

# Selecting Your Photographer

The wrong photographer will not give you the right headshots

Unless you're an experienced marketing professional, you probably don't know how to evaluate creative service providers. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you make a good decision.

## 1. Define your needs, and then set your expectations.

- To prevent mission creep, write out why you need new headshots: job search, company website, promoting a book or speaking tour, press release, etc.
- Decide how you want to be perceived by the decision-makers who see your headshots: relationship builder, innovative creator, decisive leader, etc.

## 2. Explore your options.

- Ask a friend who raved about their recent headshots for a referral to their photographer. Past success is a good indicator of future performance.
- Search on Google. Limit your search to photographers who specialize in headshots by specifying "headshot photographer" (include the quotation marks), ensuring you'll get immediate, relevant results.

## 3. Review photographers' websites and shortlist the ones whose work you like the most.

- Who you choose to shortlist depends on how you've determined you want to be perceived. One photographer's work may be polished and have a solid commercial feel; another will be casual and down to earth.
- Headshots are all about first impressions, and the first impression you get from a photographer's website should influence your decision to shortlist them or not.
- Select three or four photographers who feature headshots of people looking like how you want to look.

## 4. Now is the time to look at the price.

- Never spend more on your headshots than you can easily afford.
- If you're looking for a \$150K+ position, \$2000+/- is appropriate. You'll spend that much on a suit and get less traction.
- If you're in management looking for a promotion to a director, \$800 - \$1200 might be just right for you.
- If you're looking for an entry-level position, \$100+/- is about all you should spend.

## 5. Interview the photographers on your shortlist over the phone or Zoom to learn if they're the right kind of person for you.

- We all have our personalities, and that influences our approach. As an example, my mentor, Peter Hurley, has a larger-than-life personality. He might be the perfect photographer for you, or you may prefer to work with someone with a nurturing, thoughtful approach.
- Ask about the photographer's process. Put them on the spot and see how they respond. Do they know what they're doing or making it up as they go along?
- Ask about their studio. Choosing a photographer who works on location requires you to be comfortable performing for an audience.

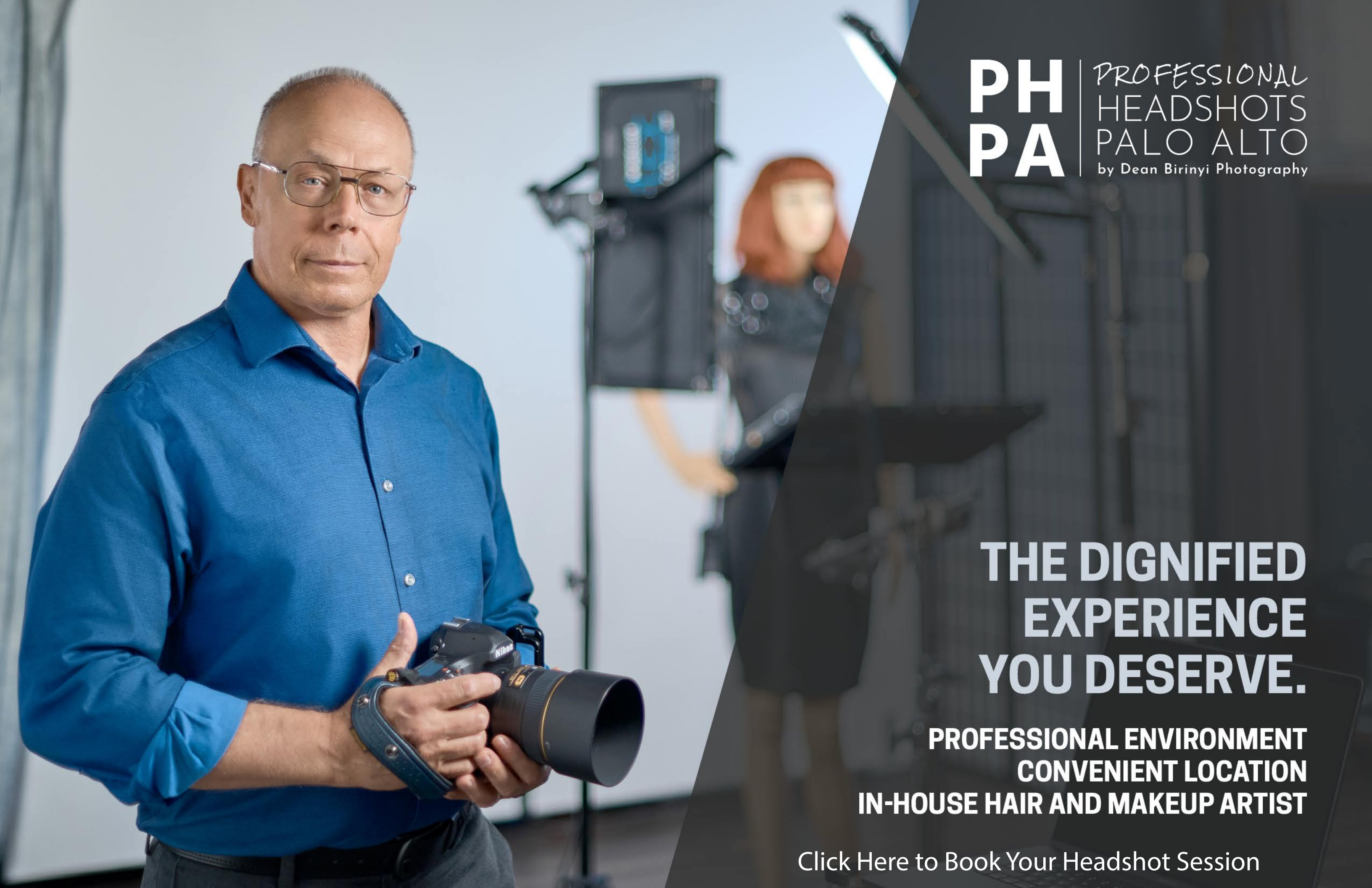
## 6. After you hang up the phone or end the Zoom meeting, answer these three questions. Of the photographers you interviewed:

- Who do you like the most?
- Who respects the value of your professional image the most?
- Who do you trust to lead you through your headshot session the most?

All of this requires a good investment of your precious time. The return is headshots that make you look good and work to help you advance your career.

**“Photographers show the work they are most proud of on their websites. The style and type of photograph they want you to associate with them.**

Photographers put photos on their website to be judged by you. The goal is to help you decide if they deserve your trust.”



**PH  
PA** | PROFESSIONAL  
HEADSHOTS  
PALO ALTO  
by Dean Birinyi Photography

**THE DIGNIFIED  
EXPERIENCE  
YOU DESERVE.**

**PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT  
CONVENIENT LOCATION  
IN-HOUSE HAIR AND MAKEUP ARTIST**

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