

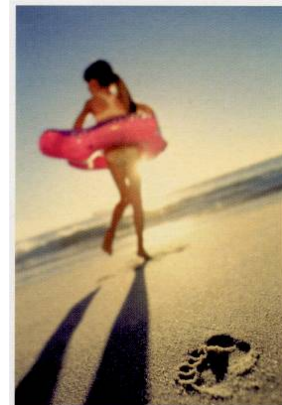


## Choose Life

*In this image-hungry society, picture libraries are having to be more competitive in the way they present their work. Lakshmi Bashkaran reports.*

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1 | 3 | Images from the Vie collection by Digital Vision  
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At a time when image consumption is at an all-time high, and the standard of visual communication constantly under the spotlight, today's picture libraries have a lot to live up to – and the stakes are about to get even higher. In an industry revolutionised by the way photographs are purchased, delivered and even used, the role of the image provider has evolved into that of an image consultant, seeking out and responding to the latest trends in a bid to service the ever-more complex demands of the creative industries.

Setting the standard – and an extremely high standard at that – is Taxi, the latest offering from Getty Images. Described as 'a tool for visual thinkers and doers', and much more than a collection of images, Taxi's combination of high production values, carefully considered stock variations and excellent art direction takes the role of the image library to a whole new level. Presented in magazine format, it provides a visual documentary on day-to-day life in our global village, backed up by an informed and informative snapshot of the latest lifestyle and socio-economic trends. Issue 1 documents the rise of the Super-Solo, as well as highlighting the latest approach to

travel, eating and leisure. In addition, the Taxi Engine Room can be found at the back of the magazine, with more than thirty pages of facts and stats inspired by the images that make up the collection.

"In many respects, the language of images is a global language, but it also has regional inflections and dialects, and that is something that Taxi particularly responds to," says Lewis Blackwell, creative director of Taxi and Senior Vice President of Creative Direction at Getty Images. "Obviously at Getty Images we have a number of collections, but with Taxi we've built the collection to have many different facets. All the content has a flexibility and range of different expressions, depending on where it will be read."

One of the most notable features has to be the inclusion of text-based features, although Blackwell is keen to stress the role of the written word within the magazine. "At the end of the day we are creating something that helps us sell a collection of images, but we want people to understand that Taxi is about images first. It's the images that drive the words," he says. "Our core business is visual language, but when we go

through this process it's to celebrate what we're doing and what we believe our customers are doing in these different places, rather than just saying 'here's a picture, buy it'."

While there is sure to be a certain degree of commonality in the global appeal of Taxi's content, having teams of creative researchers, journalists and photographers based across the world ensures that the magazine (currently produced in six languages) is not simply translated linguistically for different territories, it is 'trans-created'. While the tendency for most would be to globalise and simplify, Taxi takes the opposite approach by digging deeper and exploring further. Blackwell adds, "We know that we are doing the right thing to respect diversity, to celebrate diversity and to actually show the reasons behind the imagery, so that people can feel confident that these images are right for them."

With a cover price of £18, there may be those who see Taxi as a costly replacement for the free catalogues of the past, but given its quality, not to mention the amount of actual information, both visual and textual, few would deny that the potential is there for it to succeed as much as a

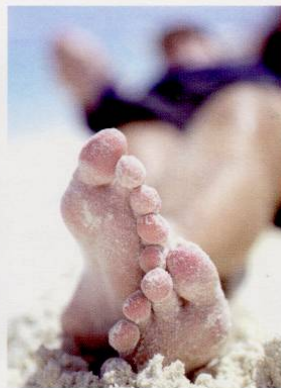
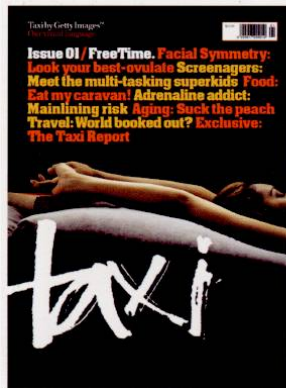


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1-4 | Images from Taxi by  
 Getty Images  
 5-8 | Lifestyle images  
 from Imagesource



social barometer as an image resource. "We think we're creating something of value that we want to distribute beyond our existing understood customer base," concludes Blackwell, "so let's put it out there so a lot of people can get it. They don't have to buy our pictures, they can just enjoy the magazine."

Adopting a similar approach, albeit on a much smaller scale, is Magalogue from Alamy, designed by Struktur Design. Presented in a fifty-page publication interspersed with half-page inserts containing contextual text about each image, Magalogue will be published four times a year, providing a snapshot view of the Alamy collection. In response to the current demand for local and lifestyle imagery, each Magalogue will be created around a number of themes. Issue 1 themes include Metropolis, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow and Born to Be Wild. "It is important to make sure you are picking up on all the trends, and when you're dealing with lots of different countries that means lots of different trends," says Monica Hart, director at Alamy. "You really have to have your finger on the pulse - but that's just about making sure you record what people want and need."

As one of the few libraries to target both the

commercial and publishing sectors equally, it was vital to ensure that Magalogue would appeal to both types of client. "On the commercial side, they prefer something thinner with a theme that is not too suggestive of how you might use an image, but that gives it some context," continues Hart, "while the publishers like reading magazines and don't really look at catalogues. That's why we came up with something that's a cross between the two." Future Magalogues will also incorporate an interactive element encouraging users to use the Alamy website alongside their Magalogue.

Hot off the press at Digital Vision is Vie - a collection of 2,000 photographs and illustrations dedicated entirely to contemporary lifestyles. Shot in locations stretching from Nevada to New York, themes in the collection include Scene, Flirt, Home Truths and Downtown. "We explored the usage of lifestyle photography in editorial, advertising and design, and as a result were able to tailor and focus titles at certain markets," says Kate Stevens, project manager at Vie, "whereas, on the whole, a mixed, general collection doesn't allow that degree of exploration."

In addition to their website (and in spite of the company's name) Digital Vision also recognises the

importance of the printed catalogue as "probably the most important showcase for a new collection". When it came to the Vie cover, Digital Vision took the opportunity to move away from its usual graphic front cover. The aim was to "highlight the current infatuation with 'lifestyle interiors', but with an ironic twist on the 'traditional' lifestyle stock shot of a tanned girl on a white sandy beach."

Two other libraries with a keen eye on the lifestyle market are Image Source and Stockbyte. For Image Source, whose current collections include Twist & Shout, Bringing Business Home and Club Party, observing new trends, both stylistically and in people's lifestyle choices, is a constant, ongoing process.

Resourcekit6, Stockbyte's sixth royalty-free collection, includes twenty-one themed titles covering business, lifestyles and concepts with that all-important 'reality' edge. The collection comprises more than 2,700 royalty-free images, shot on three continents, and incorporates a range of photographic treatments, "to create imagery which stands out from the crowd, in a market which is now flooding with imagery of varying standards". All the photographs are available either as CD collections or individual downloads. □