

Image Notes



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Click the link below (or copy and paste it into your browser's address bar) to see Sharon live on the web as she speaks to Berkeley College students on

"Building Your Business Wardrobe"

<http://video.berkeleycollege.edu/video/faculty/instructor/BB7.1-SG-BuildingWardrobe-060607.htm>

Making the Most Out of Summer Business Casual

We are happy to welcome the spring weather and choose clothes that are lightweight and fun. Unfortunately it is during the warm weather months that most work-related wardrobe mistakes are made in the name of comfort and style. Here are some tips to avoid the most common business casual mistakes.

Neutral colors such as tan, black, brown, taupe and navy blue should form the basis of your business wardrobe. White is currently a fashionable neutral, and white and brown make a new-looking combination. Brighter, trendier colors such as chartreuse, yellow, orange and fuchsia can be worn as a shirt, in a scarf or tie.

Accessories should match the dress level of the outfit: rubber-soled shoes work better for business casual while thin, leather-soled shoes are dressier. The smaller and flatter the handbag, the dressier it is. You can wear larger, slouchy bags for summer business casual. Big, flashy or artistic jewelry is less formal than smaller, more refined pieces.

Before you leave for work

take a look at yourself front and back in a full-length mirror, checking for stains, pulls or wrinkles. Please avoid any clothing that is too tight, too short, low-cut or sheer. Make sure there's no skin showing between your skirt/pants and top.

Hosiery or the lack of it is a frequent cause for uncertainty. Stockingless legs and sandals signify summer to a lot of people while their office managers aren't too sure.

Sandals don't go with a conservative skirt or pant suit, but can be worn with a crisp-looking business casual outfit. Wearing sandals pretty much requires a lack of hosiery; and although I generally don't recommend going bare-legged to work, it may pass muster if all aspects of what's now showing exhibit good grooming (ladies you know what I mean) and if it's not explicitly prohibited in the dress code policy.

One definite no-no is flip-flops, even those with a heel.

Some other trends to look out for or avoid: linen shirts



for men alone or under a sport coat are fine for summer business casual; brown leather or suede shoes go with most business casual looks; many offices allow Capri pants and long shorts for women but keep the rest of the outfit professional looking; women's casual dresses are good for work so long as they're not too short or revealing on top; tank tops are usually off limits as are those with spaghetti straps, unless they're covered by a cardigan or blazer.

Remember:

Business Casual is Business First,

Casual second.



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Dress With Confidence

How can you get dressed in the morning with confidence? Knowing your best colors and most flattering styles will help.

Some of us look better in the cool colors - blues, reds and grays. Others look better in the earth tones – browns, greens and gold. This is determined by your hair color and the undertones in your skin.

Knowing what is most flattering on you is only half the equation.

Wouldn't it be nice to know the impression our clothes are making on the people with whom we come in contact?

Here's a quick guide:

Blue: Honesty, Trustworthiness, Hardworking, Organized. Blue can also seem calming and peaceful.

Gray: Powerful, Business-like, Respectable, Serious. Gray is an excellent business color for men and women because it seems commanding without being intimidating.

Brown: Friendly, Warm, Approachable, Non-threatening. Brown and other earth tones should be worn when you want people to like you and open up to you.

Black: Authoritative, Elegant, Formal, Assertive. Black is wonderful for giving a presentation or appearing distinctive.

Red: Exciting, Confident, Passionate, Optimistic. Red is an energy color and will get you noticed.



Do You Make Your Best First Impression?

I'm sure you've heard the saying "there's only chance to make a good first impression". Well, it still has a lot of truth to it.

We make assumptions about others' personality and character often before they have even uttered a word. First impressions influence our feelings far into the future and may take several subsequent meetings to change. What causes these instant assessments? And can anything be done to control them?

When meeting someone for the first time it is human nature to form a judgment of that person in the first minute or so of being introduced. These psychological shortcuts are based on an individual's past experiences combined with verbal and non-verbal cues that the newcomer is giving out. They can be controlled to a large degree once you're aware of how they originate. The human mind is always on the lookout for

inconsistency. Insincerity is detected when verbal and non-verbal cues don't match.

In order to make a good impression when meeting someone for the first time focus on your visual image and check that it's consistent; this includes appearance and body-language.

Here are some specific tips for making a good first impression in business:

Keep your clothing, hair and eyeglass styles current. People like to associate with those who appear successful.

Eye contact is a building block for establishing trust and a lasting relationship. Eye contact should be made during at least 50% of a conversation.

Smiling puts people at ease, and they tend to smile back. It's hard to be tense when you're smiling.

The only appropriate physical contact in business is the handshake. A sincere confi-

dent grip conveys self-esteem and authority.



Stand up when shaking hands.

Good posture when standing or sitting projects confidence.

Make sure you're dressed appropriately for the situation.

Check that your shoes are in good repair; they give a clue about your attention to detail.

Consistency between how you look, what you say and how you say it is of the utmost importance.

Of course we must always be true to our self and our goals

The perfect impression is when what you say, how you act and how you look mesh flawlessly so that you come across as natural and authentic. The thing that we are striving for is the best version of our self.

Sharon Kornstein offers individual color consultations for men and women. During the consultation you will learn your best colors and most flattering color combinations; you will learn which patterns you can and can't wear; you will know which is better for you – white or off-white; and you will learn how to put together a wardrobe which suits and flatters you during all four seasons. Please contact Sharon to learn more about this.