



19 Reasons

Your **LinkedIn** Photo

Is an

Epic

Fail



By [Tobias Schremmer](http://www.linkedin.com/in/tschremmer) of MarketingProfs

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/tschremmer>



Early this year, MarketingProfs ran a great article by William Arruda on personal branding trends. The first trend he listed was about the value of having a quality headshot.

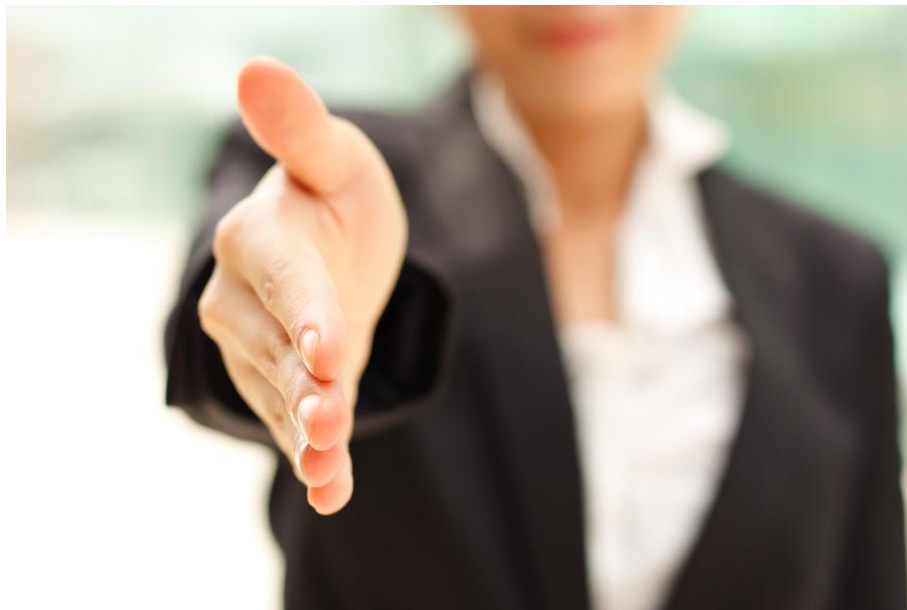
Unfortunately, not enough people are acting on Arruda's fine suggestions. As evidenced by the massive and ever-growing LinkedIn network, the personal branding story is far from reaching consensus with us in the working masses. So, I must speak up!

After carefully combing through several hundred LinkedIn photos (offered via the page that says "People I May Know"), I have come up with these 19 personal epic fail photo categories.





1. Just Straight-Up Blurry



Hello, I'm Digital Photography 101. How have we not met before?



2. Terrible Lighting



Are you the Dark Knight rising? I can barely make you out from all those shadows.



3. The “Sears Portrait” Background



Your 1981 yearbook called...



4. Random or Odd Background Images



NICE shot of the waiter behind you carrying a wine bottle under his arm. You are such, like, a restaurateur.



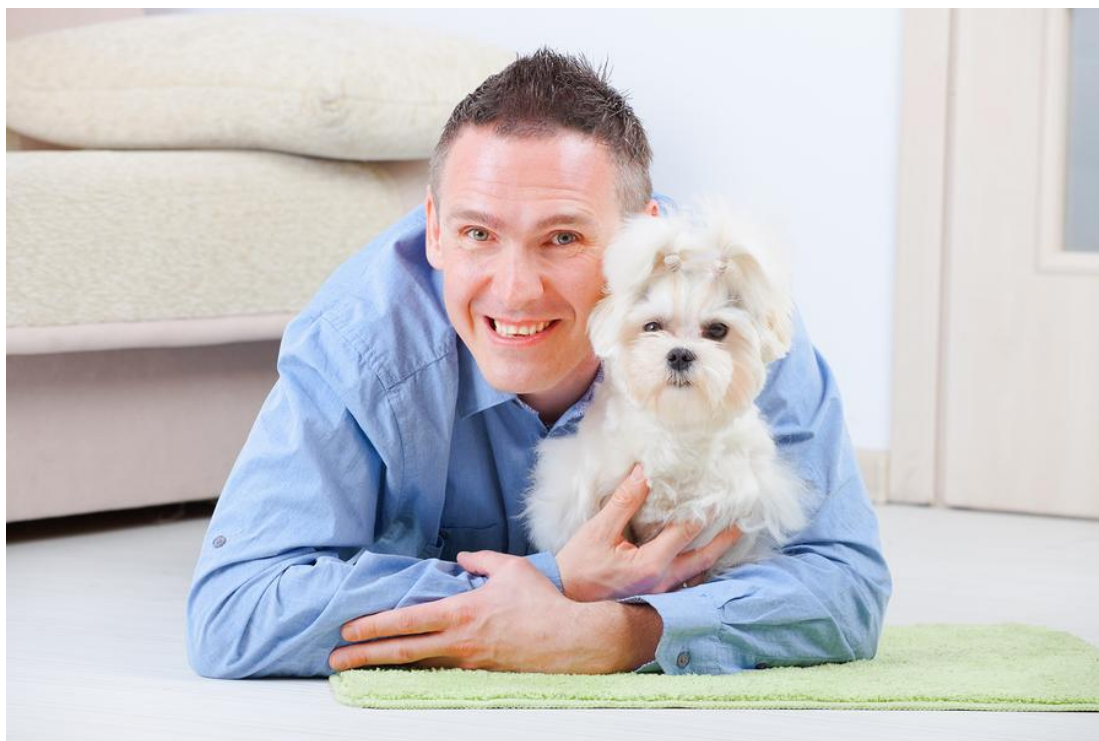
5. Classic Facebook-Style Shot #1



“I’m just way too happy right now!” (Party on, Wayne, but this is LinkedIn! As awesome as you look in a lei, you are succeeding in creating visual cacophony on what we all know is a business network.)



6. Classic Facebook-Style Shot #2



“Look at my irresistible baby (or pet)!” (How dang adorable your offspring is! Oh, but wait, wasn’t I on your page to learn about your *work* accomplishments?)”



7. Classic Facebook-Style Shot #3



“Check me out in my low-rent apartment, as evidenced by the microwave oven, IKEA kitchen cabinets, and unclean plates on the counter in the background.” (Even for a “talent management professional,” you should probably tighten it up—unless the talent you manage are pizza deliverymen.)



8. Classic Facebook-Style Shot #4



“How cute am I with my significant other in a tight embrace!”
(Because, you know, the first thing I want to know about a
“marketing project coordinator” is that she is heterosexual and
attached.)



9. The Boozy Smile



Really? Of all the possible looks you can show us, you want your future boss to have this first impression of you?



10. The “Shepard Fairey was here.”



Ah, the Obama 2008-style stencil portrait. (Does this even need a snarky comment?)



11. Full-Body Action Pic



[Jon Krakauer](#) gets to do this, but you, my friend, are a “recruitment solutions specialist.” So that 80×80 pixel image size of your posing on a big rock while on a break from hiking in the evergreens isn’t inspiring confidence in your risk-taking judgment.



12. “But I LOVE this photo of me ...”



“You love it, even though my head is right next to someone else’s, the ear and left of eye of which you can still see because I can crop a photo about as well as I can consult for your marketing needs.”

13. The White-Polo-and-Oversized Gut Combo



I'm standing in my white polo shirt holding my somewhat oversized gut with my left hand." (I'm gonna go out on this limb and suggest that you, a "digital media sales professional," opt instead for a friendly CLOSE-UP of your face, if just to spare us all the spare-tire imagery.)



14. “Side Shot of Me Working the Phone, Baby!”

And a *corded* phone no less, because you’re old-school landline-ing it, son, with your pen in hand filling out that big contract you just got a verbal on.

(Wow, no way! You use a phone and a pen in your cubicle? So do I!)





15. Mediocre Black and White



Black and white can really work—if done correctly. However, if your B&W was taken by your 1-megapixel camera circa 2006, then you're not achieving the desired effect.



16. “I’m all business and think that smiling is a sign of weakness.”



Lighten up, [Dwight Schrute](#). Even “CRM integration executives” at Fortune 500 companies can show humanity.



17. The “I’m important” Shot



“Check me out! I’m a CEO who speaks at conferences, as you can see from the ad:tech event sign behind me and the microphone and podium in front of me.” (When I just see that, I think one thing: “What a tool.”)



18. The Group Photo



“Here I am, Account Director, along with three other people all scrunched up into this tiny photo! Oh, and to make it even more awesome, see how the outdoor sunlight is BEHIND us rendering all attempts at identifying any facial features impossible?” (This combination of photo faux pas immediately triggers in me a strong reaction: gladness. I’m glad I can’t tell which one of these faceless folks happens to be you. Next.)



19. My Favorite Fail



The photo that shouts, “Seriously, world, look at just how strikingly beautiful am I in this over-the-top-glamour shot!” (Congratulations, my dear, you’ve just turned every male viewer of your pic into [Joey Tribbiani](#), and every female viewer into, well, I won’t go there.)

As Arruda noted in the [MarketingProfs article](#), personal branding is no longer just for CEOs and entrepreneurs. All of us should look our best online—especially on LinkedIn. So, if your online photos need a refresh (and at least 9 out of 10 of you reading this fall into this category), get some help. Call a photographer who can bring out your best in a photo.

If you don't want to do it for yourself and your career, then at least do it for the rest of us who are subjected to your picture far more often than you think!





Learn more about
[personal branding](#),
[LinkedIn](#), and
[career management](#)
at
[MarketingProfs](#).

