

HEADSHOT RATE SHEET

THE *Wholehearted* ACTOR[♥]



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After shooting your various looks in a headshot session, it can be difficult to narrow down your final selections for each look. Ideally- you've researched, and thought about specific industry standards and expectations - so that every shot in your gallery is equally a viable option. But - should you not be clear- this guide is a tool you can use to evaluate each headshot - and narrow down your final selections.

RULES FOR A COMPETITIVE HEADSHOT:

RULE 1:

Your headshot **MUST** look like you, right now. It must accurately represent who you are in the casting room.

RULE 2:

Your headshot must follow industry standards - so that nothing distracts us from seeing you. Wardrobe, light, background, makeup, focus, crop, angle, pose) must follow industry standards.

RULE 3:

The headshot must hold our attention & tell us how to cast you next.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR HEADSHOTS

FRAMING: – Framing should be tight - from shoulders up. The photographer should be getting close up shots. The face should take up $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ of the entire image. The shot should be shoulders up, so the frame should not include the torso, arms, hands ect.

ANGLE: The camera needs to be shot level with the actor's eyes. Shots taken extremely above or below the actor become distorted – and prevents us from truthfully seeing the actor. We need to see the actor head on.

LIGHTING: The face needs to be lit from in front – the light needs to be even without any distracting shadows. Exposure needs to show the actors skin accurately (not washing them out or tinting them), and lighting needs to support distinguishing the actor from the background. Ideal light is indirect light – with a color that imitates natural light – not stylized. The actor should be lit stronger than the background.

EDITING: The edit needs to remove distraction and make the image pop. *Good editing is subtle – and we won't even notice it.* It doesn't change skin tone or texture, it doesn't erase freckles. All it does is remove the stray hairs / adjust lighting and adjust anything that is preventing us from seeing the actor honestly. The white balance, contrast, and focus all work to support the actor's feature standing forward rather than falling flat. The image should not look filtered, and the skin should still show pores, wrinkles, ect.

BACKGROUND: The background behind an actor needs to be subtle and forgettable. Backgrounds should not pull focus and aren't distracting or busy. The actor should have depth behind them –and the color should create some kind of contrast to the actor's wardrobe, hair, and/or skin tone.

POSES: Headshots should not include arms, hands – or eyes looking away from camera. While the body language can shift depending on the character / look - the poses shouldn't distract from our ability to see the actor clearly.

FOCUS: The eyes need to be in crystal clear focus. Expert headshot photographers will find the catchlights in the eyes – and be able to allow the eyes to sparkle – without it looking obviously edited. The background should be blurred/ out of focus, while the face and eyes need to be crystal clear and sharp.

SEPARATION: There needs to be a *separation between the actor and the background*. This is achieved in the choice of background, wardrobe color, lighting, and in the final the edit– and can be managed regardless of an actor's wardrobe and hair color.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Your headshot is one of your most essential marketing tools. If your headshot isn't standing out and getting you noticed, it's not an effective marketing tool. Ultimately, the best way to see how a headshot may be performing is by looking at how many times that headshot has gotten you an audition request. Like most of our tools, some of this may feel subjective - so it's helpful to gain advice from trusted professionals. But at the end of the day, you get to make the final call.

When it comes to Film & TV headshots, ideally we'd love to have 3-6 distinct looks to submit for a unique array of characters. As you are ranking your favorite headshots, make sure that each look is different - and tells a different story and reveals a different character.

We want to avoid multiple images with the same wardrobe or multiple images with the same expression. Make sure to look at these headshots as thumbnail images, as this is how casting will first see your headshot.

RESOURCES: HOW ARE YOU PREPARING FOR YOUR HEADSHOT SESSION?
(blog post)

RATE YOUR HEADSHOT CHECKLIST

- 1. DOES THIS HEADSHOT LOOK LIKE YOU? DOES THIS LOOK LIKE YOU IF YOU WERE TO WALK INTO AN AUDITION TODAY?**
- 2. ARE BOTH YOUR EYES IN FOCUS AND ALIVE? DO THEY HAVE EMOTION AND ENERGY AND CONNECTION?**
- 3. IS YOUR FACE TAKING UP AT LEAST 1/2 OF THE IMAGE. CAN WE SEE DETAILS EVEN IN A THUMBNAIL VIEW?**
- 4. IS THE CAMERA HEIGHT AT EYE LEVEL? DOES THE ANGLE OF THE IMAGE ALLOW US TO SEE THE FACE HEAD ON WITHOUT DISTORTION?**
- 5. IS HAIR & WARDROBE DISTINCT & SEPARATED FROM THE BACKGROUND? DOES IT POP AGAINST THE BACKGROUND COLOR?**
- 6. IS THE BACKGROUND FREE OF DISTRACTION & ALLOWING THE FACE TO SAY IN FOCUS?**
- 7. IS THE HEADSHOT FREE OF OTHER DISTRACTIONS (ARMS, CLOTHING, JEWELRY, OR LARGE PATTERNS)**
- 8. DOES LIGHTING & CONTRAST PROVIDE DEPTH & ENERGY? DOES IT ALLOW THE SUBJECT TO POP & GRAB OUR ATTENTION?**
- 9. IS MAKE UP & STYLING NATURAL SO THAT THE EYES ARE THE FIRST THING THE VIEWER NOTICES?**
- 10. ARE THE EYES & FACE FULLY VISIBLE TO THE CAMERA? (AVOIDING SHADOW OR HAIR HIDING THE FACE)**
- 11. DOES THE EDITING ALLOW US TO REALLY SEE THE UNIQUE FEATURES & CHARACTERISTICS (MOLES, FRECKLES, ECT)**
- 12. DOES YOUR HEADSHOT REFLECT YOUR TYPE, & BRAND? DOES IT SHOW A SPECIFIC CHARACTER THAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY PLAY?**
- 13. IS THE HEADSHOT TELLING A COHESIVE STORY. DOES THE FACIAL EXPRESSION, WARDROBE, BACKGROUND & LIGHTING ALIGN TO REFLECT THE SAME STORY & CHARACTER**

Count out how many YES answers you have. If you got 10+ yes answers, your headshot is working! If you got 9 or less YES answers, your headshot could be serving you better.