

WHY YOUR LINKEDIN HEAD Shot May Be Holding You Back

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Recruiters, colleagues, and potential clients are 14 times more likely to click on your LinkedIn profile if you have a photo. If you're spending hours editing your summary statement, ensure you give equal time to the images.

Speaking of images, researchers also say that most viewers take only about one-tenth of a second to form judgements about how trustworthy and competent you are. Learn how to make your LinkedIn photo say what you want it to say and deliver the message quickly.

Tried and True Tips for Your LinkedIn Photo

Numerous studies show some techniques are effective for any line of work or any stage in your career. When you're trying to convey your professionalism, it's usually okay to look a little conventional.

- 1. Smile and squinch.** A smile makes you look friendly and approachable, and even increases your happiness. **Squinting refers to the lines that appear when you narrow your eyes, a sign that your grin is genuine.**
- 2. Stay updated.** You may lose some credibility if your photo doesn't look like you when you show up in person. Take a new shot every couple of years.
- 3. Focus on your face.** Making your face about 60% of the image is a good rule of thumb. Crop it from the shoulders up.
- 4. Make eye contact.** Holding eye contact encourages positive feelings. Take off

your sunglasses and watch out for glare so the viewer will be able to connect with you.

5. **Dress for work.** Put on clothes that you would wear to an interview for your dream job. For most professionals, that means business or business casual looks. **Solid colors tend to be more flattering than busy patterns.**
6. **Hire a professional.** Investing in a visit to a professional photography studio could pay off. Ask around for referrals and check out work samples. If you're on a tight budget, ask a friend or family member who's handy with a camera.
7. **Skip recycling.** Suppose you have a shot you love from your last vacation or your cousin's wedding? Unfortunately, you'll probably lose points if you have to crop out the background or your girlfriend's knees.
8. **Be consistent.** Become more recognizable. Use the same image on other social media platforms and websites.
9. **Seek feedback.** Check out **photofeeler**, a free online service that gives you unbiased opinions from strangers. It even breaks down the ratings for qualities like confidence, trustworthiness, and influence.

Innovative Tips for Your LinkedIn Photo

On the other hand, maybe you need to stand out or communicate your unique personal brand. Experiment with these more creative ideas.

1. **Play with color.** Vivid background colors grab attention. See how you look in a field of orange or purple.

2. **Highlight your passions.** While it's usually a good idea to leave pets and children out of LinkedIn photos, you may be the exception if you're a veterinarian or a nanny. Similarly, a musician playing or a chef cooking may be more persuasive than the usual head and shoulders shot.

3. **Create balance. If your photo is a little daring, let the rest of your profile show your serious side.** Write a compelling headline. Gather impressive recommendations and endorsements. Change your custom LinkedIn URL to your full name.

4. **Supplement it.** Add additional media to your profile. SlideShare presentations, YouTube videos, and Instagram posts help to make you more interesting and engaging.

Your LinkedIn photo is an important ingredient in your professional brand. When you're picking images that will advance your career, appearing approachable and competent is more important than looking like a movie star.