

Professional Dress

You don't get a second chance to make a good first impression. How you look tells others how you feel about yourself and makes a difference in how you will be treated. It's easier to get to the top if you look like you belong there.

Clothing is not the only thing a business man or woman needs to be successful. Drive, ambition, intelligence and education are needed to move up in the business world. Without these qualifications, the best clothing available won't help. Even with all the qualifications, without the right clothing, no one moves ahead.

Here are ten decisions people will make about other people based solely on first impressions.

1. Social Position
2. Economic Level
3. Educational Level
4. Trustworthiness
5. Moral Character
6. Level of sophistication
7. Success-previous and current
8. Social Heritage
9. Economic Heritage
10. Educational Heritage



Surveys also proved that when employees were dressed professionally, they conveyed strong feelings of trust.

Research has proven that young employees can overcome comments from older customers such as, "You remind me of my granddaughter/son" or "May I speak to someone in charge", simply by learning the secrets of dressing professionally.

Because clothing covers 90% of our bodies, it becomes very important in communicating non-verbal signals. We can use our appearance to determine how those we meet will react toward us.

COLORS THAT TESTED BEST FOR PROFESSIONALS

1. Medium range blue (the average blue in a man's suit)
2. Gray (two shades lighter than charcoal)
3. Navy (very dark blue)
4. Camel
5. Black
6. Dark brown
7. Beige
8. Deep maroon (burgundy)
9. Rust
10. White is very powerful for women.

SUIT COLORS TO AVOID

WOMEN:

Most shades of green

Mustard--very bad.

MEN AND WOMEN:

Most Pastels, particularly pale yellow

Bright Orange

Dark colors make you more powerful. Use them when you need control. Keep in mind your size. If you are 6 feet tall, you don't need power colors. Your size creates it for you. Navy blue is a color respected by all socio-economic levels. A substitute teacher should wear navy. The kids will behave better for him/her!

SUITS AND DRESSES



A good suit says you are an upper middle class executive type, while an obviously cheap polyester suit says you're not. Research shows that when you are wearing a suit, it's easier to give orders and have them carried out. Although the skirted suit has tested as the very best outfit for the professional woman, the dress is the other choice. A dress can say, "I'm in charge." Dresses are usually more professional when they are in solid or near solid colors. It is best to avoid prints. Dresses with long sleeves are more widely accepted for business wear than short or sleeveless dresses. A dress with a jacket is a great option. Avoid plunging necklines. Currently a panted suit can be very appropriate if fitted properly and if made of fine fabric. Polyester is acceptable when it looks like a natural fiber such as wool, cotton, or silk.



COATS



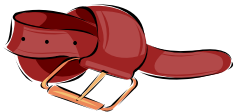
Raincoats that test best for both business and social situations for men and women should be beige.

If a woman is only going to buy one coat, it should be camel colored and a wrap-around. It's the only one that tested well, giving women both authority and appeal. Single breasted coats are better than double breasted coats. A coat should always cover the dress. Avoid extra pockets, gaudy buttons and buckles.

ACCESSORIES



Shoes: They should never be lighter than the hem of your dress or pants. If in doubt, go darker. Use white shoes carefully and sparingly--usually with an all white outfit when nothing else works. Use another color if possible. A heeled pump is a classic professional woman's shoe. A wing tip is a classic men's shoe. Keep heels repaired and shoes shined.



Belts: Be sure they are classic and made of quality leather.

Bags and briefcases: Leather briefcases and matching bags (a shoulder bag that relates to your size is more functional) work best for the professional woman. Leather briefcases and organizers work for men. A briefcase is a symbol of authority. Select dark burgundy, dark brown, or black.



Jewelry: Quality pieces, not too much or too flashy. Select watches that are simple and businesslike. Do not wear fraternity pins, school rings, etc.

Scarves and Ties: The best are silk. Linen and cotton ties are more casual and better for leisure wear.



Glasses: Research indicates that the right glasses can make a person considerably more authoritative. They should have plastic, metal, bone or no frames, be of moderate size and with little or no tint. Clients must be able to see your eyes.

Pen and Pencil: Carry quality writing implements, not cheap ball points and don't ever put cheap pens in your shirt pocket.



PROFESSIONAL DOS & DON'TS FOR MEN AND WOMEN



Do wear classic styles--a conservative, elegant look works for men and women who want to advance in their field.



Do have your hair trimmed every four to six weeks.



Do get professional advice from image consultants.

Do purchase the best fabrics and clothing that you can afford.

Do organize, care, and repair your clothing.



Do take advantage of fine clothing sales.

Don't wear jeans of any kind.

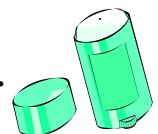


Don't wear tennis shoes.

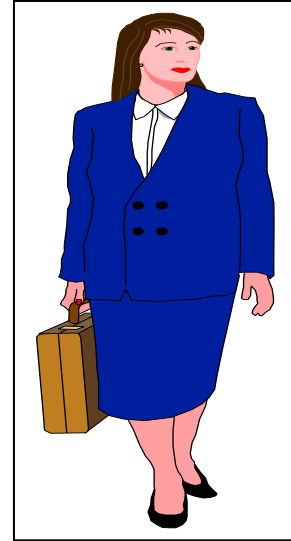
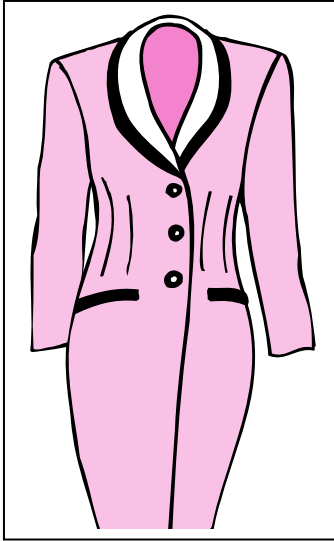
Don't wear too much perfume or cologne.



Don't have body odor, bad breath, or dirty fingernails.



PROFESSIONAL DOS AND DON'TS FOR WOMEN



Do wear your skirt to the knee or just above with no front slits that can open when you sit down.

Do wear light undergarments with light clothing and dark with dark clothing

Do wear shoes as dark or darker than the hem of your garment.

Do wear basic, simple shoes with medium to low heels.

Do wear hose that are skin tone or match with your shoes.

Do up-date your wardrobe yearly--buy separates and solid colors.

Don't wear slinky skirts or low necklines.

Don't wear noisy or too much jewelry.

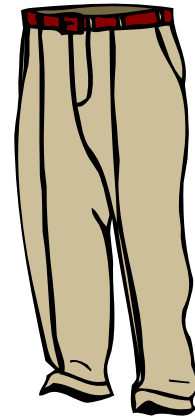
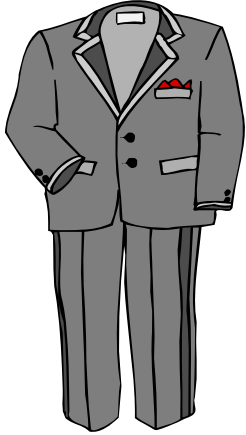
Don't have chipped polish or wear stockings with runs or snags.

Don't wear ruffles or large patterns.

Don't go without hose or let panty lines show.

Don't wear reinforced toes in nylons that show from your shoes. 5

PROFESSIONAL DOS & DON'TS FOR MEN



Don't wear a jacket if the collar doesn't fit flat against your shirt collar.

Don't wear your pants so tight that they pull at the crotch and make your pockets stick out.

Don't comb your hair in a manner that tries to cover up a bald spot.

Don't wear short socks with your business pants.

Don't wear sport socks with your business clothing.

Don't wear short-sleeved shirts.

Do button the top button of a two-button suit jacket.

Do keep the last button of your vest unbuttoned and make sure the vest covers the waistband of your trousers.

Do wear your pants so they break slightly where they hit your shoes in front and extend just to the top of the heel in back.

Do make sure one half inch of your shirt cuff shows below your jacket sleeve.

Do select jackets whose hem extends to the bend of your cupped fingers when your arms are hanging at your sides.

Do consider custom-made shirts. They are worth the money because they fit better and last three times as long.

After reading this brochure I am sure you are saying, “ I can’t afford these nice clothes.”

Well, I am here to tell you that you don’t have to have a lot of money in order to have nice clothes. You can find the best deals on name brand clothes **RIGHT IN YOUR COMMUNITY!** Yes, that's right! Consignment and thrift stores are everywhere and they have just what you need. Check them out - even if you don't buy anything... you need to get familiar with how they work.

A **Consignment Store** is a store that resells clothes for someone who can't wear those clothes anymore. The clothes are usually in excellent condition because folks want to make money. You can usually find designer and specialty clothes at a great price.

A **Thrift Store or Goodwill Store** is a store that takes donated clothes so you'll get a range of clothes at very inexpensive prices. The buys are awesome but check the clothes carefully.

Following you will find some tips to use when shopping at resale stores:

- ◆ Shop regularly for the best selection. You may not find a lot the first time you go. But remember since it is a consignment shop, their selection changes weekly, if not daily, so you have to keep going back.
- ◆ Location matters. Know the areas of town where the finer goods can be purchased. Consignment stores in upscale neighborhoods tend to carry higher-end merchandise.
- ◆ Before purchasing be sure to check all of your items carefully for damages, including separating seams, stains, tears, moth holes, missing buttons, or faulty zippers.
- ◆ Be sure to try the clothes on before you purchase them. Previous owners may have had the clothes altered, so the size 10 might actually fit like a size 8. Or the clothes may have shrunk through washing.
- ◆ Be sure to look through the whole store. Many consignment shops are randomly organized.
- ◆ Learn about the seasons and when things will be arriving for consignment. There is usually a buying schedule. If they buy on Saturday’s you might want to check on Monday to see what is new.

NOTES: