Before You Book

7 Questions to Ask Any Headshot Photographer

Hiring a headshot photographer for your team is a real investment—in time, budget, and your company's image. Not all photographers work the same way, and asking the right questions upfront saves headaches later. These seven questions will help you compare options and find the right fit.

1 Do you come to us, or do we come to you?

When your team has to travel to a studio, you're asking 10, 20, or 50 people to block out half a day—travel time, parking, waiting. That's expensive in billable hours alone. An on-location photographer brings everything to your office and works around your schedule.

> **What to listen for:** A photographer who comes to you should arrive with professional lighting, backdrops if needed, and everything required for studio-quality results in your space. Ask what equipment they bring and how much room they need.

2 Can we see the images during the session?

This is the difference between confidence and anxiety. Some photographers take hundreds of frames and disappear for weeks. Others show you every image on a tethered display in real time—so you and your team member can pick the winner together, right there.

> **What to listen for:** Look for tethered monitoring. If someone tells you “I'll send the best ones later,” your team has zero input on which images are selected.

3 Will our images look consistent across the team?

If one person has a white background and another has gray, or the lighting style changes halfway through, your team page looks like a patchwork quilt. Every image from a single session should feel like it belongs in the same family.

> **What to listen for:** Ask to see examples of group sessions—not just individual portfolio shots. Look for consistent lighting, background, and retouching style across every face.

4 What does retouching include?

There's a big gap between “no retouching” and “you won't recognize yourself.” Professional retouching should be invisible: removing a temporary blemish, softening shadows, evening skin tone. Never making someone look like a different person.

> **What to listen for:** Good answer: “You'll look like you on your best day.” Red flag: No retouching at all, or heavy beauty retouching that erases texture.

5 What's the turnaround time, and what files do I get?

You need high-resolution JPEGs suitable for web (LinkedIn, your website) and print (marketing materials, conference programs). Ask about file formats, resolution, and usage rights.

> **What to listen for:** A clear, specific answer—"two weeks for a group of 20" is better than "it depends." Ask whether you own the right to use images anywhere you need them.

6 How do you price group sessions vs. individuals?

Pricing varies widely. Some photographers charge per person, some charge a day rate, some charge per final image. Understand the total cost for your headcount and the number of retouched images each person receives.

> **What to listen for:** Transparent, specific pricing—not "let me get back to you." Ask what's included and what costs extra. A professional should quote your session on the spot.

7 What else can you capture while you're on-site?

Individual headshots are just the starting point. While your photographer is already set up, you might also need group and team photos, office candids of your team collaborating, environmental portraits of leadership in context, or event coverage for marketing and social media.

> **What to listen for:** A photographer who asks about these extras upfront is thinking about the full picture, not just the headshots. It's easier and more cost-effective to capture everything in one visit.

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