital camera or phone.

Most built-in flashes are not powerful enough to light larger spaces. If you get more than 2-3 metres away it's likely your photos will be dark. If all you have is a small auto-focus camera with a built in flash, concentrate on

taking close-up photos. Remember that using the zoom lens increases the camera's need for more light to illuminate the subject. The tighter you zoom, the more light you will need. Digital cameras and phones will shoot in very low light without a flash, but that doesn't mean the photos will be usable.

Depending upon the light, the shutter just stays open longer and longer, and with anything slower than 1/30th of a second you will get motion blur because you just can't hold the camera still. Practice taking digital photos in the rooms where you will hold events so you know what you can and can't do with your digital camera or phone. This way you'll be more likely to get usable photos.

Sending Photos to Newspapers and printers

You may have taken the award-winning photo, but if the resolution is too low, it cannot be used by the media nor will it look good in printed material, and all your efforts will have been wasted. Set your camera to the largest file size for photos in its setup menu. Standard resolution for print publication is higher than the one used for web pictures.

Most printed newspapers, local or state, requires copies of the original camera files at the greatest size to use in their production. The printer, and graphic artist, need the large camera or device photo files to enable them to reprocess those photos for use on the presses that print the newspaper. They may also need to crop or edit the photo to make it more reader-friendly.

As Probus members use a variety of devices to take their photos at meetings and when on outings, this can cause some issues when your club wishes to submit an article and photos to a newspaper. If you have a digital camera, or smart device, simply copy the photos off the camera chip or device by connecting it to your computer with the charging USB cable. If you use a Macintosh computer, you will need to send any HEIC format photos as attachments with your email. Windows computers need simply attach the photos from the camera or phone with an email. iPad and iPhone users will need to send the *Original File Size* photo as a *Windows Friendly Attachment* – consult your manual on your device for instructions.