

# Your Wife is on Your LinkedIn picture? Are You Kidding Me?

**Dear Stephen,**

*My wife and I are having a debate about my LinkedIn photo. I have read your thoughts on this subject before, but nothing I see on LinkedIn seems to conform to any specific formula. Is there a new, more up-to-date protocol on what a LinkedIn photo should look like? My wife wants me to use a photo she likes of the two of us. I am in a suit and it's cropped in a way that makes us both look professional, but there are two of us. I have never had a professional picture taken, and I guess I can do a selfie, but I really don't want to mess this up.*

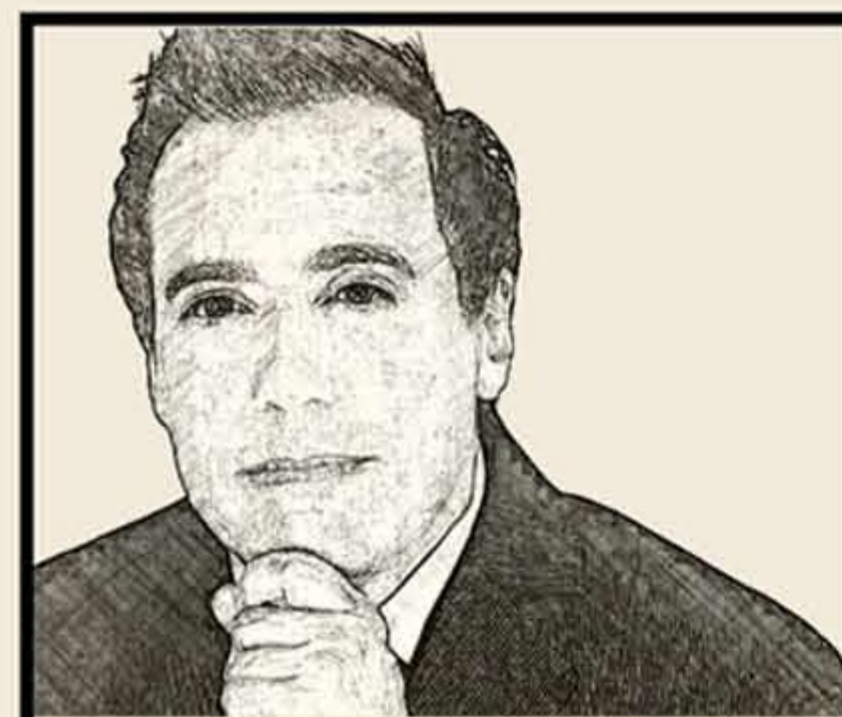
*Is there a right way to have your photo? Should it match my Facebook profile picture? I just scanned LinkedIn again. I was looking at the men and found some in suits like they would wear to work, some who were more casual, some who just used their Facebook photos, many profiles didn't have*

*a photo and a few had a man and a woman together. They are all over the map! As the new year approaches, I am starting to put feelers out and beginning to interview. I am in outside sales. A friend of mine in HR told me that when she gets a resume she always checks the person on LinkedIn (or Facebook) to see what they look like. Is that true? She told me that my wife does not belong in the picture, and that it's weird. I've spent a long time getting my LinkedIn profile right, and I would hate for my picture to turn people away. What is your advice?*

**Is This What You Want to See?**

Dear Want to See.,

I have very strong feelings about LinkedIn photos and have shared them before, but this is the perfect time of the year to bring up the subject again. Everyone is getting ready for the new year, and sometimes that means ex-



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Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter @WorkplaceGuru, Like Stephen on Facebook; and follow him on LinkedIn.

ploring options — even if you end up staying put. So, yes, an update to my WorkplaceGuru LinkedIn rules seems to be in order.

First, trust your HR friend; she does this for a living. It is absolutely true that it is vital to create or find the perfect LinkedIn photo, which means your picture should look like you, and you should be dressed for the job you're seeking or doing. If you work in Silicon Valley, you should look like you work in Silicon Valley, not on Wall Street; if you are an architect or designer, you should look like an architect or a designer, not a barista or a lawyer. Now, even within specific professions there are varying

looks. For example, a pharmaceutical sales rep dresses very differently than a textiles sales rep does, and A&D reps look different from everyone else. Get it? Look the part you want. It seems like common sense, but tons of people can't catch on.

On the topic of obviously bad ideas, let's consider the insanity of having your LinkedIn picture include your partner. For the life of me I cannot fathom what makes people think this is a good decision, and every HR director I have spoken to about this agrees with me.

It seems like it is your wife who is pushing the idea, and that is actually quite a common story. The vast majority of men who have pictures with their partners tell me those partners suggested they be in the picture. In some cases, people are just lazy and choose to use any photo they have that they feel looks good, but most times it's some weird territory marking, like a dog peeing on its owner so all the other dogs know to stay away.

Your spouse may think people are trolling LinkedIn looking for a date or that you might have co-workers to whom they'd like to send a clear message. Give me a break! Couple pictures of any kind on LinkedIn send a bad impression. Maybe you have a great marriage, and you chose the photo because it was convenient. But to someone on the outside, it can give off the impression that

you have an overly possessive or jealous spouse or other baggage in your personal life. Nobody wants to hire someone with baggage.

I am a little shocked that I still have to explain to people the difference between Facebook and LinkedIn, but here I am, once again, shouting into the abyss. Facebook is for casual photos; you can post your personal things there. Have a great picture of you and your partner? Put it on Facebook! That is entirely appropriate and what it is for. Mind you, many HR people will look at your Facebook profile if your account is not private, but no one is rejecting you because you have a picture of your wife on your Facebook page. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is a social media site made expressly for the purposes of professional connections. You don't bring your spouse to work on a random Tuesday, so don't bring them into your LinkedIn picture.

I do understand there are tricky bits to finding the right photo, but if you follow these rules, you should be good to go:

1. No sunglasses, ever. Unless you are applying to Top Gun flight school or you are Joe Biden.
2. Dress for the job you want.
3. No body shots, no matter how good you look.
4. No bottles or wine glasses in hand (again, I am amazed that

I need to include this one, but I do).

5. No vacation photos.

6. No tuxedo pictures, unless you are a waiter or limo driver.

7. Avoid the selfie at all costs. This is not Tinder.

8. Don't pick a photo because you look good; pick it because you look professional — whatever professional might mean for the job you want.

A good LinkedIn photo is a frame that captures just below the shoulders to the top of your head. Your head and body should both be slightly angled, and you should have a small smile. If you are getting it done professionally and the photographer knows what they are doing, they will take it from a slightly elevated angle. Chances are, you paid to have your resume created, why not pay to get a professional headshot taken? Yes, a picture really is worth a thousand words, and it can determine whether or not you get an interview, and, ultimately, the job. Of course, as important as the picture is, the content of your LinkedIn page is obviously just as important. Remember that your profile needs to match your resume exactly. So your homework is to get your wife out of the photo, take a new picture and be sure the content is up to date. Then, your LinkedIn page will be Viscusi-approved!

**Stephen**