

Dress for Success?

As the rules regarding business **attire** become more and more grey, the issue of dress code becomes more colorful than ever. Twenty years ago corporate dress code was all about image. Professional or business attire was **de rigueur**. Then companies like Microsoft came along and **blew the socks off** the stereotypical, polished, suit-clad professional. The desire to wear **casual** clothing soon spread throughout the service industry. What was once a company policy for suits and ties has become a request for jeans without rips or at least a belt to hold up extremely low-cut waistslines...

The anti-discrimination laws regarding headwear, facial hair or anything else to do with religious beliefs seem very clear-cut in comparison to the question, "How do I tell my colleague that the lace on her push-up bra or the Calvin Klein label on his boxer shorts is distracting clients?" Indeed, popular films and television programs seem to celebrate **revealing** clothing in the business world.

While companies **advocate** or recommend certain attire, they tend to **shy away from** defining a **hardcore** dress code. As the rules get increasingly **vague**, dressing conservative and smart seems to have become a personal rather than company choice. The corporate image can no longer be found in a layer of cloth. First impressions must be **perceived** elsewhere, perhaps in the tone of a conversation or e-mail. After all, shouldn't we speak to succeed rather than just dress for success? SB

Glossary

advocate	Speak, plead, or argue in favor of
attire	clothing of a distinctive style or for a particular occasion
blow the socks off	if something blows your socks off, you find it extremely exciting or good
casual	informal, relaxed
de rigueur	required by etiquette
hardcore	<i>here:</i> unyielding
perceive	become aware of
revealing	allowing to see more than usual
shy away from	avoid having to deal with some unpleasant task
vague	undefined