DRESSING PROFESSIONALLY ON A BUDGET

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WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR WORK?

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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 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 in 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

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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
Dress Well with a Tight Budget –
Clothes Make the Man or Woman –
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
Dress for Work Success –
http://humanresources.about.com/od/workrelationships/a/dress_code.htm