

personal branding

MY FIVE TOP TIPS FOR STYLING YOUR
PERSONAL BRAND PHOTOS SO YOU NEVER LOOK NAFF AGAIN



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“Do you know what makes someone beautiful? Confidence. You don’t have to have this shape eyes or that shape lips. No one seems to be able to decide which shape is best anyway. You can have every kind of blemish. It’s confidence that attracts people. That’s what everybody’s looking for. It’s what no potion can really give you.”

DANIEL NAVARI, *ANOTHER FAUST*

Confidence.

That’s what great personal branding imagery does for you, and your business, too: It gives you confidence.

And *THAT’S* attractive.

If you’re thinking about a personal branding shoot to help build confidence in yourself and your brand, but you don’t have the vaguest idea where to start, read on for my five top styling tips so you never look naff in photos again.





How do you want to be seen?

THIS QUESTION IS KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL BRANDING SHOOT

How do you want to be seen? Can you answer that question? How do you want your brand to be seen? Is there alignment between how you want to be seen and how you currently present yourself and your brand to the world?

Being able to articulate your answers to those questions, being able to describe who you are, who your brand is -- this is key to being able to start describe to your branding team (photographer, graphic designer, website designer, product designer...) what you want them to create.

All of our personal branding shoots here at vividity start with exploring your answers to these questions, and a whole lot more. We typically spend weeks getting to the core of you and your brand before stepping anywhere near a photo studio or camera.

Why? Because the answers to these questions are the foundation of your brand identity, and without being able to articulate these key things, you will end up spending thousands of dollars on images (and all sorts of other marketing materials) that will not serve you well.

And we don't want that. Not for you, and not for us.

So, as with all good stories, we start at the beginning: who are you, what makes you light up, *how do you want to be seen?*

If you want to change how others see you and your brand, a personal branding photo shoot is a good place to start. I know from experience, though, that booking a shoot can induce towers of anxiety.

But, if you're like most people I see in my studio, it's not the questions I've just asked that you worry about most before a personal branding photo shoot (even though they should be!) The question I hear most when people book in for a shoot is this: What should I wear?

And it's that question that will be answered in the next few pages. Read on for my top 5 tips on wardrobe styling for your personal branding shoot.

Styling your personal brand shoot





THERE ARE FIVE KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING YOUR WARDROBE FOR YOUR PERSONAL BRANDING PHOTO SHOOT:

1. Texture: favour texture over pattern
2. Colour: colours that suit you, and colours that suit your brand
3. Fit: show your shape (no matter what that shape is!)
4. Glasses: If you wear specs all the time, you definitely need some images that include them
5. Underwear: it's way more important than you think.



Texture

Give priority to texture over pattern when you're selecting clothes for your shoot. As pretty as patterns and florals are, they can be problematic at times in still photos. Not always, of course, but often, so they're best avoided if possible.

Busy patterns and small floral prints tend to draw the eye of the viewer to the print and away from your face, and it's your face — your eyes in particular — to which we want to draw the viewer's attention.

Texture can be found in:

- layering: a jacket over a blouse or dress, for example.
- a chunky knit
- zips and buckles on a jacket
- a draped neckline
- lace
- jewellery and other accessories
- the soft rib of a jersey fabric and the wrinkles of the lounge behind as shown here...

Colour

CHOOSE COLOURS THAT SUIT YOU & YOUR BRAND

I always tell my clients to focus on variety when choosing clothes for their shoots: variety of style and shape, variety of season, variety of formality, and variety of colour. The worst thing you can do is turn up with 5 little black dresses!

Bring:

- something light in colour (soft pinks, creams, pale grey perhaps)
- something dark in colour (French navy, charcoal grey, black, dark denim)
- something bright in colour if it suits you & your brand (burnt orange, cerise, royal blue, red..)



01. JUST A TOUCH

Soft pink of this brand echoed in belt and soft lipstick colour, as well as use of soft lighting.



02. SET & CLOTHING

Touches of navy, cream, and gold in clothing, jewellery, and cushions on the set.



03. PROPS

Neutrals in clothing, set, and props like the notebook seen here.



04. LIPSTICK

Brand accent colours brought in through gold watch and red lippy.



INCORPORATING BRAND COLOURS:

You don't have to dress head to toe in your brand colour. Instead, incorporate your brand colours in subtle touches like accessories, props. Talk to your photographer about bringing them into the set design. Subtle integration of your brand colours allows you to create powerful on-brand marketing pieces for your business *and* will give you images that can seamlessly integrate with other brands when needed, like when you need a bio pic for that magazine you want to feature in, or conference you dream of being keynote speaker for.

Clothes that fit



STYLIST
Caitlin Stewart

MODEL
Prona Lovenz



“Constantly worrying about your reflection and criticizing your body, shape and size is an act of violence against yourself.”

EMMA THOMPSON

CLOTHES THAT FIT YOUR BODY:

No matter what your size and shape, your photographer wants to be able to *see* it! A good photographer knows how to pose different body types in flattering ways, and that’s easier done when your clothes fit you properly. Fitted clothes that hug the shape of your body are generally a better bet for having photos taken, than trying to “hide” your body behind loose kaftans and baggy jumpers. (These kinds of things actually have the effect of making you look bigger on camera, not smaller.) Over-sized clothes are generally a no-no.

Check over the clothes you plan to take to your shoot, and have any alterations done as needed. Pay particular attention to sleeve lengths on jackets and coats,

as well as the fit around bust, waist and hips on all your garments. Make sure everything you’re planning to take to your shoot is clean and pressed.

On the other hand, your photographer probably can work with things that are just a wee bit too small. I have done that several times with fabulous dresses that didn’t quite do up at the back. It just needs some careful posing (and a wee bit of tape!)

Talk through your wardrobe plans with your photographer prior to your shoot.



CLOTHES THAT FIT YOUR BRAND:

Can you describe your brand as a person? Is your brand young and fit? Sporty? Feminine? Masculine? Gender-neutral? Is your brand ultra-conservative? Or casual and relaxed? If you can picture your brand as a person, what kind of clothes would your brand wear?

It's important that you dress for your personal branding session in clothes that fit your brand persona. That's not necessarily just one look, but each outfit you bring along to your shoot needs to suit the look and feel that you want for your business.

If, for example, your target market is stressed out mums, you probably don't want to look too corporate or too edgy. Better would be to present yourself as well-groomed and nicely put together, but casual and relaxed. Not too 'threatening'. If, however, your aim is to look like you know your stuff & can hold your own in the board room of a Fortune 500 company, then you need razor sharp suiting and a high level of attention to detail.

Where does your brand sit on the spectrum from casual to formal?



Glasses

Glasses can sometimes be problematic for photographers. Here are some tips to make things easier:

- Make sure your glasses are clean! And bring your cleaning clothes/solutions with you.
- Avoid transition lenses if you can (the ones that change colour with light)
- If you have a few different pairs, bring them along to create a range of different looks.
- If glare is a problem for your photographer, have them photograph you with and without your specs and do a composite image in post production.
- Have some fun: pick up a couple of pairs of frames at a second-hand store. (I suggest this to all my clients who only have transition lenses.) You can even pop out the lenses if you need to.
- If you don't wear your specs all the time, have some photos taken with and without them. Sometimes they can be pictured on your desk, along with other tools of your trade, or you can simply hold them in your hand.

“What’s going on in the inside shows on the outside”

EARL NIGHTINGALE



Inside job

01. WHAT’S INSIDE YOUR CLOTHES

Underwear. It’s more important than you think! I’ve seen many images spoiled because of the wrong undergarments.

If you’re planning several changes of clothes during your shoot, make sure you put in the appropriate underwear for each outfit that you bring along.

There’s nothing worse than a client turning up for a shoot wanting to create a high-end corporate look in a soft white blouse, but with only the brightly coloured sports bra she turned up in.



02. WHAT’S INSIDE YOU

What’s going on inside *you* is important, too.

Hopefully your photographer will be skilled in helping you relax and feel comfortable in front of the camera. Unfortunately, though, not all photographers are.

Your photographer should also be able to tell you how to pose to get the best shapes and angles for your face and body. Again, sadly not all photographers are good at this, either.

My best advice is to shortlist some photographers whose work you like and talk with each of them over the phone. Go with the one who makes you feel most at ease.

Most of my clients arrive full of trepidation at the thought of being photographed, but they leave on a high, telling me how much fun they’ve had.

I wish the same for you, whoever you choose for your personal brand photography.



CHECKLIST

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR SHOOT

COLOUR & TEXTURE:

- I have outfits in a range of colours for my shoot:
 - something light
 - something dark
 - something neutral
 - something bright
- I have found ways to add texture to my outfits:
 - layering
 - textured fabrics such as tweed/lace/knits
- I have accessories that suit some/all of the outfits I'm taking.

GLASSES:

- I have packed more than one pair of glasses if I have them
- I have transition lenses and I've discussed this with my photographer
- I've picked up some funky frames from my local second hand store, and can pop the lenses out of them if needed
- I have packed my cleaning cloths and solutions.

FIT:

- I have tried on my clothes, and am bringing outfits that show my shape
- I have had alterations made to anything that needs it
- All the outfits that I'm bringing are clean and pressed
- My outfits suit my personality and also my brand persona.

BRAND COLOURS:

- I've found subtle ways to incorporate brand colours into my accessories:
 - touches of brand colours in my outfits
 - accessories in brand colours
 - props and set design as discussed with my photographer

THE UNDERNEATH:

- I have packed appropriate underwear for each outfit I'm taking to my shoot
- I'm feeling comfortable about being photographed. If not, I've talked with several photographers and I've book the one who made me feel most at ease.

Have fun planning

HAVE FUN PLANNING YOUR SHOOT!

A little preparation will go a long way towards getting the results you want from your personal branding photo shoot.

Truth be known, what to wear is actually the easiest decision when creating images for your brand. What's more important — way more important — is to think about your business goals and what you have planned for the next 6~12 months.

When clients book a full branding session with me, we typically spend weeks before the shoot date delving into their brand, their marketing plan, and their business goals. That way we can style their shoot to meet the specific needs of their business... because no-one wants to be *that* business owner who drops thousands of dollars on hundreds of images they will never use.

I'm ready to help you with the next steps of growing your library of marketing images, specifically created for your business needs. Drop me a note, or give me a call.

Jen x

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More at www.vividity.com.au





Never Look Naff



PERSONAL BRANDING STYLE GUIDE FROM VIVIDITY