



"The Power of Your Image"

A guide to a great looking business portrait
by Rick Billings, M. Photog., Cr.



Rick Billings, Master Photographer

10363 Windermere Chase Blvd. ♦ Gotha, Florida 34734

407-733-3502 ♦ rick@billingsphoto.com

www.BillingsPhoto.com

When you look great, so do !!

A first impression is a lasting impression. Your portrait is an essential part of your business. From your business cards to your web site presents, your image will go along way in personalizing your business. So make sure your image is Powerful!

A strong business portrait is achieved through many different techniques, like lighting, posing, and getting the right expression. With lighting we add the third dimension to a flat piece of two dimensional paper. Highlights will protrude forward and shadows will recede. Done right this will create a three dimensional image which will have great impact. Now creating a great pose and with a good expression you will have a powerful image that will convey your personality and professionalism that will carry throughout your business.

Done poorly, your portrait can make your business look amateurish, convey a negative message that you didn't intend and lead people to doubt that you are the kind of person you say you are.

Most people will not make negative comments about your portrait, they will just not comment at all. When you have a powerful looking portraits you will get many great comments about your image. Positive comments will carry through into your business, many times making people feel very comfortable using your products or services.

Always remember that when you look good, you feel good!

What Makes a Business Portrait Effective

Your photo is often the first image that potential clients have of you, so it's important that it makes a good impression on your behalf. In business...especially a service-based business...a good impression comes from communicating that you are: **Professional, Personable and In sync with your business image.**

Professional

The way you communicate professionalism in your portrait is in the same way that you do in your regular business communications...*by delivering quality.*

Personable

When a business portrait is done well, it establishes a friendly connection with a prospective client and is welcoming. This is important in business because the more that potential client or customer feels connected to and welcomed by you, the more likely they are going to buy from you.

The image below was created to show a team effort in selling real estate. The client also wanted the image to connect with the consumer by pointing, in essence saying “We Want You to Call Us”.



In a photo, the way you transmit intangible qualities such as approachability and personality are through: ***Your Expression, Your Pose and Your Visible Comfort Level.***

If **your expression** is friendly and you are looking directly at the lens...seeming to make eye contact with the viewer...you'll appear welcoming. Friendliness is usually communicated with a natural smile, and a smile that shows teeth is interpreted as the friendliest.

Your pose also can convey friendliness and be very welcoming. It can create confidence in your products or services you offer.

Your visible comfort level can portray knowledge and be very inviting to the viewer. Half length to full length pose must be very natural and relaxed.

In Sync with Your Business Image

Imagine a water ski instructor with a photo in his brochure in a suit and tie. That would be odd. That’s because it would not match the image of his business. In this case the photo should be outdoors in his natural environment which would be more in tune to his business.

Portrait vs. Illustrative Shots

There are two different types of photos that you are likely to use in your business materials. One is the portrait, a close-up picture of you that expresses your personality. Another is the illustrative shot that shows you in action and is meant to add personality. Illustrative shots are great and can add a lot of energy to your marketing collateral, but don’t mistake them for the business portrait that you must have on hand.



Your clothing, accessories, and any poses you use also convey your image. What colors and styles would set the mood appropriately? What would make sense to viewers if they had read your copy or bio before seeing your photo? You have many options to express yourself.

Elements of a Great Portrait

Lighting

Our eyes are trained to read left to right and in most case I will light left to right. What this means as to view a great portrait is the light is coming from the left creating a natural shadow on the right. When

you achieve a “V” of light on the shadow side of the cheek, that is call **Rembrandt lighting**. This is the way Rembrandt painted his portraits in the 1600’s. It is also called 3/4 lighting and has the greater dimension and is commonly used in portrait lighting.

Your eyes are prehaps your most important feature in your portrait...because it’s through eye contact that people perceive connection.

What’s a “Catch Light?” A catch light is a reflection of the main light source that you can see in someone’s pupils, The catch light give your eyes a direction in where they are looking. A portrait with no catch lights in the eyes tends to have very little impact and no direction. A portrait with several catch lights has a glass eyed look. **A great portrait will have one catch light in each eye.** Catch lights will also make your eyes appear to sparkle and give them life.



Should my face have a shadow? YES...again creating a great portrait there should be a highlight side to the face and a shadow side. Done correctly this thins the face and creates dimension to the photograph.

Lighting, like proper focus, is one of those things that must be done right the first time, rather than added in later.

Posing

On head and shoulders portraits the top of the head to the chin should equal the balance of the image in height with the proportion of the images being 2 by 3. *See example to the left.*

With illustrative shots it is unlimited to the type of pose that would be appropriate.

Expression

Again, a smile is always a welcoming image to portray.

Making a Great Portrait...Outstanding

The difference between a great portrait and an outstanding one is the retouching. Rick Billings retouching and digital artwork is the finest available. Everyone loves our subtle retouching techniques which make you look your best. This includes complexion enhancement, whiten smile, soften facial lines, lighten under eyes, remove blemishes and remove any fly-away hairs.

Keeping Your Image Updated

It's a fact that people form an opinion within seconds of seeing an image. Remember that you don't just sell a product or service, you sell who you are. This makes managing your personal and corporate image very important.

Color Versus Black & White

Should your photo be color or black & white? We'll, it depends on how you're going to use it. For some publicity work, you need a black & white for use in print publications. While you can turn any color photo into a black & white image using a computer, be aware that not all converted color photos look good without knowing special conversion techniques for doing this.

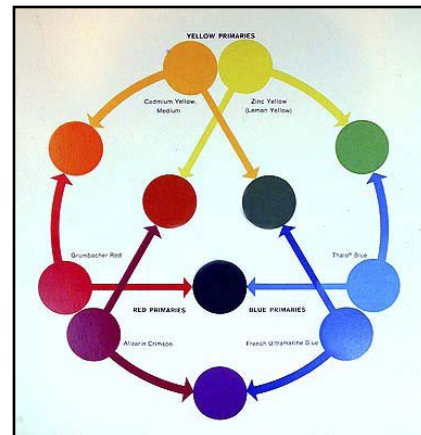


Here is an example of an image that we've converted to black & white for the client.

Background Considerations

In a head and shoulder portrait the background should never take attention away from you. In the above

portrait a blue background was selected because it is a complimentary or opposite color to the warmer skin tone. This creates a color image with greater impact. See chart below for complimentary colors.



The background should be *somewhat out of focus*, which will create more depth to the image. The background should be easy on the eyes and you should not be able to see any sharp cast of a shadow on the background.



Where and How to Use Your Photograph

Where you use your photo is dependent on your business. If you like most business owners, it make sense to include it:

- *On your Web Site*
- *In Print Brochures*
- *On Sell Sheets*

In the Real Estate, Mortgage and photography industry in is customary to include your photo on your business cards.



Image placement is equally important. Because we are trained to read left to right, by place the portrait on the right side of your business cards in this case, we read the copy and then in to the subjects face. The shadow side of the face stops our eye and we continue to read.

The *Eastman Kodak Company* did a study over 20 years ago that stated, people will select and keep a photo business cards 10 to 1 more than a traditional printed card.

You may also want to use your photo:

- ***In your Press Kit***
- ***Alongside Articles you write for print publications***
- ***Any feature published about your business***
- ***On the cover of books that you author.***

Digital Image Format

The digital image format in dependent on how you'll use the image. For print publication you'll need a high- resolution file at 300 dpi (dots per inch). For the Internet you will need a low-resolution image.

At Billings Photography & Design we provide 2 different sizes electronic images, in color and/or black & white on CD Rom which allows you to archive and use your image for many uses.

- ***Publication Image which is 5x7 at 300dpi, TIF file.***
- ***WebReady Image which is 4x6 at 72dpi, JPG file.***

So to simplify things, the Publication Image is 1500 pixels by 2100 pixels and the WebReady Image is 288 pixels by 432 pixels.

Final Thoughts

In a modern world...where we now have fabulous tools that allow us to communicate information and ideas to others without being present...it is sometimes difficult to retain the human touch. When you're reaching out to a larger audience with your business, the burden is upon you to find ways to personalize the experience and give others the opportunity to connect with you.

By taking the time to put your face in front of clients, customers, and readers, you have the opportunity to share a bit of the warmth and interest that they would experience in person. In doing so, you're likely to find that they develop a deeper connection with them and your business becomes more memorable.