

Fotolia Want More Photographers - "Operation Level Ground"

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By Steve GibsonFri, 2009-10-23 00:35

[Fotolia](#) [3] have announced the launch of their '[operation level ground](#) [4]' to attract new photographers. The program is open to both existing contributors at other microstock agencies (e.g. quit your istock exclusivity and come join us) and also to photographers who are currently outside of microstock selling their work elsewhere i.e. [macrostock](#) [5] prices.

Instead of starting at the bottom of the fotolia ranking system (an important factor that fotolia uses to calculate commissions based on previous sales history) the 'operation' allows new photographers to immediately jump to a higher level hence earning higher commissions from day one. Existing photographers at microstock agencies have to prove their downloads at another agency and will be credited with the same rank they would have received if those images were sold through fotolia. Photographers from outside of microstock need to prove their income from selling images is at least \$15,000, more for higher rankings.

Some existing fotolia contributors are upset by the move, many of them who have also been uploading to istock where they have received more downloads now want to have their rank bumped up. A quote from [stockastic on microstockgroup](#) [6] (quite an interesting thread going on there...) summing up some of the sentiment:

*Another example of how the 'microstock' industry is being rapidly re-configured into a channel for big shops and established pros.
All you small players who've been dilligentaly chipping away, slowly building a portfolio and looking to the future - guess what, a whole bunch of big guys were just let in the side door and shoved in line in front of you.*

For existing microstock photographers who understand the market then this could be the perfect opportunity to quit exclusivity as it eliminates the stumbling block that keeps a lot of photographers exclusive with a single agency: "lower earnings while you go through the process of submitting to another agnecy". We might be likely to see more press releases [like this](#) [7].

Because photographers need to have at least 1000 images in their portfolio we are not going to see huge numbers of amateurs 'jumping the queue'. According to [istockcharts](#) [8] there are only just over 1000 photographers at istock with more than 1000 images, so from a microstock point of view the only people likely to move on this are seasoned microstockers who feel [trapped by their current exclusivity](#) [9] or for some reason decided to only upload to a single site.

But some traditional photographers might be in for a culture shock, and it's these photographers that I think fotolia is especially interested in. Those who can prove they have had \$15,000 in sales won't be [testing the water](#) [10] and [calculating an RPI for their images using a small sample](#) [11], it looks like (?) they will have to dive straight in with more than 1000 images which in some cases will be "permanently written off to micro", many macrostock terms I've read prohibit portfolios containing images previously offered at micro prices.

Operation Level Ground Runs until 31 December 09, visit fotolia.com/levelground [4] to apply.

0 Comments

It's quiet in here!

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