

Top 3 Tips for an Impressive Legal Portrait

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Effective use of photography is critical for creating professional headshots that project a consistent brand, convey an inviting demeanor and touch on the personalities of individual lawyers.

During a recent international project for a large international law firm, Gittings learned that while cultures vary, the elements of an impressive legal portrait remain consistent: While anyone can take a head shot, a firm that "gets it" will produce photos that address these three elements.

Expression

Most people interpret a smile as a message of connection. Even so, our legal clients are often reluctant to smile in business portraits. Attorneys certainly want to be seen as competent, but it's important that they also be viewed as responsive and approachable. Gittings photographer Rick Bettinger, who photographed attorneys in Asia, said he found that the smile really is an international language. "Sometimes they didn't understand what I was asking them to do, but all I had to do was smile at them and they immediately smiled back." After the portrait session, most of our clients agree that the poses in which they are smiling represent them best.

Wardrobe

Whether you're wearing a traditional business suit, a casual sport coat or even a keffiyeh (the traditional headdress worn by lawyers we photographed in Saudi Arabia) your clothing communicates your sense of style. Yet even an expensive suit can appear untidy under certain circumstances. "Your photographer should ask you to button your jacket when you're seated," explains Gittings President Greg Lorfing. "It may feel awkward, but if you don't, the lapel hangs straight down instead of coming to a V as it should." In some countries, when Greg said "button your jacket," the client had no idea what he meant. Asking them to "close" their jacket did the trick.

Environment

The current trend in legal portraiture is environmental portraits created onsite. These informal photographs allow prospective clients to visualize a working relationship with an attorney. Navigating small office spaces, finding an attractive background, and constructing a setting that enables the attorney to relax are critical steps in creating compelling environmental portraits that match the look

and style of those taken by other members of our team.

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