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IN BUSINESS Las Vegas

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Keeping the 'dress' in dressed for success

By Danielle Birkin
Contributing writer

While appropriate business attire skews toward the conservative, these days, businessmen and women need not dress like FBI agents to appear professional. New fashion trends, color and accessories allow leeway, not to mention individual expression, in dressing for success.

Of course when job-hunting, it's better to err on the side of orthodoxy. But once the job is landed, mesh with the corporate environment, whether it's formal business attire, casual business attire, or in some cases, even weekend wear.

So what's the difference? "Business formal is typically a suit, jacket and pant or suit jacket and skirt, but even if you're business formal you can make it more fun," said Tanya Fiori, ladies suit and

coat buyer for Dillard's Phoenix division. For women, this might entail wearing a silk or chiffon blouse in stylish colors such as fuchsia, mint or yellow, while men can opt for a patterned tie to break up the monotony.

For less formal business environments, the options increase. "Business casual means a nice pair of pants or even city shorts, and for women, a nice blouse or a sweater set," Fiori said. "Accessories such as belts, shoes, scarves and jewelry can pull your look together as well."

Arlene Mack, personal shopper with Macy's in Fashion Show,

offered similar guidelines for gentlemen. "For business casual, I like slacks and an open shirt or a vest or sweater. Or, even a silk T-shirt under a sport coat with a nice slack or even a dressy pair of khakis," Mack said. "But they are also using jeans with a silk tee and a sport coat and calling that business casual, so it really depends on where you work and what their standards are."

In work environments where jeans are acceptable, keep the look professional by pairing them with boots, heels or loafers, and make sure to keep the look conservative on top. And, of course, avoid frayed hems or holes in the knees.

As for trends, Fiori said gray is emerging as a business wardrobe staple, although chocolate brown is still strong. There are also trends in color and detail, such as swing-body jackets and variations in sleeves that make dressing for work more fun and fashionable.

Mack expressed a similar sentiment. "Black is still number one, but brown and gray are also very popular this year. Then you have the branch-offs — beiges, tans and camels, and for accents, metallics like gold, silver and bronze that are very big with shoes and accessories,"

she said. "Animal prints are back too, especially in shoes, coats, vests and shirts."

Then there's the great dress vs. pants debate. Margaret Barlow, the better and contemporary dress buyer for Dillard's Phoenix division, said dresses are making a workplace comeback and recent trends in dress design have made them more appropriate for business. "It's the year of the dress," Marlow said, adding that renewed sleeve interest makes dresses more work-appropriate, particularly when worn with a jacket or blouse. "You need to have some type of sleeve to be professional. Also, nothing too low-cut and nothing too short, even though short dresses are in for fall."

Fiori agreed. "It's so easy just to throw on a dress and a jacket with a great pair of shoes and jewelry to look dressed up. Plus, there are a lot of work-appropriate dresses in knits and cottons for fall," she said. "When women originally entered the workplace, dresses were all they could wear. So in my mind, when I think dresses, I think 'put together.'"

All of the workplace fashions displayed in this feature were provided by Talbots.

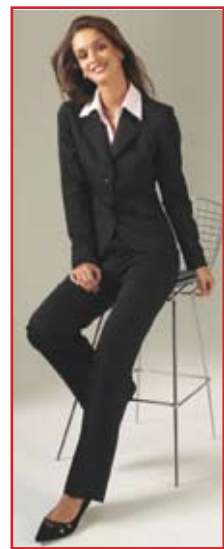


Image is everything

Stepped-up appearance and attitude influence other's reactions

By Marnie Settle
Contributing writer

A professional image is vital to your business success because clients and colleagues often make judgments on you, your product and your company on first impressions. While looks aren't everything, image is, and it's no accident that some of the most successful people in the business world are image conscious (think The Donald). But, it's not just



about what you wear, it's also about when you wear it.

When deciding what kind of image to project and what to wear, consider your clients. Are they casual and relaxed or dressed to the nines? If your clients dress casually, their comfort level will increase if you're a match. On the other hand, if your client is all about Armani and you're in jeans, you may have a problem.

If you're among the fashionably challenged, seek expert help. Most large retailers, like Nordstrom, Macy's, Joseph A. Banks and Dillards, offer personal shopping services, most often free of charge. Macy's, for example, offers individual appointments, wardrobe-preference personal profiling and consultations.

More into online services? Try www.livepersonalshoppers.com, a site that offers online chatting with personal shoppers coupled with advice

on product options. But if you're completely lost and in need of a total image makeover, try Global Image Group www.globalimagegrp.com, a full-service consulting firm that specializes in helping clients develop a strong first impression and brand identity through wardrobe and image development, communication, etiquette and protocol skills. GIG also offers a book called "The Sterling Strategies of Style and Success," a great tool to keep handy when developing your perfect image.

But the most important image builder is attitude. Project an attitude of competence, confidence and pride and it will open doors that you never would have expected. Never forget that your clients have many choices and it's your job to show them that you are the best choice they can make.

A knotted affair:

Picking and tying ties takes practice

By Brian Sodoma
Special Publications writer

Job interviews, and myriad life-cycle events will likely require a tie — even if your boss doesn't. And while finding the right tie with the right knot may seem like a burden, with a little know-how, anyone can be an expert.

Jack Sexton, suit department business manager at Dillard's at Fashion Show, has outfitted many high-profile executives and politicians. Sexton says, for an executive, a power tie is a must. Solid colors with high shine are the most obvious power ties. But if you're the stripe type, make sure the dominant stripe is thick — the key to keeping the "power" in the power tie. "For executives, CEOs and upper management level types, it's basically a conservative approach — solids, some spots, stripes, but not a Jerry Garcia tie," he laughed.

As for color, standards get looser. Sexton says some executives like to go with bright colors for spring and summer, then tone it down for fall. He says a power tie, regardless of color, should have a high shine with little movement, meaning no paisley, dots, flowers or busy patterns.

Tie advice is likely the most important guidance Sexton gives new executives. "Make sure a tie can go with several different shirts and suits," he said. "One tie can handle two to three different colors of suits or shirts."

He also recommends picking a suit or shirt first, then looking at ties. "A lot of people come in with a tie and say 'get me a shirt and suit that goes well with this tie,' and I say, 'let's reverse the process.'"

The knot

There are four basic tie knots: the Windsor, Half-Windsor, Four in Hand and the Pratt. Some knots are more appropriate for certain situations and attire, says Caspar Isemer, a German business consultant who started the Web site www.tie-a-tie.net as a resource for the inexperienced in knot tying.

The Windsor, for example, is a thick knot which "projects confidence" and should be used during "presentations and job interviews," said Isemer. But he adds that the Windsor tends to use more fabric and could be wrong for tall men. He recommends longer ties for tall men, ties that are 62/63 inches.

The Half Windsor is symmetrical and triangular and works best with wider ties made of light to medium fabrics.

The Four-in-Hand knot is described as a "narrow, more discreet and slightly asymmetrical" knot, "best suited for a standard button-down dress shirt and works best with wide ties made from heavy fabrics." Isemer recommends this knot for men with shorter necks because of its narrow look.

The Pratt knot, also known as the Shelby Knot, is also a fairly wide knot, but not as wide as the Windsor. It's well suited for wider ties.

Wearing it out ...

Sexton adds that most ties today are made of silk, rarely, if ever, require dry cleaning, and can maintain a high shine for many years. Sexton, who owns about 120 ties, said thinner ties and knitted ties are making a



comeback, but considers them "trendish."

There are also three quality levels for ties: 3-fold, 5-fold and 7-fold. The latter two are found in most major department stores, where the 3-fold would likely be found at a discount retailer. The levels indicate the thickness of the tie and its ability to withstand wrinkling. The thicker, higher fold count means higher quality, said Sexton.

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Office grooming

Basic tips for men and women

By **Brian Sodoma**
Special Publications writer

From dweeb to a Pamela Anderson look-alike and everyone in between, when it comes to grooming and hygiene, every office has its share of crowd pleasers and — well — not. So how do you know if your look is on target or if, horror of horrors, you're office-humor fodder? In Business Las Vegas asked local beauty professionals about do's and don'ts when it comes to grooming. Here's what they said:

Emily Passman, a human resources specialist with Sephora beauty supply and consultation store inside the Venetian's Grand Canal Shops, has spent 13 years in the beauty and cosmetics business, and offered practical advice. "There are several products to keep you looking and feeling fresh all day," she said. "And, that's only going to make your work experience better."

First, Passman recommends Sephora's face wipes, with vitamin B5. The wipes come in a small, convenient plastic container. "It's terrific for our climate." "Use them when you've been sweating and you're not feeling so fresh," she said.

Passman also recommends the Go Smile teeth whitening system, available in either two or six percent peroxide varieties. The six percent whitens teeth 10 shades within seven days (when applied twice daily). The system is available in ampoules, not strips, and it freshens breath, too. "Unlike strips, you don't have to brush your teeth afterwards and you don't have to rinse," she added.

Passman also recommends Cosmedicine Medi-Matte oil control spray, which helps keep skin oil-free and reduces the appearance of pores. It's great for men with oily skin and for women who want to keep make-up looking fresh all day, she said. Or, she recommends blotting linens from Boscia, which come in packs of 14 and can fit into a wallet. "Both leave the skin looking healthy, not shiny or too glossy," she said.

Quick make-up tips

If you're a woman in an executive position or do public speaking, Passman encourages darker lipstick shades. A common mistake is wearing bright lipstick, which could detract from the eyes. For eyes, lighter eyeliner emphasizes eyes. "If you have smaller eyes, you wouldn't want to use black because it would make your eyes look smaller, more set back," she added.

Manly musts ...

Passman said women, because they tend to use moisturizers, get better sun protection than men. "I encourage men to use a sunscreen, even if that's the only thing they do," she said. "There are many types of sunscreen — oil-free, powders, sprays." She added that men spend big money on suits and haircuts, but completely overlook their skin, even though it's the part of their body people see most. Further, Passman said men should pay particular attention to their lips. "There's nothing grosser than lips that are peeling," she said. For a lip product she recommends Jack Black's (no relation to the actor) natural mint lip balm.

Ruben Fisher, owner of Tonic and Tonic II salons in the west valley, said men are notorious for letting their eyebrows as well as nose hair get out of hand. If you're gunning for the promotion, it's advised to watch both. "It's one of those things you don't have to do every other week, but every couple months," he said. Eyebrows and nose hair can be salon trimmed or buy an inexpensive nose-hair trimmer for home use.

Hair ...

Fisher said hair should be both professional and stylish in the workplace, while maintaining versatility for after

work play. For women executives, Fisher says it's okay to have longer hair, but he recommends showing the face by wearing hair half-up or pulled back, but not tight. "People really need to see your face, especially if you're an executive."

Fisher also recommends sticking with your natural color. "Keep hair classic, yet trendy," he said, and recommends a bob, a style that will work for any woman in the workplace, executive or not. He said there are so many variations on the style that it brings an amazing amount of versatility. "There's just nothing that beats it," he added.

For men, Fisher sees a trend of wearing hair long enough to part for a dapper daytime look, but short enough for the messy, spiked look for evening. He cites Brad Pitt and George Clooney as examples. He said a good, textured cut will slick with styling product for the day but will transform into a messy, really cool look, like you didn't spend two minutes on your hair even though really you did, for evening.

Ditch stiff spikes and the comb over

While it's not headline news that guys with thinning hair are shaving their heads, Fisher cautions men against "comb overs." They should consider a shorter cut that will work with what they have. "You don't have to take a shaver to it ... but you can get a really short, textured cut that works ... and you'll notice a tighter and cleaner feel," he added.

Also a thing of the past is over-gelled, spiked hair and the absence of sideburns. "If you don't have any sideburns, it looks ridiculous. ... But if they're too long, it creates too much attention. ... Middle of the ear is the natural length for most sideburns," he added.

Facial hair should be avoided for some professionals, but if allowed, Fisher recommends keeping beards and goatees down to a shadow and keep it clean under the neck. He also says some men can get away with keeping their daily shaves down to a shadow as well, since it is currently stylish to do so. But he still cautions checking the work environment to make sure it's accepted.



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Gray: The New Black

Versatile black will always be the color of choice for fall career fashions. But this fall, gray is a close second as the must-have color for career wardrobes. Fashion experts agree that's because gray has the ability to match a variety of colors.

"Gray is a great canvass for fall," said Betsy Thompson, director of public relations for Talbots.

Added Tanya Fiori, a ladies suit and coat buyer for Dillard's Inc. southwest division, "Everyone's touting gray as the new black for fall. Just like brown was in the past, it's the next best color to black."

This ensemble allows the professional woman to present a polished, but approachable look. A delicate Antonio Melani faux wrap with ribbed collar knit top (\$129) is part of the designer's Dark Romance line and matches the full-length, knit-blend skirt (\$250) which features a geometric striped pattern of gray, beige, blue and black by Anne Klein New York. A pair of Antonio Melani rosette pumps (\$89) in pewter.



This belted dress (\$138) in mist heather gray by Gianni Bini, is accented with a gray and blue animal print scarf (\$28) by Preston & York to create a simple, refined look for the workplace. A pair of gray patent leather wedge heel pumps (\$110) by Calvin Klein and a genuine leather metallic handbag by Francesco Biasia complete the ensemble.

This elegant Antonio Melani polyester blend, three-button, notch collar suit jacket (\$199) in castlerock with black suede pocket flaps, black suede elbow patches and matching lower rise, slight flare leg pant (\$129) creates an air of elegant authority with a pair of gray leather pump ankle dress booties (\$89) with black stretch fabric accents on the sides by Gianni Bini, complete the look.



This Alex Marie three-button, wool jacket (\$139), which features black/white patterned mélange suiting fabric, two pockets and a black belt with a gunmetal buckle, matching A-line skirt (\$79) and white cotton tuxedo shirt with French cuffs (\$109) by Antonio Melani create a stately workplace look. A complementary pair of patent leather, crisscross, open-toed pumps (\$69) by Gianni Bini and a black patent leather handbag (\$65) by Kathy Van Zeeland, which features an imitation crocodile print and accents of rounded silver studs and silver charms on the zipper finish the look.

All of the workplace fashions displayed in this feature were provided by Dillard's.



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