



AI For Creating Marketing Images

Course Overview:

Delivered by Evan Mangan on behalf of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Cork North & West

This training course was delivered as part of **Enterprise Week**, a significant period for Local Enterprise Offices featuring a wide array of events aimed at supporting businesses. **Evan Mangan**, provided a comprehensive guide on leveraging artificial intelligence for visual marketing. Evan emphasized that the goal of the session was not just to highlight free tools, but to ensure participants understood the relative value of both free and paid options to enhance their digital marketing strategy.

Core Concepts: Multimodal AI and Copyright

Evan began by explaining that current AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Gemini, are **Large Learning Models (LLMs)** that have been trained on billions of pieces of data scraped from the internet, including text, images, and videos. These tools are increasingly **multimodal**, meaning they can process and generate outputs across different formats—text, image, and video. For instance, a user can provide a text prompt to receive an image, or even attach an image to get a text-based analysis.

Regarding the legal landscape, Evan addressed the common concern of **copyright**. He cited a New York court ruling from the previous year which stated that images created by AI do not hold traditional copyright issues for the user. The AI companies do not own the images, and the user does not own the copyright simply for writing the prompt. Consequently, Evan confirmed that businesses are **free to use these images in their marketing** without legal repercussions regarding ownership.

The AI Landscape: Major Tools and Their Strengths

1. ChatGPT (OpenAI) Evan noted that while ChatGPT is perhaps the most famous AI tool, its free version is limited to only **three free images per day**. The paid version (\$20/month) offers unlimited image creation via DALL-E 3. Evan described ChatGPT as a "multimodal" powerhouse but suggested that for those seeking purely free high-volume options, other tools might be more suitable.

2. Google Gemini and "Nana Banana" A significant portion of the course focused on **Google Gemini**, which Evan explained is currently in an "arms race" with ChatGPT. Evan provided a brief history of Gemini's image engine, noting its internal code name "**Nana Banana**". While it started as a code word, Google kept the name for its image tool, even adding a banana icon to the interface.

- **Nana Banana 2:** Evan demonstrated that this free tool is exceptional for **image manipulation**.
- **Accessibility:** Unlike ChatGPT, Gemini offers **unlimited free image generation** because Google can afford to subsidise the AI costs through its massive ad revenue.
- **Logic:** Evan noted that while tech experts argue over which model is better at high-end reasoning, for most marketing purposes, Gemini and ChatGPT are effectively equal.

3. Midjourney For those seeking the highest possible quality, Evan pointed to **Midjourney**. He stated that almost everyone in the industry considers it the **best tool for high-end AI images**, though it does not offer a free tier, starting at \$10 per month.

- **Advanced Controls:** Midjourney allows for specific adjustments like **Stylization** (making images look high-end or "glam"), **Weirdness** (for unusual creative flair), and **Variety** (how different the four generated options should be).
- **Exploration:** Evan shared that users can use the "Explore" tab for free to see what others have created and copy their detailed prompts to use in free tools like Gemini.

4. Grok and Meta AI Evan highlighted two other major players offering free features:

- **Grok (xAI):** Created by Elon Musk, Grok is integrated into the X (formerly Twitter) ecosystem but available via grok.com. Evan demonstrated that Grok provides **unlimited free images** that appear in an endless scroll, along with **free video generation**. Evan also mentioned Grok's "uncensored" nature compared to the more "polite" ChatGPT.
- **Meta AI:** Available via meta.ai (using Facebook or Instagram logins), this tool is being integrated into WhatsApp and Messenger. Evan found Meta's images to be of **very high quality**, sometimes exceeding Gemini's in realism, and noted it also offers **free video creation**.

5. OpenArt.ai Evan described **OpenArt** as an aggregator that pulls multiple AI models (except Midjourney) into one place. It is useful for those who want to compare how different models, such as **Flux** or **C-Dream**, interpret the same prompt. Evan noted its value for creating **consistent characters** and AI-generated voiceovers.

Integrating AI with Canva

For the 45% of participants already using **Canva**, Evan explained how AI fits into their existing workflows. He clarified that while Canva is the market leader for non-designers, its internal AI tools (Magic Studio) have recently lagged behind specialists like Google Gemini.

- **Magic Grab and Grab Text:** Evan showed how these tools can extract a person from a photo to place text behind them or edit typos directly within an image.
- **Design vs. Manipulation:** Evan recommended using Canva for the final **design** (adding logos and text) but suggested doing the heavy **image manipulation** (changing backgrounds or objects) in Gemini first.

Advanced Image Manipulation: The Power of Consistency

The core "magic" Evan demonstrated was **consistent manipulation** using Nana Banana. In older AI models, asking for a change would result in a completely new image. Evan showed that Nana Banana can maintain the same subject while altering specific details:

- **Product Placement:** Evan took a photo of a Nutri-Grain bar and asked the AI to place it on a breakfast table with a white tablecloth and a fruit bowl.
- **Contextual Modelling:** He attached a photo of a handbag and asked the AI to generate a woman in her 20s carrying it down a street in Dublin.
- **Perspective Shifts:** Evan demonstrated that users can ask to see a scene from a **different angle**, such as a side view or a drone's-eye view, or even ask to see the fabric of a dress "up close".
- **Object Removal:** He showed how the AI could "erase" people from a busy tourist photo or remove tattoos from a model's arm while keeping their watch and jewellery intact.

Ethics, Transparency, and the EU AI Act

Evan concluded with a vital discussion on **trust**. He noted that as social media becomes flooded with AI content, many people feel a sense of unease about what is real. Evan argued that for a business, **integrity is a marketing asset**.

- **The EU AI Act:** This legislation requires businesses to be transparent about AI to ensure citizens aren't "tricked".
- **When to Declare:** Evan suggested that "utility" edits—like removing a car from a property photo or changing a dress colour from red to black—do not require a disclaimer. However, if the entire person or scene is fake (like the AI woman modelling the handbag), Evan strongly recommended using a hashtag like **#AI-assisted** or a caption stating that AI was used to present the product.
- **Privacy:** Evan warned that information fed into AI models "improves the model for everyone" unless privacy settings are specifically toggled off. He advised participants to switch off "data sharing" in ChatGPT settings to protect sensitive company information.

Action Point List for Participants

- **Audit Your Current Visuals:** Identify product photos that look "static" and could benefit from being placed in a lifestyle scene (e.g., using Gemini to place a product on a table).
- **Secure Your Privacy:** Immediately go into your **ChatGPT settings**, select "Data Controls," and turn off "Improve the model for everyone" to ensure your uploaded images and data remain private.
- **Set Up a Google Gemini Account:** If you are among the 70% who haven't used it, log in with a Gmail account to access **Nana Banana 2** for unlimited free image creation and manipulation.
- **Experiment with Perspective:** Take an existing marketing image and ask Gemini to "show this scene from a side-angle view" or "show this as if shot by a drone" to create new content from old assets.
- **Test Creative Text for Sales:** Use Nana Banana to create "themed" text for upcoming promotions, such as asking for text "made out of knitting needles" for a wool shop.
- **Utilize Midjourney for Inspiration:** Even if you don't pay for it, visit the **Midjourney "Explore" gallery** to study the detailed prompts used by professionals and adapt those keywords for your free tools.
- **Try Grok or Meta AI for Video:** Experiment with the **free video animation** features in Meta AI or Grok to turn your product images into short, eye-catching clips for Instagram Stories or TikTok.
- **Implement Ethical Labelling:** Review your upcoming social media posts; if an image features a completely AI-generated person or environment, add the **#AI-Assisted** hashtag to build long-term trust with your audience.
- **Refine Your Canva Workflow:** Continue using Canva for layout and logos, but use the **"Grab Text"** or **"Magic Grab"** features to fix typos in AI-generated images or to move objects for better text placement.
- **Stay Updated:** Since tools change monthly (e.g., the launch of Nana Banana 2 just last week), sign up for Evan's monthly update email to keep pace with new features and privacy changes.

Please note: This guide was created with the help of one of our AI colleagues 😊