

Dressing Professionally on a Budget

Denise Dias

Family and Consumer Sciences Agent,
Sedgwick County

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

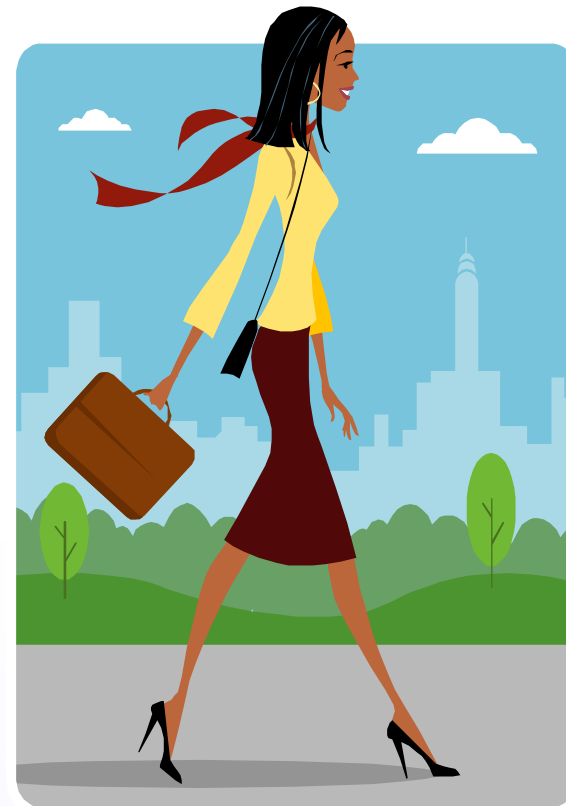
- Buy classic styles.
- A suit that will last for years is a better investment than trendy attire.
- Err on the side of dressing conservatively.
- Big ticket items – suits, dresses, coats – buy classic styles.
- Accessories – buy trendy but inexpensive accessories bright seasonal colors.

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



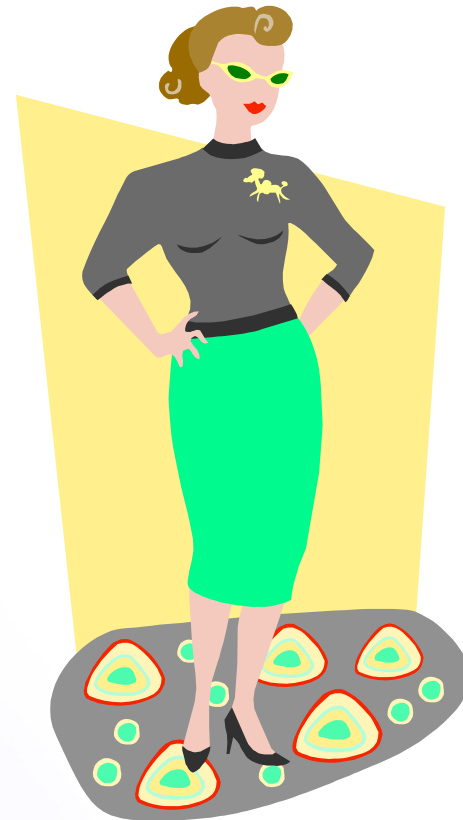
Five-Piece Wardrobe



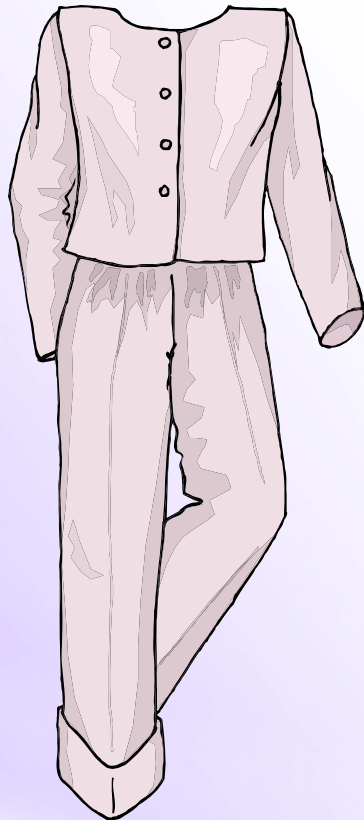
- 1 jacket
- 1 blouse
- 1 short skirt
- 1 long skirt
- 1 pair of pants

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
- Diana Pemberton-Sikes – <http://www.FashionForRealWomen.com>.
- Dress Well with a Tight Budget – <http://ezinearticles.com/?Dress-Well-with-a-Tight-Budget&id=174381>
- 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

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