

Editorial Eleven

## **Gentlemen, this is for you**

Gentlemen, fashion and style is not just for the ladies and as we don't want you to feel neglected, this article is for you. The way you look also sends out messages about you and dictates to the rest of the world your position in life.

A little thought into what you wear has never hindered men before. This is not about being metro; this is about taking some pride in who you are and projecting the right messages. The aim is to avoid sabotaging your overall look. First impressions are just as important for men as they are for women and your image says a lot about your personal qualities.

If people can relate to you and your image they are far more likely to trust you. Nothing distorts this trust more than someone whose image is not appropriate. So how do you create the image you want? It is all about knowing some simple rules and keeping your dress appropriate for the occasion.

The colours you wear are an important part of the communication process and have a powerful impact on the way people react and relate to you. The right use of colour in your clothing can actually strengthen your image and communication showing those around you that you can take on greater responsibility. Your colours are determined genetically and stay the same for the rest of your life so why not take advantage of the colours best suited to you? It also makes your life easy when shopping because you know what coloured clothing to buy. Think of the time and effort you will save.

As mentioned in our last article, shoes say a lot about you and are a 'telling measure of a man's taste' (Antongivanni, p. 87). Choose ones that are in a colour and style that will go with the clothes already in your wardrobe and remember to keep them polished so they look smart and cared for. This shows others that you take pride in you and your work.

This is probably a good time to remind you that socks and sandals are not a fashion statement and as such should never be worn together! If the weather is cold enough for you to wear socks then it is too cold to be wearing sandals. Select some closed in shoes instead and leave the sandals for the hot summer months.

Jeans and sneakers can work if you select your sneakers with care. A lot of the retro or casual sneakers work well with jeans but if you are wearing your white sporting or gym sneakers with jeans you may want to re think this option, especially if your sneakers are white and your jeans a dark colour.

Nothing draws attention to you like a stark contrast in colours and I am not sure if this is the kind of attention you were hoping for.

Remember to keep your footwear consistent with what you are wearing. Casual shoes don't compliment business wear and dress shoes don't go well with casual outfits such as shorts and t-shirts. The work environment is generally not as forgiving when it comes to casual shoes worn with a suit and let's face it, dress shoes worn with a casual outfit look just as out of place. It is also important to team like colours together. Black shoes are great for black, grey and navy pants and brown shoes are perfect for brown and tan pants. Avoid the temptation to wear black shoes with brown pants.

Socks also play a part in your overall image and should be in a colour that matches your shoes and pants. We are still amazed at the number of men who continue to wear white socks with dark coloured pants. Recently we saw a well-dressed guy who had the suit, shirt and tie pattern and colour combination right only to see that he was wearing white socks with red spots. It totally ruined his image. You want people to remember you and not the colour of your socks. Invest in some dress socks and avoid this happening to you. It is ideal to buy socks that come to mid calf level so your shins aren't exposed when you sit down (Karpinski, p. 44)

Not everyone feels comfortable in a bright pink shirt. Everyone has their own comfort level that often dictates what they will wear. If the bright pink shirt is you then wear it with pride. If it is not you then that is fine too. You are better to choose a more conservative colour that you feel comfortable in. It is very obvious when people wear something they are not comfortable in. Just don't forget to push your colour boundaries every so often to make life a bit more exciting.

While some bold colours can jazz up an outfit, be careful when adding stripes and patterns to your outfit. A busy striped shirt and tie or suit and shirt combination is very easy to get wrong and can detract from your look rather than add to it. Wear stripes with caution. When worn together the busy patterns on a shirt, suit and tie can conflict against each other and have a tendency to overwhelm those around you who don't know where to look. Choose one pattern and keep your other garments in a much more subtle pattern or solid colour.

If you are required to wear a tie to work make sure the length is right. 'The tip of your tie should touch the top of your belt' (Ecker, J 2008) If your tie is too long or too short it sends out the message that you are not sure what you are talking about. It is a good idea to buy good quality ties, as cheap materials don't wear as well. If your tie gets dirty, have it dry cleaned. Unfortunately dirt marks on your tie stand out like the white socks.

It is important that your clothes fit well and are in proportion to you. Pants, shirts and jackets that are too small or too big take away from your image. It is difficult to take someone seriously when the pants they are wearing are too small and pull in all the wrong places. It is better to buy the bigger size and

have the garment taken in by a tailor. Most department stores can advise you on a tailor you can use. The same thing applies to jackets. The fit of a jacket is extremely important and includes shoulder width, jacket and arm length. When buying a new jacket, try on a few different styles. You may find that one model or design is a better fit for you than others. When it comes to shirts, the collar should sit flat and you should be able to fit 1-2 fingers between the collar and your neck (Ecker, J 2008). Make sure your pants don't sit too low, especially for work. Low rise pants may be in fashion at the moment but unless you have long legs they make your torso look longer than your legs giving you a short and stumpy look. Well-fitted clothes on the other hand help you look taller and slimmer.

Casual Fridays can often be the source of a lot of confusion and dress codes vary according to your place of work. Regardless it is advisable not to fall into the trap of being too casual on Fridays. Casual Fridays were designed to allow some flexibility to the suit and tie look worn during the week. It is expected that you look smart and professional as you are still representing the business you work for. There are going to be occasions when you have to meet an unexpected client and need to look presentable. Pants and a nice shirt with closed in shoes are normally a wise choice. Keep your shorts, t-shirts and thongs for the weekend.

Remember to keep your clothes appropriate for the season you are wearing them in. Winter fabric jackets are meant for the winter months. 'If your clothing needs to span the seasons, try to buy year round fabrics in natural fibres.' (Karpinski, p. 61)

Finally it is advisable to invest in at least one good quality suit in a dark colour. It can be worn often, it won't date and it will last many years. Even if you don't have to wear a suit to work, there will be occasions when a suit is required and this will save you the stress of having to find one at the last minute.

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Please contact us on [izziana@izzianaimage.com.au](mailto:izziana@izzianaimage.com.au) if you have any questions on our articles or if you have topics you would like us to write about.

Izziana Image is dedicated in assisting individuals to be confident with their body and personality. We will show you how to strengthen your image and communication through the correct use of colour and style and how to be confident with your clothing choices. More information can be found at [www.izzianaimage.com.au](http://www.izzianaimage.com.au)

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Izziana Image is presenting at the International Millinery Forum, Wagga in January. See <http://www.internationalmillineryforum.com.au/> for details

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Reference material:

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