

## **Productivity, Personal Appearance and Performance – a Success Triangle?**

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Is there a connection between productivity, success and the way you dress? According to Human Resource professionals, 95% of the workforce dresses inappropriately for their jobs. They wear clothing that undermines their credibility, masks their capabilities and significantly reduces their income.

In a survey of professional career advisers by Just for Men, almost 70 percent said appearance affects salary. Almost 65 percent revealed that "at least one male client had lost out in a job hunt because he looked too old." As Baby Boomers age, the men's category in personal care items has exploded in answer to their demand for products to help them retain their youthful appearance.

When it comes to women, society definitely does judge you by the way you look and the clothes you wear. A Cornell University study found that when white females put on an additional 64 pounds, her wages drop 9%. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that there is a statistically significant "wage penalty" for overweight and obese white women – and the overall obese category takes has a wage loss of 12%.

### **Is Performance Dead**

Since perception is reality, be aware of how you are perceived in the workplace, at meetings and with clients. While performance, knowledge and experience are necessary and often ensure continued employment, the new economy criteria for being hired, advancement and prosperity often rest as much on personal appearance as performance.

Through your appearance and clothing, you teach others how to treat you. Does your clothing and your personal grooming habits reveal a person that is responsible, self-respecting, honest and dependable or carelessness, indifferent and unreliable? You also reveal your self-esteem, education and income level and social status.

People spend huge amounts of time and money going to the right schools, getting the right training, getting into the right networking organizations, putting together a perfect resume and preparing for job interviews; but never put into their success formula any thought about the role their appearance plays in landing and keeping the job, getting a promotion or increasing your long term prosperity.

### **Package Yourself for Success**

The biggest appearance negative other than un-cleanliness and poor grooming is your clothing where comfort and personal choice take precedent over appropriateness and function - the result, a lower paycheck and fewer opportunities. Learn to package yourself for success, not just your resume.

**Wear Appropriate Clothes.** Most organizations and businesses have a basic written or unspoken "appropriate dress code." The rule of thumb for advancement is - always dress better

than the dress code suggests or almost as well as your boss. If the normal workday requires business or formal business attire do not dress down. You will be noticed – negatively.

If the dress code is business casual, determine the definition for business casual. Does that mean a t-shirt and blue jeans with holes or does that mean khaki slacks and casual shirts or country club casual which is great in the field of real estate? While jeans are the norm in some workplaces if you question the appropriateness of ones with holes or that are too tight, don't wear them.

For female business professionals at any level, wearing something pretty that could double for a dinner date after work is not appropriate attire in the workplace. The message being sent is that you are a lightweight, not always dependable and up to being fully productive. If you add to that heavy perfume, a skirt that is too short or a plunging neckline, the message can change to something that could even become disrespectful. In today's economy, inappropriate attire is often number one over performance at lowering your chances for future opportunities and receiving the full income potential of your next raise.

**Make a statement.** The only statement you should be making in the workplace, with clients and at meetings is the one you and your organization want remembered. You should always be in the appropriate attire or slightly better for the event when on the job. This statement reveals dependability, trustworthiness and promotion material.

It is never appropriate in such locations when representing your workplace to make personal statements whether they are political, environmental or social causes; or your love for a favorite sports team or entertainer. Save those for a weekend picnic with family and friends.

If you love “trendy” styles and want to change with the seasons, do it with your social attire but not for work. Following the trends closely can be interpreted as being indecisive, undependable and lacking self-confidence. If you must bring a few trends into your working wardrobe, do it with the accessories; a scarf, tie, even a shirt. They represent a contemporary splash of style on a very confident person which will be reflected positively in the future.

**Is there a Missing Link?** In the field of Feng Shui, surrounding yourself with positive energy is vital to productivity and prosperity and one of the keys to success. What is often overlooked is that **your clothing is a big part of your personal environment.** Your clothing must provide you the energy to meet your needs and goals on any given day at work. Clothing that provides supportive energy for success should be thought of in the following terms.

*If it doesn't fit you, look great on you and make you feel like a million dollars wearing it, either don't buy it or if it is already in your closet, get rid of it.*

To package yourself for productivity and success, the following guidelines will help you decide what to wear based upon your energy needs for that day.

- Neutral colors are great for staying focused and limiting interruptions
- Bright colors are good for being upbeat and on the go all day

- Fitted clothes in darker colors help you be in total self-control
- Loose fitting lighter colored clothes are better for chaotic days or when creativity is essential
- Black is great when you want to absorb the energy of the moment
- Red, in small or large amounts and when appropriate, is great when you want to be noticed or empowered
- Earth tone colors work well for endless phone conversations, lots of computer time and good relationship connections
- Blue provides calming energy if you are in a high stress situations

Stop working harder than you need to; work smarter by creating an environment that enables, encourages and involves you in generating more opportunities and promotions. Begin in your closet at home. Make sure what you wear immediately identifies you as a success oriented trustworthy and dependable person ready to take on any opportunity that comes your way. The missing link in the triangle of success is: **Personal Appearance Matters in the new economy.**

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Pat Heydlauff, president of Energy Design, speaks from experience. She works with organizations that want to create an environment where employees are engaged, encouraged and involved, and with people who want to be in control, anxiety-free and confident.

Her new book, "Feng Shui: So Easy a Child Can Do It," provides change that leads to success and prosperity. Contact Pat for consulting, speaking and programs: [www.Energy-by-Design.com](http://www.Energy-by-Design.com) or call: 561-799-3443 – Feng Shui Music for meditation, relaxation and energizing <http://www.energy-by-design.com/HealingMusic.html> .