



**Respectability Robbers
By Dawn E. Waldrop**

A positive professional appearance package creates impact and **respect**. We never want anything to **rob us of that respect** we have worked so hard to achieve. Here a few ways to utilize your appearance as a business tool to gain respect, promotion and increase your income. When we do not achieve these items they become **respectability robbers** to our careers.

Work attire needs to be seventy percent of the closet if you work full time. Work is where we are the majority of the day. These are clothes **only** worn to work not on the weekends.

Benefit: By keeping this wardrobe separate you will look professional and save money.

Shoes are the most important accessory. Most people pay little attention to their shoes. When someone approaches us we see their shoes first. When someone walks away we see their shoes last. Make sure the shoes are clean, not worn and are a professional type of shoe. Shoes need to be the same color or a darker color than the hemline of the pants, dress or skirt.

Benefit: People will remember you and not your shoes. Shoes are a fine detail sending the message you care about details.

Tailored clothes. We all have one leg and arm longer than the other. For that reason and that no one is built exactly the same, it is very important to have your clothes tailored. An appropriate business length for a woman's dress or skirt is middle of the knee, one to two inches below or just above the mid-knee. The front of a man's pant leg should slightly rest on the top of the shoe with a slight crease. No crease means pants are too short and too much material draping means pants are too long. Make sure the tailor measures both arms and legs. Wear the shoes you will be wearing with the outfit when getting tailored.

Benefit: Tailored clothes look professional and you will feel more comfortable.

Dress for your industry, position and clients. Think about whom you will be seeing that day and dress accordingly. Determine if the day dictates **power professional, professional or business casual attire**. If you are meeting with a president or upper level manager, your dress may dictate a business suit. The next client may be casual. Remove your jacket to create a more relaxed message. A woman can change to a professional flat from a pump.

Benefit: You will never wish you had worn something else.

Business Casual, choose it wisely. Just because a client is casual or the company is having a casual day does not mean it will work to your advantage. It is important for others to recognize you as the professional. Keep your business casual wardrobe separate from your weekend casual clothes. **Benefit:** You will save money and always look and feel professional.

Dressing professional never works against you. Dressing unprofessional does. Employers pay more and companies hire individuals with fewer skills if they dress professional. Why? Companies will teach you the technical skills most do not want to teach you how to dress. It is not their expertise. Your professional image can gain you **respect** and bring great success to your career.

Dawn Waldrop is a National Speaker & Image Consultant. Founder of Best Impressions® LLC in 1989.

A leading expert on attire in the workplace she motivates professionals how to present their best image for success through keynote presentations, half/full day training sessions, one-on-one coaching & personal consultations.

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