



Why have a LinkedIn photo?

Your profile picture can be one of the most important elements of your LinkedIn presence,” reports Lydia Abbot, a social media marketing specialist. In fact, recent LinkedIn statistics, updated as of Aug. 13, indicate “adding a professional photo to your profile makes you 14 times more likely to be found on LinkedIn.”

Do you have a photo on your profile? If not, why not? Many of my clients have indicated they do not want their faces visible on social media such as LinkedIn because of the potential for discrimination (age,

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race, sex, etc). I can certainly understand those concerns; however, there is always the possibility of discrimination occurring in the job search. In many cases, it’s simply a matter of time and place.

In today’s world of social media, having a professional photo can be considered the initial step to building your personal brand on LinkedIn. LinkedIn profiles without photos are far less effective than those that include one. There’s something about seeing that faceless box that makes it much less likely an employer or recruiter will click on your profile to read more, or potential connections will accept your request to connect. Joshua Waldman from “Job Search-

ing with Social Media for Dummies, 2nd Edition” tells us “recruiting professionals are used to seeing profiles with pictures, so the one without the picture becomes the oddity.” Waldman continues, “Without a picture, your profile probably won’t get the full consideration or visibility it deserves.”

Another interesting point is in a study conducted by TheLadders, where an eye-tracking heatmap showed recruiters spend 19 percent of the total time they spend on your profile looking at your picture. Then your current job position and education are glanced at, but not so much time is spent on your skills, specialties or older work experiences. According to the study, the “eye-tracking” technique examined the eye movements of 30 professional recruiters during a 10-week period to “record and analyze where and how long someone focuses when digesting a piece of information or completing a task.”

Now that we’ve talked about why you should have a LinkedIn photo on your profile, let’s take a look at a few elements of a profile photo that can increase the probability of recruiters, hiring managers and potential connections wanting to engage with you:

- Be sure to read LinkedIn’s Profile Photo Guidelines and Conditions.
- Use an up-to-date professional headshot of only *you* — not your pets, family, landscapes or company logos.
- The quote by Dolly Parton, “Smile — it increases your face

value,” is so appropriate for your LinkedIn photo. Your warm and welcoming smile is one of the first things people notice about you. That look of approachability in a photo can make the same impression on others as if you were greeting them personally.

- Dress in appropriate, professional attire. You want to avoid being overdressed or underdressed, though in some cases you may want to step up your attire a rung or so. Whatever you decide to wear, solid colors come across better. Avoid large stripes or checkered patterns.

- Your pose should be business-like. With that being said, it’s a good idea to check out your local photography studios, where you have a professional photographer who can guide you with various professional shots.

- Lighting and background are crucial. Lighting that highlights your face, coupled with a background that is not distracting, is important. The focus should be on your face. A general rule is your face should take up at least 60 percent of the thumbnail photo frame so it can be clearly visible on others’ computers.

The bottom line, as Susan B. Joyce, president of NETability Inc., points out, is “A professional social profile without a nice headshot photo of you hurts you much more than the lack of one helps you find a job or avoid discrimination. So, don’t skip it.”

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