

The Confident Closet

Universal Tips to Achieving Wardrobe Success

Success!

It's not a mistake. Each and every day successful women are born. Women who win in life know what it takes to be seen as successful. Thank you for purchasing this tool to help you with your business image.

In *The Confident Closet!*, you will find many ways to enhance your image. From building an effective executive and business casual wardrobe to dressing for your next promotion there are tips and techniques for you to put into place to get your foot in the door to success.

Every day I encourage you to try new ways to enhance your image. Use color to enhance your wardrobe one day, change your shoes the next. Each day you have an opportunity to create an abundance of success.

Learn how to communicate effectively and what mistakes to avoid. Success is not a mistake! I wish you much success in your business and in life!

To Your Success!

Karen

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Building an Effective Executive Wardrobe

You have worked hard to achieve the success you have right now. In today's highly competitive world, putting attention on cultivating an executive wardrobe will accentuate the professional image that supports your objectives. While you know that you get only one chance to make the all-important first impression, it is equally imperative to make every day a day that you look your very best, even if you have no meetings except for the impromptu get-together you have in the lunchroom or around the water cooler.

Follow these tips to build an effective executive wardrobe that will convey confidence and competence throughout your workday.

Know the Environment

Office climates are continually changing. Knowing what is considered appropriate for your office environment will ensure that you do not make any expensive mistakes when building your wardrobe. For example, in a conservative office a suit is a must; while in some offices, you might wear a pair of trousers with a sweater set. Keep this in mind when visiting another office that might have a different business dress style than yours.

Consider What Activities You Will Be Doing 9-5

If you look uncomfortable doing whatever your job requires you to do because your wardrobe selection is out of place, you will not be taken seriously on the job. Be sure you build outfits into your wardrobe for each activity.

If you are an outside sales rep you will be doing a lot of driving around and pounding the pavement. You may want to wear more pants than skirts, or select suiting made with some stretch in the fabric, or wear less tailored styles that are easy to move around in.

Start With a Closet Audit

When starting to build an effective executive wardrobe, you need to start by being sure of exactly what you have already – before you make a list of what you need.

Pull out everything in your closet that could possibly be worn to work. Try everything on. Make sure it fits well, that it looks fantastic on you and that it is in good condition.

Build a Baker's Dozen

Your goal should be to have thirteen outfits in your closet. That does not mean thirteen suits. It means that with mixing and matching, your shirts, blouses, jackets, skirts and pants make up at least thirteen outfits that will comprise your executive wardrobe. You do not have to be at thirteen immediately, but it is what you want to work towards.

Start With Your Core Color

Start with at least one great suit that fits you perfectly, and in one of your neutral core colors. Your core colors are colors that are the same as your eyes or hair: black, brown, green, blue etc.

Keep Your Budget in Mind

Once you put together your shopping list, do not just grab your purse and go. Do some Internet research to see what is out there, look for sales and calculate what a realistic wardrobe budget might be. You will not feel good in your new clothes if you have gone into debt to pay for them.

When shopping, remember that quality is important and you are going to spend more for quality. Leave trendy clothes for your weekend activities. Start with clothes that will last for at least a few years.

Essential Pieces

While the task of getting your closet into "executive shape" may seem daunting, this list will help you find the essential pieces to start with to build your executive wardrobe:

1. Two dark suits in one of your core neutral colors
2. One dark skirt in one of your core neutral colors
3. Two pairs of slacks in one of your core neutral colors
4. Two solid shirts or blouses (not prints) in your accent colors

5. Two accent-colored shells that would look great under your suit jackets
6. A jacket that is tailored, yet loose, in an accent color
7. A knit shell in one of your core neutral colors

When in Doubt, Hire a Professional

Consider hiring an image consultant, a personal branding coach, or an executive coach to work with you to define your professional objectives and help you put together your best possible executive wardrobe.

You are now equipped with the knowledge and information to build a wardrobe that can clearly reflect your high level of professionalism. Keep this article with you while shopping or when considering if something is a must have for a wardrobe that will bring many rewards.

Business Casual How to Make It Work for You

Your image is one of the most important contributing factors in business. When it comes to 'business casual,' so many people get it so wrong. According to a June, 2008 CareerBuilder.com survey of nearly 2,800 U.S. companies, 35% of employers have sent home an "inappropriately dressed" worker.

What does business casual actually mean? There are a variety of definitions, given that business casual is somewhere between formal business wear and street wear.

Everyone's workplace is different and different regions have different practices. Not every business or office is the same, and dress code policies vary across the board. Business casual can also be defined differently across different industries. Get informed about company policies, and know what is "not okay" for your workplace. If you have any uncertainty, look to your supervisor or HR Department for clarification. Still, you do not just want to meet the standards of dress for your company – you want to exceed them.

Use the tips here to figure out whether business casual is right for you and learn how to best integrate this style of dressing into your wardrobe.

Do Not Be Too Casual

Some obvious clothing pieces should always be left at home. These include flip-flops, cut-offs, shorts and ripped or intentionally torn garments or beachwear. Decide to forgo any garment that is too tight or way too baggy.

Keep Covered

If you are perceived in the workplace as dressing sexy, you run the risk of not being taken seriously. When you wear a skirt, it should be at least knee length. Remember to keep cleavage to a minimum, as it is not appropriate for business. Save your shimmery, glitzy and glittery fabrics for evening attire.

Hosiery is not necessarily required for business casual but is recommended if you wear a skirt. Also, while open-toed shoes allow you to show off your pedicure, they are better left for the weekend.

Abandon the Banging Bangles

Sometimes trendy jewelry worn to work makes you look more like a fashion victim than a competent professional. Keep your jewelry simple and classic. If you work in a creative industry you have more flexibility. However, wearing an armful of bracelets, huge hoop earrings and a belt that is bigger than a breadbox will do nothing to advance your career.

Go Light on the Paint

Business casual does not mean so casual that you forget to put on your face. Women who do not wear makeup and appear less put together can give the non-verbal message that they are tired or overwhelmed. Makeup should be natural looking, leaning toward conservative. Be sure to wear only your daytime makeup to the office.

Keep Up Your Credibility

Any image professional will tell you the importance of always wearing a third piece. Your blouse and pants or skirt are the first two and then you need one more – a jacket, a sweater, or even a big scarf or shawl. Even if you are doing a business casual look, you still want to command authority and convey credibility, so be sure to continue to include that third piece.

A Safe Bet

Three outfits that work great for business casual are a sweater set paired with a pair of slacks, a turtleneck with a scarf and a skirt or slacks, or a neatly pressed pair of pants or a skirt worn with a pressed long-sleeved, buttoned solid shirt. These combinations will always help you win at business casual.

Discerning between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate for business casual may save your career. Take time to plan in advance what you will wear for those casual days. Use the tips and tools given here to help you set yourself apart from the competition and as you continue climbing the ladder of success in your industry.

Effective Executive Communication

As an executive, when you communicate you want to convey confidence and credibility, and you want people to feel compelled to listen. Considering that a lot of what is communicated is non-verbal, body language and vocal inflection can miss communicate your true message. Use these seven tips to increase the effectiveness of your communication and ensure that you always get your point across.

Recognize the Power in Your Posture

Your communication starts with the stance you choose when you speak. Whether you are talking on the phone or you are in a meeting, it is always best to stand up when you speak. To really get your point across pull your shoulders back to slightly exaggerate your posture and open up your diaphragm. Do not play with a pen, fidget or cross your arms and legs when you speak. Using open body language conveys that you mean what you say and are open to the input of others.

Project Your Voice

Recognize that the purpose of the volume of your voice is not exclusively to ensure that the listeners hear you. Volume adds authority to your vocal presentation and it is important to speak up to project the volume that demands attention.

Be Articulate

The most prevalent challenge in everyday business communication is the lack of clear articulation in conversation. Every time you use a speech filler as in “ah” or “um” or “you know” or “so,” you are detracting from the confidence you want your words to convey and you diminish the power of your message. Ask a trusted colleague to tell you what your speech fillers are and work to eliminate them. You can also record a few of your phone conversations; you will be surprised at what you hear.

Remember to be clear about the message you are delivering. Do not cloud the issues you are talking about. If you are delivering a message about appropriate office attire, you do not want to start giving detailed messages about the upcoming company picnic.

Pay Attention to Your Pace

Everyone has their own natural pace for speaking. When we are nervous many people really speed up. When we talk too fast we convey a lack of experience, and we do not allow time for our listeners to comprehend what we are saying. Pay attention to your pace, be sure to breath and do not be afraid to pause.

Keep In Eye Contact

Another huge challenge many executives have when they are talking is that they look everywhere except at the people to whom they are speaking. Do not let that be you. When you avoid looking at people, they may subconsciously feel that you are not telling the truth and you are also more likely to lose their attention. Staying in eye contact makes people feel like you are speaking to them personally rather than just speaking out loud.

Be Prepared Even When You Think It Is Not Necessary

So often executives think that because they know their work or their projects well that they can “wing” a briefing or even a fairly long report or presentation. Do not do it. Winging it *never* works well unless you have delivered the same message or report or presentation a hundred times. Take five minutes to figure out your talking points, or take even longer for a major presentation. Preparation makes you feel confident and ensures your nerves will not get the best of you.

Even before you call a client or leave a message for your boss do not hesitate to take a few moments to jot down your ideas. This way you will always come across as the competent professional that you are.

Be Consistent

Keep your message consistent. Do not contradict yourself from one communication to the next, or be inconsistent in your words on the same subject to different people. This can quickly put your coworkers in the position of distrusting you. Consistent communication is key to building confidence in the workplace.

Every time you speak you solidify or confuse the effective executive image you have been working hard to create. Identify which of these communication areas need the most attention from you and get started today. Your communication is the cornerstone of your executive image. Make sure yours is working for you.

Five Common Executive Image Mistakes – And How to Avoid Them

As a new or even top executive, your image matters. In today's business environment, judgments are made in the blink of an eye. Follow these five tips to avoid common executive image mistakes and ensure your effectiveness.

Clothing that Makes You Appear Invisible

You may want to be a dynamic executive. However, if you find the boardroom keeping you out, the first question to ask is: are you wearing your personal power colors that demand attention. Color is a powerful business tool that you do not want to overlook as you build your executive image. The fashion colors this season may or may not be your friends. Get your colors professionally done to ensure every bright, neutral or pastel color you put on is sending the message you want it to send. You will find that when you wear the colors that are best for you, you will get more attention, be taken more seriously and perhaps best of all, you will feel more confident.

Forgetting to Dress Office Appropriate

If you are wearing super low-rise pants and your underwear is peeking out of the back, what message is that sending? Other inappropriate dressing may include a too short skirt. Even if it is the trend, it is not appropriate in an office environment and some people will not take you seriously. No matter how proud you are of your chest, showing more than a hint of cleavage will work against you in a coed work environment.

Even in warmer climates open-toed shoes should be saved for the weekend, and opt for pants if you really cannot stand wearing nylons. Bare legs and arms send a casual message that may not serve your career goals.

Even on Casual Friday do not get too casual – skip the T-shirt and tattered jeans. If you are in a position of authority or if you want to be remembered, always wear a third piece: a jacket or a sweater or even a colored shawl should be worn over your blouse or dress. This is your authority piece and an important part of your wardrobe.

Falling Head First into the Fashion Trends

Do you find that you gravitate to the 'have-to-haves' of the season? This may be a challenge as time goes on because you will continually have to update your wardrobe. By choosing timeless pieces, you can bring in a new piece to mix-and-match with your current wardrobe without breaking the bank every season.

If you really want to be fashion forward from 9-5, consider wearing only one trend piece at a time. This way you will still look current and hip without looking like you care more about fashion than looking professional.

Overdoing Accessories...or No Accessories at All

At work, your accessories should complete and complement your outfit, not be attention grabbers themselves. Still, do not be afraid to wear one statement jewelry piece or bold accessory – just not several at the same time. A great handbag or briefcase can polish your outfit to perfection. However, four necklaces, six bracelets and a big buckle belt will be a bit much for any outfit, and will send the wrong message at the office.

This also applies to your makeup – wear makeup, but do not overdo it. Your makeup is also an accessory – it should be fresh and should polish your look. Keep the adventurous accessories and dramatic makeup for your evening activities.

A Dated Hairdo

Nothing says, "I am not on the cutting edge of my profession" quicker than an out-dated hairdo. Keep your hairstyle current. If you are donning a 1960s bob or 1970s flip style, it is probably time to update that look. Consult your hairstylist or an image consultant to find out the best possible looks for your face shape and skin tone. Try flipping through different magazines and find a style that you like. An updated hairdo can give you a whole new level of confidence.

Select one or two of the tips above to focus on over the next two weeks and make the necessary adjustments to your executive image. You will see results and garner the respect and attention you deserve, while having more confidence in your executive image.

Go From 9-to-5 to an Evening Out – With Ease

Often times you need to go right from work to the theater – or to a charity dinner or out for a romantic evening for two – and you may not want to look all business. The good news is that you do not have to.

In today's busy business world you can go from day to evening with ease – if you know a few tricks. You will be able to confidently go from your 9-to-5 office environment to a fabulous evening out with these tips.

Get All the Info

When planning your office-to-after-work attire make sure you know all the event particulars. If a cocktail party is right after work everyone may be dressed in their office attire, while a little later start time means everyone will have changed.

Also know the location: will you be outside, on the roof garden or the terrace? That will mean another layer. Being cold never looks good on anyone.

Try Things Out

If you are planning to wear your evening outfit to the office, try it on at home, and plan ahead as to what changes you will make for the transition from day to evening. Or if you have a new dress or pair of shoes you have just purchased for a special event, always do a test run. This means wear the new shoes, skirt or dress around the house one day on the weekend to make sure it is comfortable enough to get you through the day AND evening.

Start With Your Silhouette

Your dress, or shirt and slacks, are key when successfully going from the office to an evening out. Consider starting your day with your little black dress, even in a silk or satin fabric. You can conceal most of it by wearing a jacket over it for the office. Even if it has a plunging neckline you can easily cover it up with a colorful scarf worn long and tied to prevent anything showing that should not be revealed before sunset.

A metallic or sequined shirt is great for evening, and is often fine for daytime. If you feel it is too much, then you can use the jacket and scarf trick again here.

Do not Rush

Once you are ready to convert to your evening look, be sure to set more time aside than you think you need to get ready at your office. When you rush, you are more likely to forget to change your earrings or your blouse gets buttoned wrong.

Add a Shawl or Wrap

Select a shawl that adds an air of style and drama to your outfit. You need a few wraps or shawls in your wardrobe in different colors and fabrics – all selected to add flair to your outfit.

Change Your Shoes

Wear your professional low heels for the office and bring a pair of stilettos or sling backs that will transform your office attire to “fabulous” for the evening.

Change Your Jewelry

Jewelry is one of the easiest changes that you can incorporate to change the look of your outfit. Wear simple earrings to the office and bring those show-stopping rhinestone-accented chandelier earrings with you for the evening.

Change Your Hair

If you generally wear your hair up for work, let it flow freely in the evening. Pack some hair spray and a comb for back-combing to gain volume. Conversely, if you wear your hair down at work, pull it back and include some stunning hair accessories for evening glamour.

Quick Changes for Your Makeup

The one item to make sure you have in your makeup bag is a dramatic lipstick to convert your work look to a striking evening one. Smoky eyeliner will also enhance your makeup, creating a dramatic complement to your nighttime outfit. Remember the evening calls for extra makeup – do not be afraid to add a little drama through color.

Your next after-work event will be a breeze, now that you have the tools to convert your office attire to evening pizzazz with ease.

Hair, Makeup and Accessories that Enhance Your Executive Image

As much as you realize the importance of investing in an executive wardrobe to enhance your image, recognize that the garments you select are only one part of your overall executive image equation. Your makeup, jewelry and other accessories are also influencing factors that deserve your attention so that you always look your best.

These important accents can complement or compete with your carefully selected, executive outfit. Follow these ideas to ensure that what you decide to do with your accessories and jewelry is working for you at work every day.

Do Not Skip the Jewelry

Jewelry is important, as it finishes the look. Always wear earrings to frame your face. Also add at least a necklace or a bracelet, and always consider a watch. Without jewelry you look underdressed in the workplace – and underpaid. Invest in some good classic jewelry that will last a long time, and then each year add one or two more current pieces.

Any Old Necklace Will Not Do

Just because it is real gold does not mean it is working for you. It is important to wear jewelry in your colors, and proportion to your body size. Too many women wear very dainty necklaces in the workplace, and this does not enhance their authority. Pick jewelry that is a good size for you, and specifically complements the outfit you have on.

Keep Your Bags and Shoes Neutral

Choose suede or leather in neutral colors for your bags and shoes. Patent leather is a great way to add flair while still being neutral. Also, choose classic styles rather than the latest trends. Classic shoes and bags are good investments and will look great for seasons to come.

Do a Test Run

Take the time to do a “test run” on any new accessory or garment you add to your business wardrobe. Wear it first to run errands or to meet a friend for lunch before you wear it to work so you will not be surprised by an earring that keeps falling off or a necklace that keeps catching your hair. You want to be aware of any challenges and resolve them away from the office.

Do a Double Take

Take a good look at yourself in the mirror before you leave each morning. Are your clothes clean and pressed? Are your shoes clean and polished? Are your accessories simple and classic? If you do not look well put together, you are not conveying the professionalism that your colleagues expect of you.

Watch the Noise

While all shoes make noise, notice if yours are unusually loud. This can distract those around you and will be sure to make you uncomfortable. Also the same goes for jewelry. Save the bells and chimes for the holiday parties and keep them out of the office. Another important tip here is to remember to take off all but one bracelet if you are doing a presentation. You do not want your noisy bracelets to distract from your powerful message.

Choose a Purse or a Briefcase – Not Both

A big accessory mistake is to carry both a briefcase and a purse –this can get cumbersome. Instead opt for a stylish briefcase. Today many designers make feminine yet sophisticated cases that can serve as your purse and hold your papers, or even your laptop. You can always stick a small evening bag in the briefcase if you need to go from day to evening. Just leave the case in the office when you go out to that dinner or cocktail hour.

Accessories are a vital part of an effective executive wardrobe. Whatever your professional role follow these ideas to ensure you always feel confident, and look fantastic.

Harness the Power of Color in Your Executive Wardrobe

In today's fast-paced world, using color effectively in your wardrobe can determine your position in your company. Use these tips to start to identify your power colors and implement them into your wardrobe for business success.

There are several factors to consider when determining your colors:

Determine if You Have a Warm or Cool Palette

It is relatively easy to determine whether you have a warm or cool palette based on what colors look best on you. If you tend to lean towards earth colors, such as bronzes, gold, earth greens, mochas, browns, and ivories, you most likely have a warm skin tone.

If you have a cool skin tone, you may look best in jewel tones, such as emerald green or royal blue.

Or you can use metals as a tool. Pick up some metallic fabric at a local craft store. Stand in front of a mirror in natural light and hold the gold, then the silver fabric next to your face, looking to see which one makes your face 'light up.' If the silver makes your face light up, you are most likely cool-toned. If the gold makes your face light up, you are most likely warm-toned.

Now that you know whether you are a warm or cool-toned, you are equipped to select the colors that will help you turn your drab wardrobe into a power wardrobe.

Plan Your Message with Color

As a successful professional, everyday you probably plan your day and what you want to accomplish with your time. Give the same consideration when planning your attire. Ask yourself what is the visual message you want to convey today with your image. Is it important today that you get noticed? Is it mostly credibility that you want to instill today? Or is today the day that you have decided that conveying friendliness and

approachability is key? Whatever your goal for today, recognize it starts with the colors you select.

Know What Your Colors Are Saying

Each color, of course, comes in many different shades – some are muted, which means the shade has more grey in it, or they are tinted, which means the shade has more white in it. That said, certain colors do convey certain psychological messages overall. For example red is the color to wear when you want to get attention and appear confident and powerful. For women, a red jacket or suit works really well for this purpose. For a man, using red as an accent color in a tie or pocket handkerchief will still convey the same message with less flair.

Beware of Black

It is also said that the darker the color the more powerful you appear. However, recognize that black can be perceived as intimidating and that may not be what you are after. Although in many industries black is a staple of executive wardrobes, recognize that not everyone looks good in black. For some people all you will see is the suit, and not the man or woman. Be sure black accents your appearance rather than overpowers it.

Do Own a Dark Suit

If black is not for you, recognize you still need a dark suit to convey dependability and reliability. Chocolate brown or dark navy blue can be excellent choices. By the way, navy blue, and dark grey are thought to convey professionalism and trustworthiness.

Get a Second Opinion

As an executive you realize the value of hiring a professional. While you may figure out your best colors on your own, an objective professional can be an excellent resource, or at least provide a good second opinion. Sometimes we like a color or think it looks good on us based on a past positive association with that color. For example, you may have a soft pink dress that your favorite aunt gave you when she took you on a special trip. Even though it is not the right color for you, you are still drawn to wear it. You may not even be consciously aware that a past positive association with that color is the reason.

Hire a professional image consultant to determine the colors that best suit you. Also if you had your colors done more than ten years ago, or if you have changed your hair color, it is time to get them done again.

There is a lot more to say about color. Make the commitment to yourself to learn more and explore the role color plays in your wardrobe. Apply some of the ideas here to support you in sending the message you want in every work situation. By incorporating the power of color into your wardrobe, you may see dynamic changes in how you are perceived by others in the workplace, and you are more likely to get the results you want every day.

How to Dress for Your Next Promotion

Your big interview starts long before it is scheduled. From the day you take a new job, you want to be preparing for your next promotion. Follow these ideas to ensure you are sending the right image messages.

Position Yourself to be the Best Fit for the Promotion

You know you are the ideal match, but how does your boss feel? Make sure when you are going for a higher level position that you have considered all factors that your boss will take into account before offering you that big promotion.

It Is Never Too Late for a Good First Impression

You are going for a promotion, so dress the part. Take dress cues from your boss as well as other employees that are one level above you. When you arrive for your interview, be confident and enthusiastic that you are the best fit for the position.

Find a Mentor

Identify with someone higher up in the company than you and designate them to be your mentor. This will help you find out what it takes to get the promotion you are working towards, as well as other factors you may not have considered.

Do What it Takes

Keep track of your attendance – take time off only when truly needed. Pitch in where needed – if you are caught up on your projects, offer to help out and put in a few hours to assist others with their work. Attend workshops, seminars, and classes offered by your company. These are often free and your employer is likely to take notice of your work ethic and desire to learn. Keep track of your job performance – include the number of hours you worked overtime (whether paid or unpaid), new skills you have acquired, continuing education credits, etc. All of the above will help position you as the best candidate for the promotion.

How to Win in Your Big Interview

You have prepared for that next promotion, and you want to make sure to send the right message as you sit across the desk from your interviewer.

Consider the following how-to guide to help you dress for success and land that promotion with ease.

Embrace the Neutral

When sitting across from your boss, you want to appear confident and competent. Think olive green, taupe, navy, chocolate brown or black for your suit. Use color sparingly for the interview – that pop of color is great on a day-to-day basis, but for a promotion interview use that tool in moderation. Consider a basic beige, blue, green or sand-colored blouse, or opt for a simple buttoned-down collared shirt.

Trendy is as Trendy Does

Unless you work in the fashion industry, leave the trends behind for your big interview. You do not want anything you wear to distract from what you are saying.

Do Not Go Gaudy on Accessories

Accessories can make or break an outfit. Keep your accessories simple. If you like to wear pearls, this would be a good day to wear them. Small pearl earrings and a matching pearl necklace are stunning. A simple watch is great, but do not overdo it – no gaudy or big-faced watches. Of course, forget those anklets and wear one ring per hand to keep your look simple and stylish.

Hygiene is Important

Do not overdo your fragrance, or better yet, skip it. Consider getting a manicure – clean, neat nails are attractive and will leave a good impression. Getting a haircut before the big interview should give you a visual and emotional lift and you may want to add that to your schedule. Pop a breath mint a few minutes before you walk in the door. As you pass through the threshold remember you have what it takes, and always remember to smile.

Maximize Your Chances for Success

You now have all of the tools necessary to get your next promotion. Get prepared, dress the part, and set yourself apart from others by making a fabulous impression with your boss, so that the only option is to give you that new position.

How to Pack Your Executive Wardrobe into a Carry-On

Along with your successful career comes the potential for travel. Savvy executives do not want to wait for their bags to come off the carousel or risk their luggage getting lost. It is possible to pack everything you will need into a carry-on for maximum efficiency in travel. Use these tips to learn how to pack your executive wardrobe so you are always ready to grab your carry-on and go.

It Is in the Bag

When you begin packing for your trip, make sure that your bag is large enough to fit all of the items you need to bring, as well as fitting in the overhead bin of the airplane. Most airlines allow you to have a carry-on that is 45-to-50 linear inches – meaning the dimensions of the width, length, and height cannot total more than that when added together.

Create a List

Make a master list of everything you may need for your trip, and refer to the list as you pack. Only take with you what you will need – nothing more. Remember this mantra as you pack: “Less is more.” Also keep a folder of your travel documents: your airline itinerary, your boarding pass, hotel and rental car information, etc.

Roll with the Punches

Rolling your clothes will take up much less space and will also help minimize wrinkling. Consider the fabrics you are packing as well. Typically synthetics are less likely to wrinkle when packed, and will not need ironing when you arrive at your destination.

Color Coordinate

Build your wardrobe around one versatile neutral and one other color from your palette. You can mix and match everything else around these colors. Do not over pack on shoes. One statistic suggests that the average female carries five pairs of shoes when she travels. To save space, opt for two pairs of shoes: one pair of flats and a pair of heels, both coordinating with your color scheme. If you want to bring your workout shoes, consider purchasing a compact pair just for travel.

Layer Your Bag

Start with the heaviest items, such as shoes, on the bottom of the bag and lighter items, such as shirts and toiletries, on top. Fill in the nooks and crannies with your socks, accessories, and underwear. Do not forget to use yourself to pack. Wear a jacket on the plane so it does not take up critical space in your bag. Your jackets will be the biggest space consumers. See if you have any untailored jackets in your executive wardrobe – those take up less space.

Prepare Your Accessories

Select appropriate accessories for each outfit, and put them in a Ziploc™ bag. If you are carrying a garment bag as your carry-on, hole punch the accessories bag in the top corner and hook it to the hanger of the outfit with which you plan to wear it. If you are not carrying a garment bag, still pack the accessories for each outfit together in a Ziploc bag so getting dressed is easy and efficient.

Do Your Laundry

Traveling light will mean recycling the outfits you have packed. Check out the hotel's laundry facilities and use the clothesline in your room to dry delicate items. Do spring for hotel laundry service when you are on the road if you need it. Always pack a couple of extra large Ziploc bags for any soiled clothing you need to take home.

Your next executive trip will be a breeze with these tips. Remember to make a list when you start and only pack what you need – nothing more. Keep your wardrobe simple and ladies: pack only two pairs of shoes. You will soon find packing everything into a carry-on will happen with ease.

Your Wardrobe Needs Management Too

Our whole life we have been getting dressed every day, and most people take getting dressed for granted. I hope after reading this article that you never will again. The savvy professional gives attention to her wardrobe, manages and maintains it, and thereby enjoys all the benefits of being prepared to look great and feel appropriately dressed.

Let Go Of the Poor Producers

In business if you were the boss, after a while you would have to let go of staff that was taking up space but not producing. The same goes for your wardrobe. If you have not worn something for a year, it is taking up too much space and it is time to get rid of it and make space for a garment that contributes to producing great outfits.

Audit Your Wardrobe Annually

Each year you want to retire what is not working and take inventory of where the holes in your wardrobe might be. For example if your favorite dark blazer is starting to look ragged, you had better retire it and that means you need to go shopping for a new one.

Also make sure everything fits – all the buttons are there and firmly attached, and nothing needs repair or cleaning. There is nothing worse than thinking you have the perfect outfit for an important occasion and finding it is not ready to wear when you pull it out of your closet to get dressed.

Invest in Quality

You want to invest in quality for your executive wardrobe. You cannot look like a million bucks if your sweater is pilling, your blouse is pulling and your jacket is starting to fray.

Wool blend blazers are always a good investment. Fewer garments of a greater quality should be the rule you follow.

Focus on Fit

One thing any image professional will tell you is that there is no such thing as ready-to-wear. Everyone's body is different and you want to get each

jacket, skirt, and pair of pants properly fitted to your body. Half an inch makes all the difference in the right places to make sure you always look your best.

Consult your image professional for the best skirt, trouser and jacket cut length for you. Also, pay attention to your jacket shoulder width and waistline position.

Hang with Good Hangers

Make sure you have wooden hangers in your closet for several reasons. Wooden hangers last the longest. They also maintain their shape, supporting your jackets and other heavier garments in maintaining *their* shape over years of service. Also your lighter weight clothes will drape naturally in your closet. Some people prefer satin pillow-filled hangers because they are prettier. However, they are a lot less functional and do not last very long. Wooden hangers do cost more, and the investment is worth it to keep your garments looking great.

Protect Your Investment

Your executive wardrobe will cost you more than your casual outfits, and you want your garments to last a long time. Take steps to protect your wardrobe. One common mistake is dry-cleaning too often. Unless you have a spot that needs attention, your garments rarely need to be dry-cleaned. If you were in a smoke-filled room last night, steam your clothes by hanging them outside your shower, then air dry them on the back porch for an afternoon. Also make sure your closet is not overstuffed, and has good air flow to keep your clothing fresh and prevent the garment shapes from being lost.

After you wear something, take a good look at it in the morning light. Does it need any repairs, is there a spot on it? Always give your garments immediate care before placing them in the closet. You never want to be getting dressed for the day, and find that some part of your chosen outfit is not ready to wear.

Managing your wardrobe will initially take some attention. Apply these ideas to maximize the investment you make in your pieces, insuring that they last a long time. The result will be that you will always have the right

outfit ready to go, you will feel confident in your appearance, and that will allow you to get the best possible results on the job.

Biography

Style that is accessible and achievable is the cornerstone of Karen Hughes' mission. With humor and grace, she shows audiences how to connect to that little girl inside, transform your wardrobe, and discover the potential to shop with confidence and dress successfully no matter where they are in their life.

A Certified Image Professional and Style Coach, Karen has worked with executives and stay at home moms, as well as entrepreneurs and retired women ready to enter their closet each morning knowing they'll never again say "I have nothing to wear"! Her approach is simple. **Anyone** can dress with confidence and shop with ease. She helps people discover or even rediscover their sense of style. Karen brings her passion for education to every presentation and workshop she conducts. Her practical tips and worksheets make it easy for clients and audiences alike to learn how to get it right.

Creator of **StyleCAMP** workshops, **Style YOUiversity Membership**, **Journey to Style** and **Webinar Wednesday** online programs and **Sofie's Exchange** an interactive audio program, Karen reaches her goal of helping her client achieve style success by being accessible near and far.

As President of Image Assets, Karen has honed her skills working with men and women striving for image success. She created Style YOUiversity™ to be more accessible for all women no matter what the stage of life they were in. Style YOUiversity™ is a burgeoning online community for *educating, empowering and enriching* the lives of women helping them to **"look good, feel great and have fun doing it"**! She holds a Bachelor of Science in Apparel Merchandising from Auburn University and has trained at London Image Institute, The Australian Image Company, and SciArt. Along with certification from the Association of Image Consultants International as a Certified Image Professional, she is a member of ProWin and participates regularly in Dress for Success with bi-annual clothing drives.

- **Web:** www.ImageAssets.net or www.StyleYOUiversity.com
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Yours in Style!

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StyleYOUiversity™

Workshops, Packages and Individual Services

Workshops: Karen works with companies on an individual basis to customize presentations to suit the needs of their staff. Lunch and Learn are popular ways to introduce members to ways of enhancing the company's image more effectively. Half or Full-Day workshops are also provided.

Packages: *Each package below is designed to work together to best suit your needs. The most popular packages are highlighted *.*

"Executive/Entrepreneur Package" *

- *Custom Color Analysis & Makeover*
- *Figure & Style Assessment*
- *Audit & Shop Your Closet*
- *Personal Shopping (2 Shopping Trips)*
- *Exclusive 1 Year Wardrobe Club Membership (6 month seasonal check)*

"Moving Up—I'm Promoted Package" *

- *Custom Color Analysis & Makeover*
- *Figure and Style Assessment*
- *Audit & Shop Your Closet*
- *Personal Shopping (1 Shopping Trip)*

"MBA & Graduate Package"

- *Custom Color Analysis & Makeover*
- *Figure & Style Assessment*
- *Audit & Shop Your Closet*

"Staying Stylish Package" (choose your 2 favorite)

- *Custom Color Analysis & Makeover*
- *Figure & Style Assessment*
- *Audit & Shop Your Closet*

Individual Services

All individual services are designed to work together to help you achieve your maximum image needs. Please review the each package carefully to help you identify which program(s) will work best for you.

Custom Color Analysis & Makeover

A Custom Color Analysis and Makeover is an experience that will leave feeling and looking 10 years younger! Seasonal Color Analysis has its foundation in over 30 years of research and technology. It analyzes the 3 – dimensions of color (hue, value, and intensity) to determine where your natural coloring resides.

- Your color analysis can take up to 2 hours and includes makeup and skin care techniques to help you maximize your skin’s natural beauty. You leave with a personal color wallet that is color fast and fade resistant and recommendations for skincare and makeup to always look your best.

Figure & Style Analysis

- Discover your unique body characteristics and understand how to wear clothes to accentuate the positive.
- Understand which clothing styles work best based on your body line and proportion.
- Learn how alterations can create a better fit.

Personal Closet Assessment

Have you ever said “I don’t have a thing to wear”, yet you have an entire closet full of clothes?

- A personal closet assessment analyzes what you have in your closet.
- It looks carefully at how you use your clothes based on your lifestyle and helps you to learn to build a wardrobe that works for your lifestyle needs.
- You will learn how to put your clothes in your closet for maximum efficiency.
- You will leave with check lists to know how to shop for your separate wardrobe needs. *This is not a closet cleaning!*

Personal Shopping

Half or Full Day

Personal shopping is completed by half or full-day shopping experiences. Half day is considered up 4 hours. Shopping greater than 4 hours is considered a full day and is completed in one shopping experience.