

# Ready for Your Closeup

## How to prepare for your upcoming business headshot session

If you have a business headshot session scheduled, your next concern is looking good for it. That might seem like a lot of pressure! You know how to present yourself well for colleagues and clients. But details that don't make much of a difference when you're live and in person suddenly seem magnified when captured digitally on camera — and photographs last a lot longer than a business lunch.

Here are some tips on preparing for your photography session, from selecting the right outfit to preparing yourself personally.

### What should I wear?

The fundamental rule is to choose clothes you look good in, and that portray the image you're striving for. Talk to your photographer to find out what his or her preferences are. Every photographer has a different style, so certain outfits might work better for his or her setup.

#### For men:

- For business portraits, a dark suit with a nice shirt is always a good choice. Depending on how formal you want to look, you can wear a tie or just a shirt with an open collar — the latter is perfect for a casual business image. For a slightly less formal look (appropriate for some industries), lose the jacket.
- Select a button-down shirt that's solid and darker in color to allow the face to be the center of attention.
- Clothes to avoid:
  - White shirts (unless under a dark jacket)
  - Plaids and busy patterns
  - Golf or Polo-style shirts
  - Turtlenecks
  - T-shirts

#### For women:

- Select a dark suit for a very business-like image (lighter colors may work well too).
- For a less formal look, select from a number of business casual clothing options. A trim V-neck sweater or collared shirt can look great and helps elongate the neck. A cardigan over a shirt can also portray a business casual look.
- Choose an outfit you feel great in!
- Darker colors tend to work better because they accentuate the face.
- Clothes to avoid:
  - Sleeveless or short-sleeved shirts (unless you have very slender arms)
  - Turtleneck sweaters
  - Shiny fabrics such as silk
  - White shirts (unless they are under a dark jacket)
  - Busy patterns or plaids

## What about makeup and hair?

For women, unless you request otherwise, you will apply your own makeup before the photo shoot. (Of course, most photographers can supply hair and makeup artists if you prefer.) The most important thing to remember is to keep your makeup light and natural. If you don't normally wear a lot of makeup, don't go overboard with makeup the day of the shoot.

If you're worried about blemishes, talk with your photographer beforehand. Usually professional photography services will include retouching as part of the package or as an add-on, which will remove blemishes in the final image file.

For your hair, again it's preferable to keep it natural-looking. However, be sure to style it so it doesn't fall in your face.

Men and women both might also need to think about their hands. Check with your photographer to see if he or she usually includes hands in the picture. If so, be sure to thoroughly moisturize your hands for a few days before the shoot, and trim your nails or get a manicure so your fingers look tidy.

## Preparation timeline

A few days before the shoot:

- Decide what you are going to wear. You might want to bring a few different clothing choices to the photo session and decide on the best one on-site.
- Wash or take your clothes to the dry cleaner.
- Iron your clothing and put it on a hanger so that the clothes remain neatly pressed for the photo session.

The day before:

- Make sure to get plenty of rest the night before the session so you'll look your best.
- Drink plenty of water so your skin is nicely hydrated for the photos.
- To treat your skin so it looks especially good, steam your face the night before the shoot. Then apply brewed green tea as a natural toner on your face and leave it on overnight.

The morning of the shoot:

- Wash and scrub your face. Apply your normal moisturizer.
- Apply makeup and style your hair (unless you will be having your makeup and hair done at the shoot).
- For men, shave a few hours before the session.

What to bring to the shoot

Pack a little kit with all the things you'll need during the session. Remember:

- Your hair and makeup products (in case you need a touch-up at the shoot)
- Clothing for the shoot, on a hanger so it stays neat
- Hair brush or comb
- Electric shaver for men whose beards grow in quickly for a quick pre-shoot touch-up

## During the session

No matter how much preparation you do, your natural beauty won't shine through if you're not being yourself. Remember to:

- Smile, but don't overdo it. A natural smile is better.
- Look at the camera with a genuine smile. Look away sometimes and then look back to prevent a "plastic" smile from taking hold of your face.
- Relax your face during the session.
- Have fun!

The important thing to remember is that a business portrait captures who you are — so be yourself! The more relaxed and natural you are in front of the camera, the more your photograph will capture the essence of your personality and express who you are to your audience.

## About the author

Cheryl Savan is a San Francisco Bay Area business photographer who helps professionals make a strong first impression through distinctive business portraits. Learn more at <http://www.savanphoto.com/article908>

Copyright 2008 Cheryl Savan

Want to republish this article? Here are the details:

Permission is granted to re-publish the text in this article provided the article is unchanged and used in its entirety (including all text & links in the bio box). Permission is granted to post & distribute the PDF of this article provided that: 1) the PDF is hosted on your own site (and is not merely linking to the PDF on [savanphoto.com](http://www.savanphoto.com)) and 2) you include text on your site with a short description of the article including a link to <http://www.savanphoto.com/article908>