

Impressions

APRIL 2003

GENE PALTRINERI PHOTOGRAPHY

Preparing for business portraits

How to make a great first impression in print or on your web site



Studio portrait

Often, potential clients get their first impression of you from your business portrait. Whether formal, or casual, your business portrait should make a strong statement about you and your business.

Your first decision is to choose between a studio or an environmental portrait.

Studio portraits

Choose a studio portrait if you're looking for a portrait to be used primarily for news releases or business cards. These "head and shoulders portrait" reproduce even in newspapers and at small sizes.

Backgrounds: Choose a neutral toned background. Avoid black or white backgrounds.

Black backgrounds do not usually reproduce well because the hair may blend into the background.

On the other hand, white backgrounds look like the head is cut and pasted.

Choose as neutral a background as simple as possible, i.e., mid-tones in blue, brown or gray work well, either as solids or with subtle patterns. Bold patterns can be too distracting.

Environmental portraits

As an alternative, have your portrait taken in your work environment. These are great at reflecting what you do, and hence, lend themselves to brochure, newsletter and web site use.

Examples of environmental portraits include executives or authors in their workplace or a construction engineer on the job with heavy equipment. Other examples include musicians with their instruments or doctors with lab coats.

Props: Choose your environment and your props carefully. *You* should be the center of attention, not the environment. Too many environmental details leads to clutter.



**Environmental
portrait**

**GENE PALTRINERI
PHOTOGRAPHY**

Certified Master of Photographer
800-755-4771 603-749-4777

Your portrait should make the viewer want to do business with you



Author cover portrait



Black and white stands out in a color world

**GENE PALTRINERI
PHOTOGRAPHY**

Certified Master of Photographer
800-755-4771 603-749-4777

Clothing

Choose appropriate attire that will not distract. Your attire should reflect your professionalism and success.

A corporate executive, for example, should not wear jeans. Likewise, a carpenter would appear inappropriate dressed in a double breasted suit.

Colors: Avoid red, yellow or greens unless they are your company colors, blues and browns usually work best.

Pay particular attention to color combinations. Complementary—not contrasting— colors are best. If you're wearing a dark suit, for example, avoid a white shirt. The white against dark contrast will draw attention from your face.

A light blue or pale yellow shirt is preferable.

Likewise, tone down your tie or scarf. Stay away from bold colors and prints. Ladies should not have low necklines and/or bright, reflective bold jewelry.

Expression

Your portrait should express friendliness, sincerity and honesty. Relaxed smiles usually work best.

A wide, toothy grin might make you look not serious enough, where a too serious expression might make one look unfriendly.

Remember that the purpose of your executive portrait is to make the reader or web site visitor want to do business with you.

Digital vs. Film

With the advances in digital photography, your photographer should be able to capture, select, retouch/enhance and print your image within a couple of hours.

Unless you need an image larger than 20x24 inches, digital is more than adequate for your needs.

Note: many media outlets prefer receiving digital files than hard copy. The quality of reproduction can be better and images can be sent electronically, reducing mailing and courier costs.

Planning

Just because digital permits quick turnaround, however, does not mean you should leave planning and scheduling your executive portrait to the last minute.

For more information...

This month's newsletter contains a bonus— second— newsletter written by marketing consultant Roger C. Parker. In it, Roger describes how you can use your executive portrait as a marketing tool.



How to Prepare for a Portrait Session – 12 Tips for Success–

©2004 Gene Paltrineri, Certified Master of Photography

1. Purpose

Share the purpose of your photograph with us well in advance of the portrait session. Show us the type of portrait you're after *before* your session.

2. Choose solid colors

Avoid patterns, such as bold stripes, flowers, and lettering. Subtle prints may be acceptable, but solid colors always safe.

3. Wear neutral colors

Avoid white, red, and yellow. These attract undue attention in group shots.

4. Socks

If one person in a group is wearing white socks, they will stand out. Choose dark socks with dark slacks. Neutral or tan socks match khakis.

5. Coordinate with others

Coordinate what you're wearing with others. One blue shirt in a group of white shirts will stand out—and vice versa.

6. Avoid bright accessories

Stay away from reflective or dominant accessories, like earrings. These distract and can cause bright spots in the portrait.

7. Preparation

Be sure to get a good night's sleep before a portrait session. Post-session retouching is available, but may be costly.

8. For men only

Shave just before your session. Five o'clock shadow is costly to remove and never looks quite right. Get a haircut 3-4 days before the session, not the same day.

9. Special tips for women

Don't try a new hairstyle or hairdresser for your session. Stick with the familiar. Hair tied up may add weight to your face.

10. Children

If your child is ill, their eyes will not have the sparkle you want. Reschedule to a day when they are feeling better.

11. Food

Avoid stopping at a fast food restaurant on the way to the studio. Coffee and mustard stains are expensive to remove during retouching!

12. Schedule

Plan to arrive a few minutes early. Stress from unexpected traffic delays will be reflected in your expressions.

Compliments of

Gene Paltrineri Photography

Certified Master Photographic Craftsman

Professional Photographers of America

3 Tanglewood Drive

Dover NH 03820

603-749-4777

800-755-4771

www.genepaltrineri.com

gene@genepaltrineri.com
