

## National Business Educational Association

### “Working in Style: Steps to Maximize Your Professional Image”

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Having the right image is very important. Many times, when we meet someone for the very first time, we often make internal judgments or assumptions about that person based upon their outward appearance in less than 60 seconds. For example, we will make judgments on what another person’s occupation is, their level of education and social status based upon what they wear, how they look, their level of conversation or vocabulary usage and their behavior.

These characteristics allow others to make perceptions or assumptions as to whether or not you are credible, trustworthy, friendly or professional just to name a few. In addition to these assumptions, we also expect the dress attire of the person to be fitting or consistent with their occupation. If you want to be recognized as a credible source in your occupation, it is recommended that you wear clothing attire that is suitable for the occasion and will allow your colleagues and clients to take you seriously.

Regardless of your occupation, you must keep in mind that your image can create a positive or negative effect on your audience. Your image can leave a lasting impression, whether good or bad in the mind of your audience. So here is the question. If your image had an audible voice, what would it say about you?

#### Session Objectives

- Demonstrate “The Psychology of Color”. Attendees will learn the meaning of colors, how color impacts their mood and their audience
- “Suit Up” or “Suit Down” – Attendees will understand the differences between formal business attire and business casual and when to wear them
- Steps to create a core wardrobe. Attendees will learn practical and inexpensive ways to create a core wardrobe based upon their personality and lifestyle needs

### **Image Impact: Why is having a professional image important?**

1. People are attracted by what they see
2. It shows respect for yourself and your profession
3. People take you serious
4. It shows credibility, authority and confidence
5. Various work and social environments require a professional appearance

### **Seven Fundamentals to Dress Confidently for the Business Professional:**

#### **You should wear.....**

1. Colors that compliment your complexion
2. Styles that flatter your body proportions
3. Styles that match your personality
4. Clothing styles that is appropriate for the occasion
5. Coordinate styles that easily mix and match
6. Styles that are current
7. Styles that age appropriate

### **The Psychology of Color:**

Why is wearing the right colors important to your image?

Colors are a silent communicator. It affects our mood and level of energy. It can subconsciously attract others to us or repel them away.

***“Within seconds of meeting you, others will respond to the “color messages” flashed by your clothing. Colors can influence the viewer’s hormones, blood pressure and body temperature. It has the power to stimulate or depress, invite or repel. Thus before we dress for a particular occasion, we must consciously consider not only how colors make us, the wearers, feel and what they communicate about our personalities but how others react unconsciously when they view the colors we wear.” ---***

Toby Fischer- Mirkin, author of Dress Code

## The Hidden Meaning of Color

Source: Toby Fischer-Mirkin, author of Dress Code

COLOR	WHAT IT MEANS/IT'S PERCEPTION
<b>Black</b>	Elegance, mysterious, power, domination, sophisticated, a sign of grief or mourning (worn in positions of leadership/authority)
<b>Grey</b>	Refinement, class, economic and social mobility, intellect and power (worn in positions of leadership/authority)
<b>Brown</b>	Approachable, reliable, friendly, supportive, commands less power, is non-threatening down to earth, warmth
<b>Beige</b>	Neutral, conveys no emotion, non-threatening, approachable, friendly (ideal for those in counseling, HR or who works with people)
<b>White</b>	Purity, innocence, devoid of deception, freshness, trustworthiness, non-threatening (universal color for the medical profession)
<b>Blue</b>	Trustworthy, dependability, serious, respect, relaxing, serene (choice of color for business professionals such as bankers, lawyers)
<b>Pink</b>	Upbeat, romantic, feminine, brightens the complexion, carries a sense of youthfulness and vitality
<b>Purple</b>	Royalty, wealth, high self- esteem, passion, spiritual connotations (worn by those who are creative or who have a heightened sense of spirituality)
<b>Red</b>	Energy, dominance, excitement, stimulation, commands attention, recognition, bold statement
<b>Green</b>	Serene, relaxing, calming, healing, nature, growth
<b>Yellow</b>	Alertness, eye-catching, stimulates, illumination,
<b>Orange</b>	Attention getting, energizing, bold

## Suit Up or Suit Down:

Question: When should I wear a suit or a coordinate outfit?

Answer these three questions:

- (1) What is the occasion?
- (2) What message would you like to communicate?
- (3) Does the outfit make me look \_\_\_\_\_?
- (4) Does it compliment my personality?

## Levels of Style

Source: Institute of Image Management

- **Level 4:** Tailored or Traditional Business
  - **Style Element:** 2-pc matching suit
  - **Message:** Authoritative
- **Level 3:** Tailored Business Casual
  - **Style Element:** Jacket
  - **Message:** Accessible
- **Level 2:** Relaxed Business Casual
  - **Style Element:** Sweater/Vest/Cardigan
  - **Message:** Approachable
- **Level 1:** Casual
  - **Style Element:** No Collar
  - **Message:** Available

## How to use your Creative Worksheet Checklist:

1. Create an “inspiration style book”.
2. Choose one core item in your wardrobe (pant, skirt, dress) to match up.
3. Write in coordinate pieces from each column to mix and match with the core item.
4. Lay the outfit out so that you can visually see what it will look like.
5. Take a picture of the outfit you created.
6. Write in the missing pieces, color, etc. you will need to coordinate with your outfit or to create the “inspired look” you want.

## Work that Wardrobe

### Your Creative Checklist to Mix & Match Your Wardrobe

<i>BOTTOMS/DRESS</i>	<i>TOPS/SHIRTS</i>	<i>JACKETS/SWEATERS</i>	<i>JEWELRY/SCARF</i>	<i>BELTS/HANDBAG/HOISERY/SHOES</i>	<i>NEED</i>

## Recommended Image Resource Books

### Women

***Best Dressed:*** the born to shop lady's secret for building a wardrobe  
Author: Suzy Gershman

***Color Me Confident:*** Change your look – change your life!  
Authors: Veronique Henderson and Pat Henshaw

***Dress Code:*** Understanding the hidden meanings of women's clothes  
Author: Toby Fischer-Mirkin

***The New Secrets of Style:*** Your complete guide to dressing your best everyday  
Author: The editors of InStyle

***Women's Wardrobe***  
Authors: Kim Johnson Gross and Jeff Stone

### **Men:**

***Details Men's Style Manual: The Ultimate Guide for Making Your Clothes Work for You***  
Author: Daniel Peres

***Style and the Man***  
Author: Alan Flusser

***The Fundamentals of Style: An illustrated guide to dressing well (Style for Men)***  
Author: James Gallichio