

Style Your Brand
THE CREATIVE BRIEF

MODULE FOUR

Visual Manifestation of Your Brand

(Part 2- Signature Photoshoot Planning)



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BRAND PHOTO SHOOT

Planning your personal brand photo shoot can be such an exciting journey in the process. We've heard this before, *"a picture is worth 1000 a thousand words"*. This is why some of the top luxury brands in the world use powerful images to get us to lust over their latest products or services.

I certainly enjoyed my own branded photoshoot and working on my own clients projects. I also had the opportunity to art direct several photo shoots as the editor in chief and publisher of my own luxury lifestyle magazine.



"Image"— is everything and having photos that put into visual representation, your brand personality and story, is something that is worthy of both *time* and *deliberate effort*.

I want to help make your photo shoot experience as fun and successful as possible through the process in this workbook.

There are several essential yet often overlooked factors you need to consider before even stepping in front of the camera, so that your photos capture your true essence. Let's get started.

CLARIFY YOUR PHOTO STORY

The first step is to clarify your photo story. What message or story are you trying to tell through these photos.

How do you want your ideal client to feel when they see your photos and visit your website?

What do you want people to know about you, your personality and your lifestyle?

Create a theme for your photo shoot. What is the main message or story that you want to tell creatively through your photo shoot?

LOCATION SELECTION

What kind of scene will provide the best backdrop for your photo shoot? *(Consider the colour scheme you want in your photos. For example, lots of green, bold colours, elegant neutral tones, etc.)*

Which three locations are “on brand” and best suited for this?

Is there a fee for using this location?

Will I need permission?

Please note that you should consider having a lawyer prepare a photo release, if you are using a location like a hotel or other people in the photo shoot, etc. Some locations may not ask for it, but it's always a good idea to have one.

How long in advance do you need to book it? Is the space available and “on brand”?

Which three people (celebrities or other people in your industry) best embody the style you are trying to portray?

Head over to Google images and search for images that best embody your style for inspiration. Study what you like about those images and take notes of things that inspire you and how you bring your own iconic style into your photos. You can create your mood board using Pinterest (*you can set it to secret if you don't want to share it publicly*).

Create Two (2) Mood Boards

1. Hair and Make-up: remember not to get too carried away trying new hairstyle that you wouldn't typically wear on the day of the photo shoot. It's not the time to experiment with a new hairstyle you may not like in long-term. Be true to your own personal sense of style and let that shine through.

Who will do your hair and make-up?

2. Art Direction Mood Board: this includes wardrobe, backdrop and scenery. Write down the key scenes you would like in your photoshoot *e.g. office, restaurant, etc.* **List your artistic direction for each page on your website e.g. Home Page** (*Lounging on couch in living room*).

On average you may receive 20-40 edited photos depending on your contract with the photographer. Clarify what is included in your package up front. I suggest selecting a few photos (3-5) that will be used consistently in your marketing to create stronger brand recognition. These would typically be signature photos used on your website, social media profiles and other marketing material.

Ensure that you get the following types of photos:

 **A head shot**

 **Banner images for your website and sales pages**

 **Brand Result:** A photo that reflects the lifestyle your client will achieve after working with you.

How many photos do you need for your website? Plan the scenes by page e.g. office scene for home page etc.

How many photos do you need for social media? What type of photos do you want for social media?

Are there any special photo scenes that you need for the promotion of your products/services?

WARDROBE

Once you have your mood board, you can now work on your wardrobe selection for the shoot. This can be both a fun and frustrating experience. If possible work with a stylist that can help make the process easier. Here are some tips: *don't over think it and don't do anything too weird or out of character!*

Perhaps you already have a fabulous wardrobe or may need to buy some new clothing. However, an option that you can use, is renting some stylish high-end pieces (e.g. www.renttherunway.com) to give your photos a high quality, well tailored look.

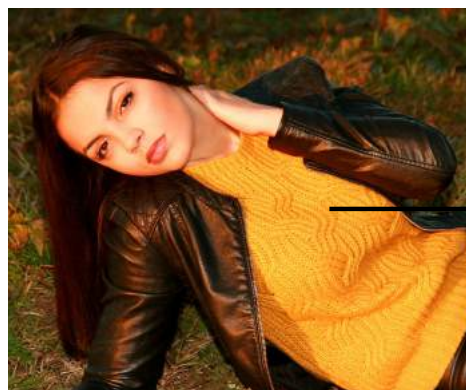


Working with a professional stylist can give your wardrobe planning an edge. Someone who can objectively look at the big picture of what you are trying to achieve, and help you select the right clothing to suit your vision. Here are some style tips:

When selecting colours to layer, start with the lighter colour and then go to the darker colour, especially for the upper part of your body to create a stronger more dynamic image. Use more neutral colours as the outer layer like black, grey, taupe, etc.



NO



YES

If you are wearing a basic colour on the bottom (*like black*), the upper can be any colour. Avoid shiny fabrics that reflect light back to the camera and tend to look unflattering.

WEARING STRIPES

Wearing stripes for your photo shoot can be tricky. Here are some tips to take into consideration when selecting stripes.



Horizontal stripes will enlarge the area over which it is worn. Unless you have slim legs or small upper body avoid horizontal stripes. Vertical stripes give the illusion of length and works well for any body size.

Diagonal stripes pointing upward (*center image*) adds length, causing the eyes to move upwards. A skirt with this pattern can make your legs look longer and waist line smaller. Wear lower cut shoes to create the illusion of even more length.

Tips for the 5'4 Ladies

If you are very short, dressing all in one colour (especially solid colours) will make you appear taller. Avoid wearing capris and shoes that strap around the ankles. Pumps the same colour of your skin will make your legs appear longer.

Taking photos with your phone while wearing an outfit can give you an idea of how it will look when photographed. Be true to YOU. I remember everyone disliked the red dress I chose for my photo shoot but my gut feeling told me that this was the exact look I wanted. Now they all love it and more importantly, so do I!

I am spending time on this subject because the woman in the dress matters so much for shaping your brand image. Here are some additional tips:

- 1) Try to coordinate colours instead of being matching.
- 2) Keep in mind where on your website you want to place the photo and what message you want to convey for that particular page.

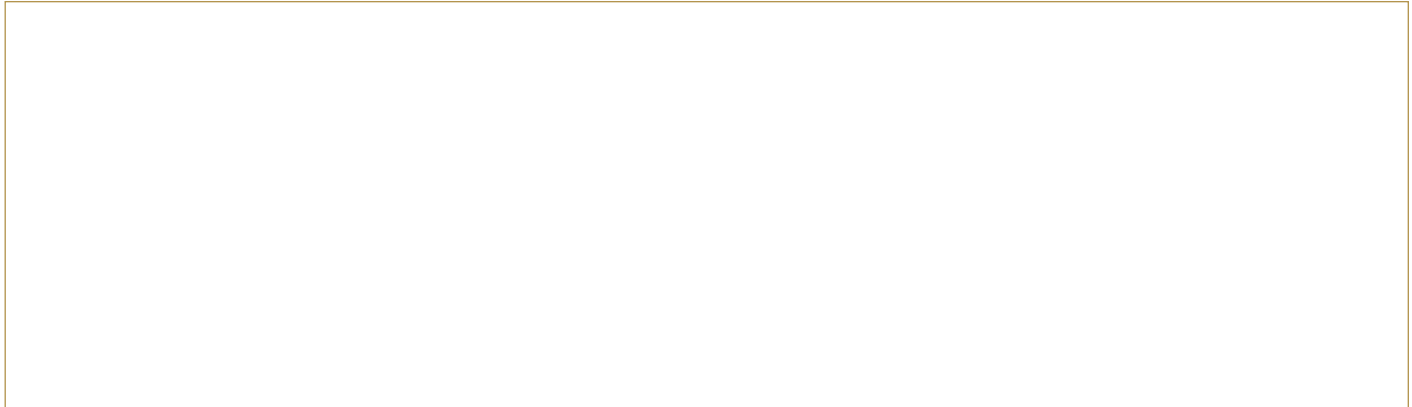
- 3) Ensure that your clothing compliments your body and accentuates your best features. Avoid clothing that is too loose fitting or too big, these tend to make the photos look sloppy. Well-fitted looks are neater, especially if you are not very tall.
- 4) Solids are always a great choice especially if you want your photos to look timeless. However, if you do use print ensure that it goes with the mood of your photos and doesn't look too busy in the location you will use.
- 5) If you choose to wear winter jackets, coats or blazers, remember to take some shots without it, as those photos will be on your website 365 days in the year and need to look like the ideal lifestyle of your audience.
- 6) Ensure that your undergarment is appropriate for the clothing you will wear and avoid revealing bra straps and lacy underwear that doesn't leave smooth lines on your clothing.
- 7) You don't need to wear the same colour shoe and dress. Try complimenting colours.
- 8) Classic white is always a winner, especially on darker skin tones. Go for timeless styles.
- 10) Walk with additional styles on the day just in case. A change in the planned scene, weather, etc. are all factors that need to be considered. Be ready.

What type of mood do you want to project through your clothing?

You may choose 1-3 different moods depending on your contract with the photographer and how many wardrobe changes you are allowed in the shoot. I suggest not going past three changes as both you and the photographer will be creatively drained going through too many scene and wardrobe changes. (*e.g. Sporty, Casual, Elegant, Glamour, Business*).

Which three signature styles will you wear for your photo shoot?

You can also use Pinterest to create a style board to get some style ideas for your photo shoot. If you are not a Pinterest user, go over to Google images and search for ideas. Consider how these styles will look in the room or location you have selected. You want the colours to contrast and compliment each other.



PROP STYLING

Props can really help set the right mood for a photo if done well. Think about the type of details you want in your photo shoot e.g. reading a book: *what book?*, a glass in hand: *wine or coffee?*, fresh flowers (*what type of flowers reflect my brand image?*), etc.



What props will you need during the photo shoot? *(Think about things that you use every day in your line of work that convey your lifestyle and story. It is a good idea to determine this ahead of your shoot and arrange to take them to the location or request that it be made available to you).*

PHOTOGRAPHER

Now that you have a clear idea of the mood for your photo shoot, it's time to find a photographer that can best capture it. Once you have selected a few photographers, compare their portfolio to the style of image that you are trying to accomplish. This can help you determine if the photographer is a right fit for you.

Once you have made your decision, you can continue the planning process with his/her guidance.

Who is a good fit to take your photos?

(Name and URL. You can list three options and then make a decision based on their portfolio and style).

For a good photographer that will deliver high quality photos that you will be proud to say *"this is my website address..."* budget around \$US1,500 - \$5,000.

CONTINGENCY

On the day of my photo shoot, it rained like there was a hurricane was on the way. This required several changes to the plan and the scheduling of an additional day of shooting, which was an additional cost.

You need to cater for variations in your plan. It may not always be convenient for your photographer to schedule another day, especially if he/she is flying in for the shoot.

Create a contingency plan *e.g. outdoor photos, etc.*

What alternatives do I have, to replace the outdoor or indoor shoots that may not be possible?

SITE VISIT

I initially selected the location for my photo shoot based on the location's website. When I did a site visit, the set up of several of the areas I wanted to use had been redesigned.

This required making changes in the art direction to facilitate the changes because I was still in love with the location. Where possible always do a site visit or request that recent photos of the location be sent to you.

If possible, do the site visit with your photographer, so that you both can discuss and determine what is feasible or not.

FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION

Will you need to cater for lunch expenses for the photographer, you and anyone else on set or is it part of the photographer's fee?

Are there any transportation cost involved?

PHOTOSHOOT BUDGET PLAN

COST BREAKDOWN

Wardrobe

Photographer

Personal Stylist

Props

Transportation

Location fees

Meals

Contingency 5%

TOTAL COST

PHOTO SHOOT DAY CHECKLIST

When packing for your photoshoot ensure that you have the following:

- Props
- Iron all clothing and place in garment bag
- Face Towels
- Wet wipes
- Dress sheild
- Scarf (*great for covering your face to avoid getting make-up on your dress*)
- Umbrella (*in case it drizzles you won't ruin your hair*)
- Scissors
- Safety Pins
- Sewing Kit
- Light dressing robe
- Comfortable slippers
- Mirror
- Phone charger
- Laptop charger
- Pen
- Hair accessories
- Sunglasses

- Lipstick/make-up
- Lip balm
- Eye drops
- Emergency kit (*Tylenol, antacid, anti-histamine, bandages etc.*)

- Protein bars/snacks (*moving around you'll need something to munch on*)
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Bottled water
- Jewelry
- Shoes for each outfit change
- Props *e.g. laptop, green smoothie, yoga mat, etc.*

Ensure that your nails and hair are done the day before before the shoot (*shampoo, re-colouring, etc.*) It's always a great idea to have a spa treatment (*e.g. body scrub*) a few days before your photoshoot so that your skin beautiful and subtle on camera. I also love to eat a raw food diet at least seven days before, to add even more natural radiance.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR YOUR DAY

Negative Space for Banner image: Ensure that you take some photos standing on the left with negative space on e.g. the right, so that you have space for your compelling headline when you place it on your website. The text are best on the right because we read left to right. It lets your client make contact with you first and then read what you have to say.



The photos you will use for your header should be landscape and in high resolution format. You may want to take some standing in the middle of the frame as well, depending on the general artistic direction of your photo shoot. Those centered shots are best for breaking up copy on your website.

Body Language: Women should be mindful of letting your feminine side shine through in your photos (e.g. *soft hands and relaxed feminine poses*). Photos are also a great way to tell people what action to take on your website. You may want to take some photos looking left, right, up and/or down.

Look into the camera so that your audience feel that you are making eye contact with them. It will give them a greater sense of connection to you. You also want to humanize your photos by having natural laughing/smiling scenes, again depending on the mood of your brand.

Leaning shots are also great options (e.g. *leaning on a desk, table or leaning forward or back to laugh*). Remember you are still positioning your self as the expert and competent professional, so add some power shots in the mix.





While on the surface this picture looks like a great shot, she is leaning forward too low. It is the typical posture you would take to relate to a 5 year old. Unless that is your target client, you want to be angled a little higher than this. However if you want to communicate in a fun child-like way with your audience, it is fine.

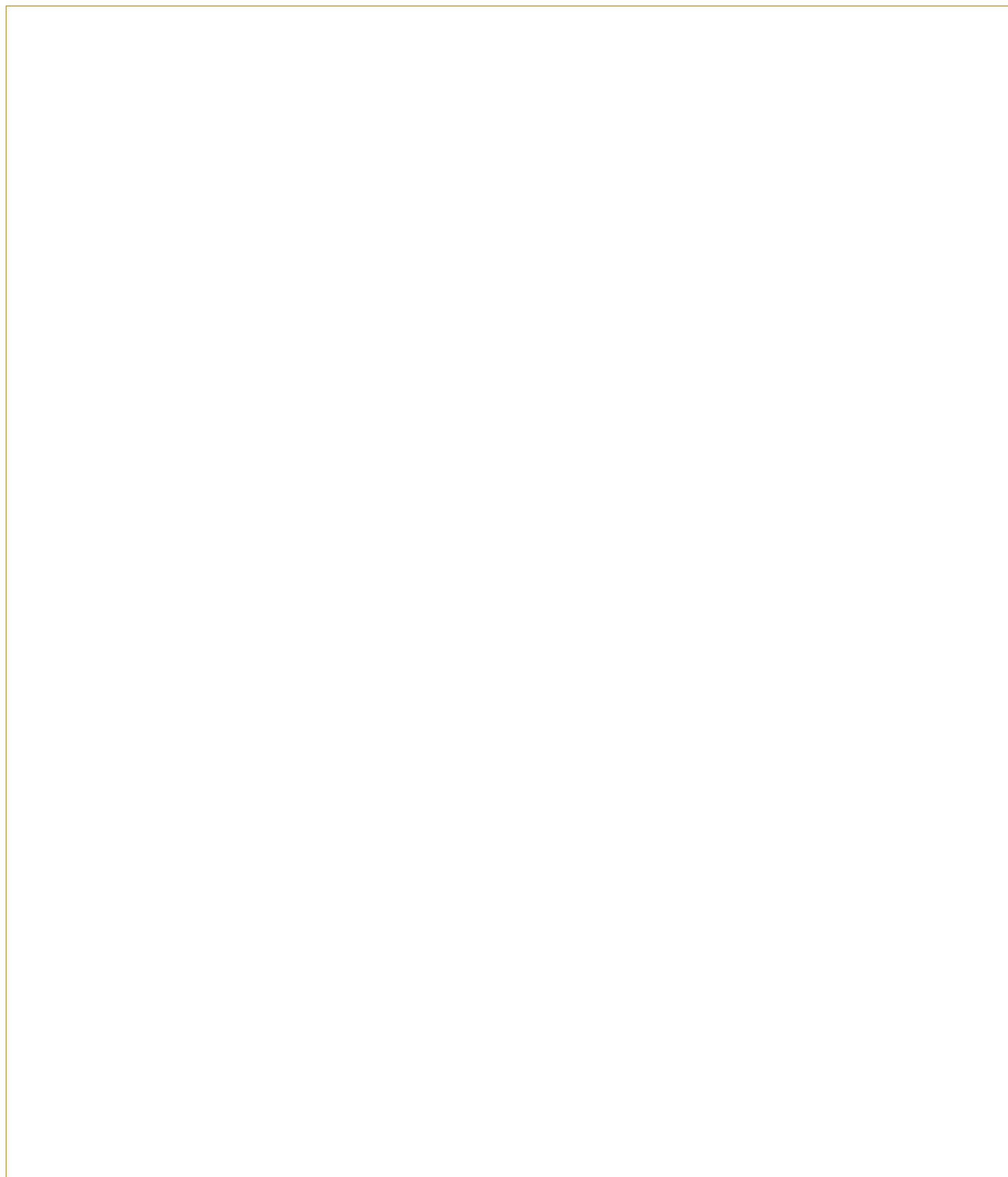


This is a great shot because though she is walking away, she is making eye contact with the clients/website visitors.

Once you have your wardrobe together, practice your poses in your mirror and take some shots with your phone to see how it looks. Stand in front of your mirror and also seat down. Observe your clothing. If you are wearing pants, look out for unwanted bulging at the crotch or skirts that are too tight and riding up.

Go through your checklist and ensure you have everything you need. On the day of your shoot, you may want to have an assistant on hand to help you dress and set up, so you are not overworked and over-stressed. If you are working with a stylist even better!

REFLECTIONS/NOTES



HOMework SUGGESTIONS



Complete the worksheets and templates in this workbook.



Print the PHOTO SHOOT DAY CHECKLIST in this workbook.

CONNECT IN OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

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