Dressing Professionally on a Budget

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What is Acceptable for Work?
What we will cover today

• First Impressions
• What is Business Casual?
• Creating a Seasonless Wardrobe
• Wardrobe Planning
“You never have a second chance to make a first impression.”
First Impressions

First impressions are extremely important, especially in the business world. In order to make a good *first impression*, you need to dress professionally and separate your social image from your professional presence.
Your Professional Presence

- Social vs. Professional Appearance – What you wear off the job or socially doesn't have to be what you wear at work.
- Perfume and Cologne – Even if you smell good, scent can be an issue.
- Tattoos and Piercing – Depending on your workplace, consider covering tattoos and removing piercing rings.
Little Details that Matter

• Clothes should be neat and clean
• Shoes in good condition
• Hair clean and neatly styled
• For women: makeup should be subtle
• Nails are clean, neat and of reasonable length
• Dress for the job you want
Rules for Casual Dress at Work

Casual dress policies are often confusing!
Simple Rules

• Casual doesn't mean sloppy.
• Simple solution: khakis and a sport shirt or sweater.
• Going to a meeting or making a presentation? Professional attire only.
Business Casual Dress Code

Not all casual clothing is suitable for the office, for example:

- Clothing that reveals too much.
- Anything wrinkled, torn, dirty, or frayed.
- Any clothing with offensive words, terms, or pictures.
- Hats, except head covers required by religion or culture

Sports team, university, and fashion brand names on clothing are generally acceptable.
What Not to Wear to Work

- Flip-flops, sneakers
- Any visible underwear
- Shorts
- Jeans
- Low-rise or very tight pants
- Low-cut, midriff-baring or tight tops
Trendy vs. Classic

• Buy classic styles.
• A suit that will last for years is a better investment than trendy attire.
• Err on the side of dressing conservatively.
• Big ticket items – suits, dresses, coats – buy classic styles.
• Accessories – buy trendy but inexpensive accessories bright seasonal colors.
Find Affordable Clothes

- Clearance racks
- Outlet stores
- Goodwill/Disabled American Veterans
- Borrow
- Second-hand/thrift shops
- Yard/garage sales
- Naked Lady Swap Meets (What’s that?)
Creating a Seasonless Wardrobe

• Mix and match key pieces
• No two pieces should be the same, but they should coordinate
• Accessories pull the look together
Take Inventory

• Take an inventory of your closet and make a list of things you need.
• Buy the best quality you can afford.
Wardrobe Planning

• Get organized
• Evaluate your present wardrobe
• Decide on a basic color plan = Neutrals
• Plan for variety and flexibility
• Determine your clothing budget
• Buy basic styles
• Find good quality
• Take care of the clothes you have!
Make the Most of Your Wardrobe

• 5-piece wardrobe = 6 looks
• 8-piece wardrobe = 30 looks
• 9-piece wardrobe = 42 looks
Five-Piece Wardrobe

- 1 jacket
- 1 blouse
- 1 short skirt
- 1 long skirt
- 1 pair of pants
Eight-Piece Wardrobe

- 2 jackets
- 1 pants
- 1 short skirt
- 2 long skirts
- 2 tops
Nine-Piece Wardrobe

- 2 jackets
- 2 blouses
- 1 shirt
- 1 pair of pants
- 2 long skirts
- 1 short skirt
Clothes communicate nonverbally. Learning to dress professionally is a process, not an event.
Resources

- *Basic Apparel Management*, S134H, K-State Research and Extension publication
- *Basic Job Ready Skills*, S134A, K-State Research and Extension publication
- *Basic Health and Wellness*, S134D (Spanish S134DS), K-State Research and Extension publication
- Clothes Make the Man or Woman – [http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/dressingforwork/a/dress_success.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/dressingforwork/a/dress_success.htm)
- What Not to Wear on a Job Interview – [http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewnot.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewnot.htm)
- Dress for Work Success – [http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/dress_code.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/dress_code.htm)