

Image Notes

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Sharon Kornstein, Founder and President, ImageDesign, LLC

Wardrobe Building in an Uncertain Economy

1. Spend on Classics, don't waste money on fads. The good news this season is that the trendier items are still considered classics, such as pretty sheath and wrap dresses, year-round tropical weight fabrics, tops that can double as jackets, white blouses and classic blazers. Think about versatility and being able to wear pieces in more than one situation.

make sure that what you do buy matches at least two or three other items in your wardrobe. Otherwise you will end up with that dreaded closet full of clothes and nothing to wear.

3. I wish I could tell you that the major department stores will have huge sales at the end of the season at which you can stock up on

your favorite spring and summer styles; unfortunately you will see fewer sales at department

stores as they have considerably lowered inventory since they don't want to be

stuck with a lot of leftovers at the end of the season. The best bets for discounts are outlet stores like those at Woodbury Commons, NY and Secaucus, NJ.

4. In any case, if you are looking to save money, stay out of the shoe and pocket-

book departments, shoe designers seem to want to overcompensate for the seriousness of some of the clothing styles and pocketbook prices have hit the roof. Accessories which you might want to concentrate on though are

ties, belts and scarves; they are a good way to update outfits and add individuality and color. Belts can be worn either in the loops on pants or just slung over a dress or jacket. The right accessories add polish to any outfit and can make your wardrobe look fresh.

5. Make regular visits to the shoemaker, tailor and dry cleaner, they will help extend the life of the clothes that you've invested in. You don't want to dry clean your clothing too much however, the fabric will become shiny; sometimes all you need is a professional pressing which will both save the life of your clothing and the rate at which you spend your money.

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Looking your best will get you in the front door but displaying poise and knowing business etiquette rules go hand-in-hand with your visual appearance. June 1 - 7 was National Business Etiquette week, but it's not too late to include dining and other etiquette tips in your next seminar.

2. Purchasing and dressing in capsules, groups of clothing that can be worn together in various combinations, saves money in several ways: you can buy fewer pieces yet still have more outfits; the same accessories will match with all or most of the outfits in the group; and it is great for travel and can save room in your suitcase. P.S. If you don't like the idea of buying clothing in coordinating groups, at least



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Visit our website

www.imagedesignconsulting.com

Contact Us

973-740-8767, Office

973-632-9456, Cell

Sharon@ImageDesignConsulting.com



Survey Results

In a work-force survey taken in late 2007 sponsored by yahoo! hot jobs and Banana

Republic it was determined that 68 percent of employees and 82 percent of human resource professionals agree that how employees dress at work directly affects their prospect for a promotion. The problem is that what's important to workers differs from what's important to their supervisors; the workers focused on both looking professional and expressing their individual style in addition to



being comfortable, while managers were only concerned with a profes-

sional appearance. The survey also found that employees from a sampling of 782 people had the following wardrobe problems: 36% feel like they are in a fashion rut and have trouble refreshing their workplace wardrobe; 25% admit to being late to work because they couldn't decide what to wear or they had a wardrobe malfunction and 13% have been reprimanded by a supervisor for their clothing attire.

Five (Additional) Business Casual Mistakes

Summer is here and many offices tone down their dress code in the warmer weather. Looking professional is still required, however, so as a reminder here are five of the more important business casual mistakes:

1. Assuming that Casual Dress Equals Permission to be Sloppy.

The most common complaints I hear from HR professionals and office managers are a. wearing flip-flops to the office b. sloppiness. Sloppiness can take the form of a lack of grooming which translates into a lack of respect for those around you or a more specific problem such as wrinkled clothing, ill-fitting garments or scuffed and dirty shoes. Grooming issues are related to the actual body and can be touchy to address. They include poor personal hygiene and a generally messy appearance. Sloppiness is more an issue of common sense and is easier to correct. You won't usually find either topic written into the dress code.

2. Wearing Weekend Clothing to the Office. It is assumed that a business casual dress code is a perk since it means less of an investment in expensive suits, shirts and ties. The problem is that although business casual clothing may be less expensive, it is trendier so you tend to shop more often plus you need more pieces resulting in a similar final outlay. The worst thing you can do is wear your weekend, social or going-out clothing to work. It will be too clingy, too sporty, or too flashy for the office.



3. Dressing down to the lowest acceptable level rather than up to the place you want to be promoted to. It may involve some effort but taking a cue from the more successful people in your office will lead others to believe you are one of them. Just because jeans, sandals or golf shirts are acceptable doesn't mean they need to be part of your daily wardrobe. You can develop your own style and still be in the upper echelons for office dress.

4. Not checking yourself back and front in a full-length mirror before leaving for work. We are often running late but a final check in a full-length mirror can save a lot of embarrassment later. Pay careful attention to zippers, lapels, collars and belts.

5. Assuming Your Personality will Shine through Regardless of Your Dress. Maybe in a perfect world this is true, but in the here and now first impressions matter. Your appearance is the visual signal that you send to the world about who you are, how you think of yourself and how you think of others. Your appearance alone will not make you successful, but neither should it hinder your efforts.

