

HEADSHOTS

**How to make a great first
and lasting impression**

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Welcome to *Making a Great First Impression and Establishing Executive Presence* with your HEADSHOT

I'm Paula Asinof, the presenter for this program.

As Principal and Founder of Yellow Brick Path, a career management and consulting firm, one of the important areas of my work is helping clients with personal branding.

I have authored 3 books on career topics.

One of them, *Be Sharp: Tell Me About Yourself in Great Introductions and Professional Bios*,

recently published in its 2nd edition,

is right on point for any discussion of personal branding.

Since graduating from Wharton,

my own career has spanned roles in Finance, IT Leadership, Executive Search and Career Consulting.

Your Headshot Mirrors Your Brand

Ouch!

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



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**The professional headshot has increased dramatically in importance.
One that mirrors your brand gives you competitive advantage in pitching yourself.**

Ouch! A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

**This software expert with an MBA from a world-renowned school was nominated for a prestigious award.
His picture was posted on his bio on the slate of candidates.**

A colleague said this about it.

"I was glad to vote for you.

However, I'm sure you lost lots of votes because of the picture.

You look drunk, Neanderthal-jawed, and addle-brained.

The flowered Hawaiian shirt might have passed if you had had looked intelligent in it or were just on vacation.

But the picture was a bad choice since you are up against guys with PhDs."

**Not everyone will be so forthright in their opinion,
but you can be sure she's not the only one who thought that.**

What Does Your Personal Branding Headshot Say?



"According to your LinkedIn profile you're a focused, disciplined achiever. According to your Facebook photos you love Jack Daniels and are pretty comfortable with your body."

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You'll want to be sure that your headshot (and frankly any other photos of you that are available to the public) don't undermine your brand – and hopefully enhance it.

This wonderful interview cartoon makes the point.

The interviewer says,

"According to your LinkedIn profile, you're a focused, disciplined achiever.

According to your Facebook photos, you love Jack Daniels and are pretty comfortable with your body."

“Tell me about yourself?”

What does your picture communicate?



**Your
Headshot**

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So, what does your picture communicate?

There is a simple way to start exploring this.

First, access your LinkedIn profile and look at your headshot.

Pretend you didn't know you and consider these questions:

- What kind of work does this person do?**
- What level is he/she at in the organization?**
- Is this the first impression you want people to have?**

It's also fun to try this exercise on headshots from some randomly selected LinkedIn profiles and see what insights you get.

Why Headshots Matter

- People make decisions based on how you look
- **A great headshot captures your energy and professionalism and engages your audience**



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It can't be said any clearer: HEADSHOTS MATTER

**People make decisions based on how you look.
If you don't match with what they expect,
it can undermine your credibility,
diminish your appeal,
and create "noise" in the communications channel.**

Even though pictures shouldn't be on resumes, they should be lots of other places – and they need to be done right.

A great headshot is one that captures your energy and professionalism and engages your audience.

The New Selfies

- Your photo represents your personal brand
- **A great headshot reflects your personality and style – and is something you feel proud to showcase**



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It should be clear by now that your photo represents your personal brand.

In today's high-tech recruiting environment, your headshot and social media profile often serve as your 1st interview.

The right photo communicates that you should be taken seriously as a businessperson. And, it can also increase social media traffic dramatically, especially on LinkedIn.

Millennials are already in tune with capturing the best photographic version of themselves to share with the world.

Hopefully they bring this passion to personal branding efforts.

One photographer has even coined the phrase "the new selfies".

To sum this all up, a great headshot reflects your personality and style. It is something you feel proud to showcase.

Do You Need a New Headshot?

How did you do on our checklist?

If you checked even one, you probably do!



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So, do you need to make an investment in a new headshot?

Here's how tell - according to LABphotography in Dallas

- Is your image sharp and your face well-lit?**
- Is the background free from clutter?**
- Is it a head-and-shoulders shot taken solely of you?**
- Do the colors of your attire complement each other, your skin, and hair?**
- Are your clothes and jewelry nicely pressed and well positioned?**
- Does your headshot accurately reflect what you look like today?**
(Is it older than 5 years old, have you changed your hair color or style, have you stopped or started wearing glasses, have lost or gained weight)
- Are you still working in the same industry?**
(Or are you now working in a more formal or casual field?)
- Are you proud of your image?**
- Would you do business with the person in your image?**

If even one applies, you probably do need a new headshot!

Put Your Best Face Forward



- A professional photographer is usually worth the investment
- Use our checklist to choose a good one

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In most cases, it's worth the investment to use a professional photographer.

Here are some guidelines on how to choose a good photographer.

- They should be familiar with photographing business executives, not the photographer who does holiday cards for your dentist and his family
- They should be open to guidelines you want adhered to
- It's best if they have a studio environment to take the pictures
- The photographer should take multiple shots and give you a choice,
- they should deliver a retouched image in .jpg format of 1-2 MB,
- and make sure they provide a "right-to-use" license in writing.
- You should receive a standard 5x7 picture and also one cropped square for LinkedIn.... and business cards.
- The photographer should provide a no cost "re-take guarantee".
- And last but not least, the photographer's services should fit your budget.

Keys to a Great Headshot

- What to do
- What to avoid



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In the “what to do” category, there are 5 that top the list

1st, the headshot should have a face-to-body ratio of 50 – 60% head.
Often standard 5x7 will include more body, with the head only about 30%.
The 50-60% ratio is easily achieved by cropping just below the shoulders to a square, which is the preferred version for LinkedIn and business cards.

2nd, your head should be straight up and down and facing forward.
Tilt on a head is popular with some photographers.
Unfortunately, tilt makes you appear subordinate.
You want to be someone with personal power who deserves a seat at the table.

3rd, you want your shoulders slightly turned.
It softens the picture and is more engaging.
If you are positioned straight front, it looks like a mug shot.

4th, both formal and informal headshots may be appropriate for professionals. Some have both.
To determine which you need, you have to assess your audience. A good way to think about this is to ask yourself, “How would I show up at an interview?”

For men, the distinction is easy.

Formal means suit and tie. Informal means jacket, open collar.

For women, it's a little more complex but the distinction is the same.

In addition, professional women can now be more fashion-forward than in the past, whether formal or informal.

Finally, retouching is essential.

Even some professional photographers, including some corporate staff photographers, don't retouch.

Retouching can remove glare, soften skin tone, and eliminate shadow that helps you put your "best face forward".

There are also a couple of poses that you will want to avoid.

They include "hand under chin", extreme lean-in, hands in pockets, and arms folded or crossed.

Your Personal Brand on Social Media

- You need to look good when people look you up, especially on LinkedIn
- The wrong headshot can undermine your brand
- Use our worksheet to see if you need to power up your picture



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A few slides back, we all laughed at the interview cartoon.
Unfortunately, that is the reality for too many people.
They put great attention into their professional presentation in places that they think have a professional audience.
They forget that they can be seen everywhere in the social media universe.

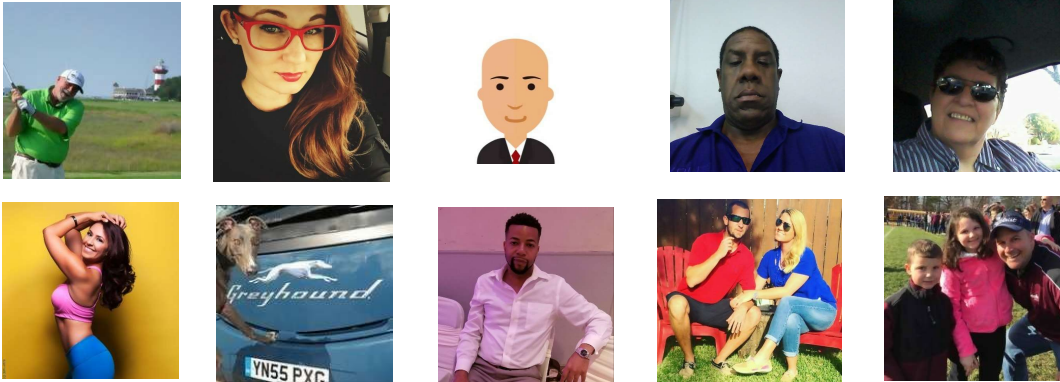
LinkedIn is the only real game for businesspeople.
LinkedIn is a business site.
It's not a social site like Facebook, Instagram (owned by Facebook) or match.com
You need to look good when people look you up
The wrong headshots can seriously undermine your brand.

For example,

- Replace selfies, vacation photos, and event photos with a professional headshot
- Skip photos with other people or pets
- Don't use photos in your backyard or living room
- Steer clear of photos in inappropriate attire
- Don't use icons, caricatures or logos and
- Avoid using low resolutions headshots

The Downright Awful

These are business professionals randomly selected from LinkedIn



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The next several slides are examples – from the Downright Awful to the Not-so-Good to The Good.

With examples to look at, you are well on your way to having a headshot that enhances your Brand.

The Downright Awful

Here are some example of business professional randomly selected from LinkedIn.

On the 1st line, you'll notice a vacation venue, an artistic presentation, an icon, a really bad mug shot and a really bad selfie.

On the 2nd line, you'll see a totally inappropriate picture.

The 1st woman is not a model or a yoga instructor.

She's a business professional for a recognized company.

The other pictures include a company logo instead of a headshot, an old and faded snapshot, and two casual group photos of friends and family.

The Not-So-Good

Retouching



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**Here's an example of the difference retouching can make.
Notice that all the glare that that been removed.**

The Not-So-Good

Head Tilt



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This one is my favorite.

The person in this headshot is actually the CEO of a small company.

With her head straight, she presents as a CEO.

With her head tilted, you might mistake her for the Assistant to the CEO

The Not-So-Good

Mug Shot



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The Mug Shot is self-explanatory. It's just not engaging.

The Not-So-Good

Black & White



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**Black & White photos are best saved for artistic purposes.
They are outdated for headshots.
Color adds energy.**

The Good



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This slide is a collage of several good headshots.

They are a diverse group.

Yet each follows the principles that have been set out to get the best results.

General Guidelines

- Wear what you would wear to an interview, whether a corporate look or business casual
- A fashion forward look is OK, depending on your industry and level – but not a casual or event look



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Now, let's review the general guidelines for a good headshot.

-Wear what you would wear to an interview, whether it is a Corporate look or business casual.

-A fashion forward look is OK, depending on your industry and level. Avoid a casual vacation look or an event look from a wedding.

-A touch of color provides energy – tie, shirt, tee, jewelry, scarf. In this case, her lipstick gives it just the right touch.

-Your headshot should be you – not you and a group, you and your pet, a sketch or an icon.

-The background should be plain, usually gray or gradient gray. Gradient gray, which is lighter by the face, helps focus attention on the photo subject

-Fade-out or backgrounds are in style and are options. Just make sure it is appropriate and does not compete with you.

Headshot Background Options



- Plain, gray or gradient gray (lighter by the face)
- Fade-out or backgrounds (in style)

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**Here are examples of the preferred background options.
Plain Gray, Gradient Gray, and Fade-Out background**

Formal vs. Informal: Who's the Audience?



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**The next slides are examples of Formal vs. Informal attire.
Keep in mind that your selection should be made based on your audience.**

Here's the 1st one

Formal vs. Informal: Who's the Audience?



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Here's the next one.

Formal vs. Informal: Who's the Audience?



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And another.

Formal vs. Informal: Who's the Audience?



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And the last example.

Headshots Bring Your Personal Brand to Life

Pictures make business cards (and you) memorable



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**Headshots bring your Personal Brand to life
and pictures make business cards – and you – memorable.**

The headshot can go in any corner that fits with your business card design.

Internet Photo Testing Tools: Popular and Fun. *Your guess?*

- Advertised for business, social and dating
- More entertainment than serious business.



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A popular and fun entrant in the headshot market is Internet Photo Testing Tools.

They are advertised on the Internet for business, social and dating purposes. One of the ads markets them this way:

“Find out what people really think of your photos.

To choose your best pics, get objective feedback in a respectful, moderated environment.

Target voters by gender and age.

Part people. Part artificial intelligence.

Stop guessing, start testing.”

Unfortunately, these are more entertainment than serious business.

These tools by necessity make lots of semantic assumptions.

What does “intelligent” or “competent” mean?

Meaningful feedback on anything requires follow up and discussion.

Some feedback is helpful, some is useless, most needs more analysis.

Keep in mind that feedback is not “truth”, only data for further consideration.

Just because someone says something, doesn’t make it so.

Keys to a Great Headshot

It can't be said too many times....

- **A great headshot captures the energy and professionalism of the subject and engages the audience**



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It can't be said too many times....

A great headshot captures the energy and professionalism of the subject and engages the audience.

Evaluating Your Headshot

- What impression are you trying to project?
- Use our worksheet to evaluate your headshot



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The fundamental question to ask as you evaluate your headshot is “What impression are you trying to project?” to the people you know and to people you meet for the 1st time.

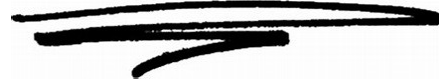
As you answer these questions, you will have the information to determine whether your headshot will serve you well.

- Does it reflect my professional best? Specifically?
- Is it appropriate for my audience? What audience is that?
- Is it congruent with the rest of my personal brand? How?
- Do I feel good about myself when I look at this picture? Specifically, how do I feel?
- Is it engaging? In what ways?
- Do I come across as comfortable and authentic? How do I know?

You might reword the questions slightly and have other people provide you with feedback.

Take Aways for Personal Branding

- Review our tip sheet on the key points – “The Bottom Line” for your professional branded headshot
- Take whatever actions are necessary



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We've been talking the importance of your headshot for your personal brand. Hopefully you now have a new appreciation for the importance of your headshot as part of your PITCH.

The headshot that you select to represent you will

- Capture the energy and professionalism of the subject and engage the audience and
- Reflect your personality and style
- Be something you will feel proud to showcase

Let's summarize “why headshots matter” and the guidelines for a good one

- A picture is worth a thousand words and represents your personal brand
- Your headshot influences the judgments people make about you and affects the congruency of your personal brand
- Your headshot is often the first (and long-lasting) impression you make
- In today's high-tech recruiting environment, your headshot and social media profile often serves as your first interview

Get a new one if yours is out-of-date, of poor quality or doesn't reflect well on you
In most cases, it is worth the investment to work with a professional photographer

The key characteristics of a good headshot are:

- 50% head-to-body ratio**
- head front and straight**
- formal or appropriate informal attire (what you would wear to an interview)**
- engaging**
- simple background (gray, gradient gray, or fade-out)**
- high resolution**
- retouched**

Avoid folded/crossed arms, extreme lean-in, or hand under chin poses

*******NOW, enjoy the journey as you create and deliver your PITCH.**