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LinkedIn Photos - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly



LinkedIn remains the best platform for you to promote yourself in the job market, and as a picture is worth a thousand words, it's important to have a good profile picture. Scanning through the gallery of mugshots for new connections can often be hysterical or downright off-putting, so what should you do to put your best foot forward?

Let's start with some common photographic faux pas:

NO PHOTO

Hello - Wakey-wakey! Do you really expect people to contact a blank cut-out? People want to see what you look like and get an insight into your personality. What makes this choice all the more remarkable is when it's done by people in marketing. No photo and eight connections do not bode well for someone who professes to be an expert in PR and social media.

DISTORTED IMAGES

Some people have discovered an app or a function of Photoshop that enables them to manipulate their image. Changing the contrast and brightness could be a good idea but pixelating or blurring the picture to the point where the person is unrecognisable seems self-defeating. We can't all look like superstars but a good, honest photo is all people are looking for.

HOLIDAY SNAPS

Maybe you want to show that you're a fun person who enjoys life, good at mixing and one of the lads or lasses, so here's one of you having a few beers with your mates in a Malaga pub or showing off your tan on the beach. It might work on Facebook but could be too informal on the LinkedIn platform.

POSEUR

Going to the other extreme, some would-be high-flyers use a pretentious, contrived image. Typical poses include the chin resting on the top of the hand or worse still, a sideways head position while sucking the arm of reading glasses, ostentatiously trying to look intellectual - are you impressed?

SIZE MATTERS

Think of a passport photo and you won't be too far off the mark but some people have lost the plot when it comes to sizing and cropping. The person may appear as a tiny stick in the distance or more frighteningly, in a leering close-up, complete with nose-hairs. As a rule of thumb, if the whole head is not in the frame, it's too close for comfort.

WOULD YOU SIT NEXT TO THIS PERSON ON A BUS?

For those who have ticked all the boxes relating to size and presentation, they may still fall at the last hurdle with an image that's uninviting. The person may look sad and depressed or even border on the psychopathic with a fixed, aggressive stare.

GETTING IT RIGHT

Unless your favourite toy is a selfie stick, you probably don't enjoy having your photo taken, which is why many people raid their photo albums for something that will do - but that'll do won't do if you really want to make a good impression. It depends on your profession and people in banking or the legal profession tend to play it safe, often using an image taken at work by a professional photographer. It may seem like an expense you could do without but it will be money well-spent.

A head shot with just the top of the body and shoulders is ideal, looking smart and professional but friendly and relaxed. It's not easy but try to smile just a little, without going for the Hillary Clinton, wedding-style, fixed grin.

Spend a little time on LinkedIn looking at profile pictures and you'll soon get the hang of it and wonder, what were they thinking?

Discussion point

- 1) Do you have a LinkedIn profile photo? What does it look like?
- 2) Would you connect with someone without a profile picture?
- 3) Does it matter what people look like or should it not be important?

Vocabulary

A picture is worth a thousand words - an English proverb from journalism

Mugshot - a facial image, often of a criminal

Hilarious - very funny

Downright - completely

To put your best foot forward - idiom, to present yourself in the best possible way

Faux pas - French but used in English, social error, gaff

Wakey-wakey - a wake-up call

To bode - to portend, predict

Pixelate - to convert an image into many small squares, often to disguise identity

Blur - to make unclear, cloudy

Snap - a casual photo taken quickly without much care

To be one of the lads - to be a regular person who mixes well

Lass - informal Northern English for young female

Poseur - a person who behaves in an affected way to impress others

Would-be - a person with a certain desire and ambition

Contrived - deliberately created rather than occurring naturally

Ostentatious - in a showy manner in order to impress

To not be far off the mark - to be close to the desired point

To lose the plot - to lose sense of reality

To crop - to select which part of an image will appear within a frame

Leering - look in an unpleasant, lascivious way

A rule of thumb - a rough, simple guide

To fall at the last hurdle - from horseracing, to fail at the final stage

That'll do - that will not be perfect but good enough

Grin - smile broadly

