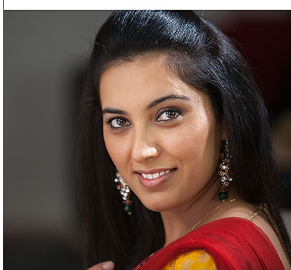




Your Image Your Business

Make a great impression!

by Dragi Andovski



A note about corporate photos...

Managing your business web page and social media accounts may feel daunting at times. When potential customers Google search for a business like yours, you want them to be immediately impressed when they find you. Since you are an intricate part of your business, your presence should be front and center. It's easy to underestimate ourselves, to think we're vain to be putting any effort into our appearance for the sake of our business. The truth of the matter is, people make snap judgments, in person and online. If you don't put yourself out there or if your About Me page photo doesn't look professional, you may be losing out on possible clients.

Potential customers want to know who they're dealing with before they meet us in person. They want to know everything they can and since a picture is worth a thousand words, this is your opportunity to give them what they want!

Jenn Vardon

Introduction

As a family photographer, I have years of experience capturing the warmth, love and affection of families and friends. Warmth, love, affection. Three attributes of family photography that you automatically disassociate with professional corporate head shots. However, I started taking corporate head shots by happenstance. It all started with a photo session with a family I adore and have worked with many times.

It's shocking to see some of the corporate head shots out there! Business web pages and social media sites are littered with superposed, conservative images of people with forced smiles. When one of my clients showed me her corporate photo, my first thought was, "Who IS this person?!" The person I had been photographing over the years was always comfortable in front of the camera, smiling happily and living in the moment. The person who was in the corporate photo looked rigid and had a worried smile on her face. I knew right then and there that I could help my client by taking a much better photo. Since that first session, a lot more of my clients have been asking for corporate photos and my portfolio in this area has grown substantially.

Over time I have learned a few tricks of the trade. The number one thing to remember when getting prepared for your photo shoot is, this is all about YOU. No need to worry about getting the kids dolled up and fed on time so that they're not cranky. The only person you need to worry about is you. You work hard for a living. Now, you can take some time for yourself while investing in your business!

I enjoy breathing life into my client's corporate photos and I'm grateful for the opportunity to share my tips and tricks for creating your outstanding corporate photo!

Dragi Andovski

Start Here

So, you're considering taking corporate portraits of you and/or your staff to enhance your online presence and connect with potential clients. To ensure your images are effective and appealing to your customer base, there are a few questions to ask yourself. Answering these questions will help you decide how you want to approach the photo session.

What does your business mean to you?

Do you have the classic elevator pitch for your business prepared?



Picture this: You press the elevator button and wait patiently. The door opens and your boss stands before you. This is the boss that doesn't answer her phone or email directly. She has far more important tasks on her plate and she doesn't even know your name. Fate has brought you to this elevator on this day and it's just the two of you. Now is your chance to tell her everything about yourself that pertains to what great work you do. What do you say?



An elevator pitch is short, concise and interesting. You only have 20 seconds to reel your boss in, to interest her enough to ask you a question. The same goes for small businesses when we meet someone new and they ask you what you do for a living. You have 20 seconds. What is the focus of your work? How might your work be helpful to the new person you just met? If you know what your business means to you and you believe in your work, it will radiate through you. Knowing the focus of your business and believing in yourself will help you in choosing

the best 2-dimensional image.

Why is it important?



Potential customers will see your image before they learn or read anything about you online or in your pamphlet. A corporate photo is used in the frontline of your marketing campaign and not only does it represent you but it also represents your company brand. Your picture tells a genuine story about who you are and what you're like.

Using corporate profile photos in newsletters, company websites and social media enhances your communication with your customers and other business professionals. The right profile photo helps you get recognized within your community and highlights your friendliness. You will appear approachable and trustworthy, which is half the battle when meeting new clients.

When should you take new photos?

The easy answer? Once per year. Potential customers want to see you as you are, today. They should be able to see you in person and recognize you instantly. If you're rocking a photo from the 80's, chances are your customers will think you are out-of-date. Worst-case scenario, when they meet you in person and you look nothing like your younger self, they'll think you tried to pull a fast one on them.

The goal is to update your profile photo a minimum of once per year but, no more than once per quarter. Remember, your



photo is part of your brand. Keeping your brand consistent helps people recognize you and associate your product/service with you. For your more social customers, it's nice to give them a little change of pace once in a while. If you completed a sports event or volunteered for a local charity, have photos taken of yourself and substitute those every once in a while for a week at a time. While sharing bits and pieces of yourself will help you connect with your clients, over sharing looks unprofessional.



Who will see it?

It's time to think about where your photo will be used. Will you use it in a pamphlet? Or, will it be used solely for social media accounts like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter? According to the founder of LinkedIn, a profile with a photo attached is seven times more likely to be viewed than a profile without a photo. Everyone, from your dentist to your plumber to your mom to your neighbour, wants to see your profile photo. These people use varying social media sites and using the same photo across these sites means you'll be recognizable to all of these people (excluding your mom, she should recognize you regardless!)



Types of Corporate Portraits

First and foremost, a colour photo is best. The research is in and people react more positively to a colour photo than a black and white. Sure, black and whites are classic and aesthetically pleasing, but they lack warmth. You may not be able to play with colour but, you can choose different portrait types to show that you're creative and approachable. Here are the different ways you can make your corporate photos appealing to the viewer.

Traditional

Think elementary school photos. Using the studio and a backdrop, the subject stands or sits in front of the background. While this is a less creative approach, it can be helpful when taking corporate photos for a large number of people. Keeping the background the same allows the viewer to see the faces as a whole, which helps to celebrate the corporate culture.



Environmental

Keep it at work. Using your workspace, you can create a photo that represents your work as well as yourself. A fitness coach might stand beside a rack of dumbbells or complete an exercise during her photo shoot, while a veterinarian may wear his lab coat while hugging a dog during his.



Contemporary

Keep it indoors. Your home, office or a studio will provide all you need for this photo shoot. Use an organic background with plain walls or very little decorating so as not to distract from the subject.



Creative Unique

This is where your creativity can shine! This option is applicable to everyone but, especially suits professions that are artistic or recreational. Minus a few restrictions to keep it professional, anything goes in this type of photo shoot.



Industry

Over the years, businesses like real-estate and law offices have maintained a certain aesthetic to their corporate photos. A standard has been set and if you are an agent or a lawyer, you will most likely stick to this photo type.



Let's Create a Great Photo!

What makes a great corporate photo? One that shows a relaxed, confident version of yourself. Your goal is to communicate something about your style and personality that you're proud to show off. One way to ensure you are relaxed and confident is to dress your best. When you look good, you feel good. Smiles will come easier and your photo shoot will go smoothly. Here are some tips for dressing the part.



Dressing for Success

1. Comfort is key. There's no need to overdress, wear clothes you feel comfortable in. Sure, you're not going to wear sweatpants and your favourite hoodie, but can you find something that looks good and feels just as good?
2. Ensure a proper fit. An over-sized sport coat or a dress shirt with a too-small-for-you collar will look worse in a 2-dimensional photo than it does in person. Manufacturers cannot meet the needs of every body-type, so don't be afraid to visit a tailor to get the right fit for you. Polo shirts are a great option for a business-casual look but, be sure the collar fits nicely and isn't worn.



3. Add a splash of colour. While you should avoid wearing an outfit with busy patterns or large stripes, a splash of colour can go a long way. If you have blue or green eyes, adding the respective colour to your wardrobe will enhance your eyes, which will help you look approachable. Wear colours

that are darker than your skin tone to look energized and avoid white unless it's under a jacket or sweater. For men wearing the classic suit and tie, choose a dark suit in navy or grey, a light coloured shirt and a non-shiny tie in a shade between your suit and shirt.

4. Lengthen your neck. Your face is your best feature and we want to highlight it. Wearing turtlenecks or covering your neck with a scarf will crowd your face and take away from the focal point. The neckline of your shirt will change the shape of your face. Try a few different shirts to find the best neckline for you.



5. Mix it up. Bring a mixture of jackets, dress shirts and jewelry to your photo shoot. You may like a certain outfit on you in person but it may not photograph as well as you imagined. This isn't a fashion show, but having access to a few different looks allows you to try a few different options and decide on the best outfit.

6. Be-jeweled. Keep jewelry simple to avoid distractions from your best feature - your face. If you have facial piercings be prepared to take them out for your photo. Don't get me wrong, we love your piercings! It's just that

they don't always translate well in 2-dimensional images. Try to keep all jewelry non-reflective and limit the flashy-ness that will take away from your gorgeous face. Earrings shouldn't dangle more than an inch from your earlobe.



7. Keep it classy. You shouldn't be able to look at a corporate photo and tell which decade it's taken in. Stay away from trends and keep your look classic. V-necks tend to look great on women and accentuate the neckline but stay away from a plunging neckline to avoid

showing cleavage. Keep your arms covered with longer sleeves for an executive shoot. Let the models and actors use tank tops and short sleeves for their headshots!

Putting Your Best Face Forward

Your corporate photo will not be sitting on your mantle at home, collecting dust. Hopefully it will be shared or viewed on the Internet daily. It will be published in your company newsletter and distributed on pamphlets for the world to see. Make sure you're putting your best self out there. Here are some helpful grooming tips to ensure that happens.



1. Take care of yourself - inside and out. Drink lots of water, eat well and most importantly and get lots of sleep days before your photo shoot to avoid bags under your eyes and to look fresh.



2. Whiten and brighten. If you're looking to brighten up your smile, start an at-home

whitening system or visit your dentist weeks before your photo shoot. Retouching can also be completed in the editing process if you find yourself short on time.

3. Facial hair. If you have facial hair and intend to keep it for your photo shoot, just be sure to trim up the edges and manage any



wild strands of hair with scissors. Shave early in the morning to let razor burn heal before your photo shoot. If your appointment is late in the day, you may have to do a touch up midday to avoid the classic five o'clock shadow.

4. To make-up or not to make-up. The number one rule with applying make-up for any photo shoot is to keep it clean and natural. We want to see that beautiful face of yours! Again, the focus is to make sure your portrait resembles you. Wear the same amount of make-up for your photo shoot as you might wear to work so that you are recognizable by your customer base. Feel free to add an extra layer of translucent powder to take away shine and create a flawless look. Avoid using any shimmer or sparkle-enhanced make-up. Blemishes and even wrinkles can be retouched in the editing process, so don't worry about covering everything up.





5. Tame that hair. If you need to get a haircut or change your colour, plan to do so 1-2 weeks before your photo shoot. This allows time for your hair dye to lighten a little and look more natural. If you've had a haircut, it allows you time to get used to styling your new do. Hair colours with

frosting or overly bright colours will take away from your face.

6. Keep it simple. If you're dying to try a new make-up product or shaving cream, wait! Hold that thought. Worst case scenario is that new product will give you a rash that will interrupt your photos. After your photo session, feel free to slather yourself in the new products!



7. See clearly. If you wear glasses, there's no need to keep them at home. If you didn't invest in the non-reflective lens, then you can always bring a pair of glass frames without the lens in them. It gives the effect of wearing glasses without the reflection of the light used in the photography process.

Get Organized!

Now that you're committed and ready for your corporate photo session, it's time to get yourself organized. Plan to have a fashion show with your friends and family to decide which outfits look best. You might even take a few photos yourself to see how the outfits look on camera. Don't forget to try on your jewelry, make-up and hair-style too. Pour a glass of wine and relish in the process!



One to two days before your photo shoot is scheduled, pack a bag of necessities to help the day go smoothly. Here's a sample checklist of things to bring to your appointment:

- Sample corporate photos that you like
- Changes of clothing and necessities
 - 1 outfit for each season or different colours combinations
 - Women - shirts/blouses with different necklines to see which ones work best
 - Men - a variety of ties and dress shirts to mix things up
 - Safety pins, just in case
 - Check buttons and zippers and fix if necessary
 - Spot remover
 - Lint brush



- Make-up
 - Men & Women - Lip balm
 - Translucent powder
 - Eye shadow, mascara, etc for touch-ups
 - Lipstick
- Hair products
 - Bring extra bobby pins and hair elastics that match the colour of your hair
 - Gel, mousse, hair spray, mold, etc.
 - Brush/comb



You Can Do This!

You might be thinking, “I’m a business professional, not a model!” However, if you embrace the process, your photos will be taken in no time and you’ll be able to get back to the work you love. Here are some things to think about during your photo shoot to help you stay focused on the positive goal at hand.

Get captured. Think about your work and what you do for others. We’re always at ease in our own element. Imagine you’re

in your own element and your photographer is capturing you, mid-work-day.

Posture, posture, posture. Sitting up straight, with your shoulders back non-verbally communicates that you’re confident and competent.



Music as a motivator. Music motivates some of us more than others. If you love your music, ask your photographer if you can plug in your iPod or play the music on your phone during your session.

SMILE! It doesn't matter how conservative your workplace or clients are, smiling makes you look younger, vibrant and ready to take on the world! Embrace your positivity and let it shine!



Think of your profile picture as a trailer for a movie - show the best parts of you and your profession. Being open to new photo ideas will give you the experience in front of the camera and make you feel at



ease. The editing process, which for you means choosing the right portraits, can take time but, it's worth every minute. The right photo can make a big difference in how you present yourself and your business to the world.

It's been a pleasure doing business with you!