

Dress smart, win big



Brokers, are you happy with your image? Do you need some pointers on how to dress to impress, to look professional and show clients you mean business? Image Group International's Jon-Michail is here to help

THE VERDICT

Barbara Keyte-Berndt, Australian Loan Company, At Call Wealth Creators

I usually present myself well and I like fashion. In this makeover experience we talked about different scenarios – dressing up for some occasions and being more corporate even whilst at home, but not to go too formal if the client is casual.

I usually wear classic casual things that go with everything. This makes you natural and approachable. Sometimes make-up can put people off, as if you've put up a façade. I never wear full make-up but lipstick is OK.

The clothes chosen for me are lovely. The pinstripe jacket is not really me but I didn't mind it for the occasion, and it goes well with the blouse. The corporate look is very male but as I am not a skirt person it is good for practical reasons.

It is extremely important to dress well, especially with regard to first impressions. Everything has to be clean, organised and ironed as people associate your appearance with how you work and operate. Having good shoes is very important.

As for being a female in this industry, I feel that women have an advantage in that they are more intuitive and approachable. However, it is vital that they dress professionally for the business environment, such as not wearing too-short skirts.

FROM THE EXPERT

Barbara already had short hair so we could not do much there. We restyled it and gave the look more of a polish. She is natural, which is great at times but it is important to understand how power is presented and that being very natural may give the impression you're not much of a go-getter.

Her clothes already looked good, but we took the outfit up a few more notches to give the impression of influence. This look avoids the 'mumsy' trap, and rather enhances Barbara's professionalism.

In the before photo, Barbara is very natural, very friendly – safe, but not influential or powerful. If she were a teacher it would be OK, or in a healing, professional, caring role or on the weekend. But not in the professional workplace. If you dress this casually, it gives the impression that you also take your professional life casually.

It can be difficult to get your heart, soul and mind geared towards looking professional and knowing what to do to give the right impression. Clothing and grooming is part of your identity and it will take time to correlate your appearance towards suiting both personality and professional image. ❖

Jon-Michail, Image Group International CEO is an award-winning author, speaker, image coach and former designer with Christian Dior.

Contact details: Image Group International
Asia-Pacific Head Office
Devon House
47 Darling Street
South Yarra, VIC, 3141
Tel: (03) 9820 4149
E-mail: jonmichail@imagegroup.com.au

To take part in the next makeover, e-mail
lisa.bowman@jmmichail.com



SOME OTHER IMAGE TIPS FROM JON-MICHAEL

Ear/Facial piercing

Men: Not generally recommended for the workplace, especially if you are in a position of influence as you may be seen as lightweight and rebellious. However, piercing may be more acceptable in some professions more than others such as the arts, entertainment and fashion.

Women: Earrings are essential. They are regarded as a signature item; an anchor because they keep focus on the face – ie the main area of communication. Refrain from wearing more than two on each ear.

Avoid: Wearing rings or studs on eyebrows, nose or lips unless for religious or cultural reasons as they can be viewed as rebellious and undisciplined. Mouth studs are also likely to be a turn-off to potential employers and clients.

If, as Shakespeare said, all the world's a stage, it is up to you to be the star. To play the leading role it is important to look good. Self-knowledge and awareness is the first step in the art of looking influential.

