

# Getting professional photography to improve your image.



## A GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED

In this guide, you'll learn best practices to; hire a professional photographer, dress for the shoot and getting the best photo that elevates you and your brand. For our industry, that message should be that you are *trustworthy*, *friendly*, *competent*, and *confident* enough to help people through one of the most important decisions of their lives.

### 1. Hiring a Professional Photographer - What to Expect and Ask For

*Your region may be offering free photo shoots. Be sure to take advantage of this limited time opportunity if available. Ask your office manager for more details.*

If you're going to hire your own photographer, please keep in mind that a great portrait photographer can be an asset to your business for many years to come. Since you wouldn't hire an amateur lawyer, don't hire an amateur photographer. Though it looks easy, portrait photography is highly technical and requires a special skill set that takes years to develop.

The good news is that finding a great photographer doesn't have to be a chore. You can use a directory like [smartshoot.com](https://www.smartshoot.com) or ask friends or coworkers for recommendations.

Here are some things to consider before hiring a professional photographer:

#### **Make sure they have a great portfolio that includes headshots and portraits**

Do the subjects look relaxed and natural, or stiff and uncomfortable? Are their head shots well composed and properly lit? Remember, a photographer's portfolio highlights their BEST work. If you don't like what you see in their portfolio, move on.

## Know what you're paying for

Most photographers offer a few different pictures from the shoot to choose from, but will only retouch your final choices. Always ask what's included in the price.

Some examples of extra costs may include:

### - Retouching:

Retouching is an alteration of your photo... to enhance desired features, or reduce or eliminate undesired ones. Minor enhancements may include whitening teeth, removing wrinkles, correcting skin tone, etc. Major enhancements may include slimming down face and body, adding/removing accessories, etc. Ask to see examples of a photographer's retouching work. An example of a headshot before and after retouching can tell you a lot about a photographer's skill. Do the "after" pictures look natural or do they look airbrushed and fake? A good photographer can remove dark circles, blemishes, and stray hairs without anyone knowing the picture was altered. Make sure your photographer can do the same.



*For a limited time Weichert Design Center is offering basic retouching which includes; whitening of teeth, light wrinkle removing and light skin tone correction for a fee of \$25.*

### - Silhouetting:

Silhouetting is the process used with transparent shots. It removes the background from the figure so it can be shown against a different background. Most photographers will charge an extra fee for this option.



### - Copyrights:

Generally speaking, a photographer maintains all copyrights to your headshot unless you sign a contract that says otherwise. Most photographers understand that you will be using your headshot all over the web, and may offer a copyright transfer agreement. That said, there are certain situations where a photographer may want to claim the copyright to your photo. To avoid confusion down the road, always ask about copyrights before hiring your photographer.

## Getting the right photo

While the head and shoulders portrait is the most versatile picture you can have in your branding arsenal, ask your photographer about doing a 3/4 body shot. These can be useful for advertising, flyers, billboards, press mentions, or more creatively designed websites.

To play it safe, a standard ¾ length is recommended as it gives you the flexibility to crop it as a headshot from the same photo just by zooming in.

## Ask Your Photographer for Print and Web ready files of your Headshot

Though the one use of your headshot may be for the website, it makes sense to have print-ready files on hand for other uses.

You may need your headshot for; For Sale signs, Open House retractable banners, flyers, posters, or even billboards at some point in the future. Always ask your photographer for print and web ready photos.

## How Much Should You Pay?

Your headshot can cost anywhere from \$50 to several hundred, depending on your location and the experience of your photographer you could expect to spend around \$100-\$150.



## 2. Dress for Success

### Know your target audience and dress accordingly

Think of what you would wear to the first meeting with your dream client. Maybe you would dress formally, but depending on where you work, “formal” can mean very different things. In Chicago, you wouldn’t dream of showing up in anything less than a charcoal gray or navy blue suit. On Cape Cod or Key West, that same suit might come across as too stuffy.

### Avoid busy patterns and excessive jewelry

as they will distract attention away from your face. We recommend you do not wear bold patterns (e.g. polka dots) and that you avoid white or very light colored clothing that won’t work against a white background.

### Use Color Strategically

Both men and women should avoid wearing black, as many people associate black with funerals or evening wear. Instead go with Navy Blue, Grey, or Charcoal as they are considered universally professional. Also, avoid wearing light clothing against light backgrounds and green clothing against green screen backgrounds. Men should consider the color of their ties to reinforce their brand or if a tie fits in their personal brand.

### Make sure your clothes fit properly

That baggy three button blazer may be comfortable, but it hasn’t been in style for decades. A well-fitting suit jacket should be snug but not restrict movement, and always remember to match the width of your tie to the width of your lapels.



### **Wear Makeup (but not too much)**

According to a study from Proctor & Gamble, makeup increases people's perception of a woman's likability, trustworthiness, and competence. Smartly applied makeup can also help men look better in pictures. Don't overdo it though; according to the study, people who wore "glam" makeup weren't seen as trustworthy, and makeup should never be noticeable on men.

### **Take a Trip to the Salon or Barbershop**

Professional photographers recommend women have their hair and makeup professionally done before the shoot: They also recommend planning your hairstyle and makeup along with your outfit a few days in advance, and to stick with a style you know works instead of experimenting with a new look.

Men should visit their barber to tidy up their hair, and make sure facial hair is neat and trimmed. Remember to keep it simple. A dramatic change in hairstyle can make you feel less confident.

## **3. Choose the Right Background**

The most important thing to keep in mind when choosing a background is to make sure it doesn't distract from the focal point of the image, you. Top real estate portrait photographers say that a white (which is really off-white) is the best color for headshot backgrounds. This background makes it easier to "read" your face when it is reproduced in tiny profile pictures like on Gmail or LinkedIn. Shot in front of a white or chroma-key (green screen) background, it also makes it easier to swap out the backgrounds for something else down the road.



Lifestyle Backgrounds "Natural Background Option" - If you do choose this option, make sure it reflects your personal brand and the area you work in. If you work in the city, a blurred street scene or brick wall behind you can look great while not distracting from your face. If you work in a more rural area, your future clients may respond more to something like a blurred forest or pastoral scene. Whatever you choose, make sure the colors blend well with your outfit, eye color, and hair color.



## 4. Posing: Looking Confident in your headshot

Unlike choosing the right background and wardrobe, looking confident comes entirely from within. Many people hate having their picture taken, and that anxiety can show up in the finished product, making you look less confident. Try some of the following tips to look more confident in your headshot.

### **Learn How to Smile Naturally**

Many people associate confidence with being severe and serious. For real estate agents, nothing could be further from the truth. Confident agents are happy agents, and happy agents smile.

### **Learn Power Poses to Trick Your Brain Into Feeling Confident**

Remember when you just closed that big deal and leverage the trick of power poses. Power poses are how confident people naturally position their bodies. Putting your hands on your hips, crossing your arms, and holding your arms above your head like superman are all examples of power poses.

### **Sit or Stand up Straight**

Professional portrait photographers recommend standing or sitting up straight in your shoot to project confidence and professionalism.

### **Relax and Remember to breathe**

We know, telling someone to “relax” generally makes them even more anxious, but staying relaxed during your shoot is crucial to looking confident.



## 5. Life After the Photoshoot

It typically takes 5-7 business days to deliver your photographs. Please confirm with your photographer on when you can expect your pictures.

Once you receive the files, please give the files to your Processing Manager or go to WeichertOne and upload them there.