



An image from TriNet's People Matter campaign, shot by Leibovitz. Trinet / Annie Leibovitz

TriNet Is Showcasing the Human Side of Small Businesses With the Help of Annie Leibovitz

LEGENDARY PHOTOGRAPHER SURPRISED COMPANIES LIKE BOMBAS WITH IMPROMPTU PHOTOSHOOTS. **BY DIANA PEARL**

Imagine an ordinary day at the office, sitting in a cubicle, when all of a sudden, Annie Leibovitz walks in, unannounced. She starts snapping photos, directing an otherwise ordinary setting to create the perfect natural shot.

Leibovitz is best known for her portraits of the famous, powerful and influential, from John Lennon to Kim Kardashian and Kanye West. Her editorial spreads have appeared in prestigious magazines like Vogue and Vanity Fair. But this time, her subjects

were employees at several small and medium-sized businesses within the umbrella of TriNet, a cloud-based company that provides payroll and other human resources services.

The result is TriNet's "People Matter" campaign, which drops

this week. The campaign features Leibovitz's images of founders, executives and team members from brands like direct-to-consumer sock company Bombas, non-profit bakery Hot Bread Kitchen, a non-profit bakery that provides educational training and size-inclusive women's fashion company Dia&Co.

Michael Mendenhall, TriNet's senior vice president, chief marketing officer and chief communications officer, said that the "People Matter" campaign stems from its name: The people who make up these small and medium-sized businesses are integral to their success. "So we thought, 'Let's focus on them, and what they're doing, and how we help them gain the traction or the success

that they're getting,'" he said.

Mendenhall tapped Leibovitz, whom he had previously worked with on Disney's "Year of a Million Dreams" campaign. The photographer the TriNet campaign "a dream assignment" that allowed her to flex a similar muscle that she does on an editorial shoot. (Though it's rare for Leibovitz to do advertising work, she's not unfamiliar with it: Beyond the Disney and TriNet campaigns, she also she shot a series of images for American Express, a campaign that ended up winning a Clio Award in the mid-aughts.)

"I don't even think of it as a campaign. I think of it as an editorial work," Leibovitz told Adweek. "It kicked me in the ass editorially. There was no

'She captured unbelievable, real photographs of these people working.'

Michael Mendenhall,
TriNet's senior vice president

agenda. We just walked in [and] saw people going about whatever they do. [At] each one of these places, people are doing things that matter."

"We wanted this to be very authentic and very real," added Mendenhall. "We didn't want to hire actors or showcase the people in a highly commercial way."

Leibovitz and Mendenhall visited each company without giving the employees any notice. "Most thought, 'Oh, some photographer is coming in and they're going to shoot for a commercial campaign,'" he said. "And in we walk with Annie, and all of a sudden, the murmurs started."

The idea, according to Leibovitz, was to capture people in a natural, candid way, without heavy posing and styling. Mendenhall added that they wanted to focus on black-and-white photography because he felt it "provides greater authenticity than color."

"You don't want to create anything," she said. "You don't want people combing their hair, putting on makeup or changing their clothes. You want people just as they are."

Aside from Leibovitz's photos—which are decorating billboards from San Francisco (TriNet's hometown) to New York (where it'll take over Grand Central station)—the People Matter campaign also includes short films that capture life inside these businesses, created by graphic designer and producer Garson Yu, producer Adrian Yu and directors Galen Summer and Katina Mercadante. Backstory to the photos will also be available in TriNet's digital magazine, Incredible Now.

