

S P E A K E A S Y



## DRESS FOR SUCCESS

MAKING THE MOST OF  
YOUR VISUAL IMAGE

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**SpeakeasyInc.com**

## “Dress for success”

has been a common mantra in the business world for decades. Recent studies are now proving that dressing for success can increase your workplace productivity, boost your confidence, and may lead to a higher rate of promotion. Business communication consultants often focus on the power of interpersonal communication skills and presentation skills as necessary tools to excel in the business world. However, researchers are beginning to turn the tide and understand that your outward appearance is a critical aspect of your communication abilities.



EMPLOYEES  
DRESSED IN  
SUITS WERE  
ABLE TO  
SECURE  
**10%**  
MORE PROFIT

Leading researchers at the Yale School of Management have extensively studied the connection between the type of clothing worn and the success rate of negotiations. In a recent study, it was found that employees dressed in suits entering a sales negotiation, on average, were able to secure 10% more profit. Those dressed in casual wear, comprised of sweatpants and flip flops, often struggled to secure financially profitable deals and were more likely to end the negotiation with a deal that resulted in no profit at all for the business.<sup>1</sup>



**41%**  
OF EMPLOYERS  
ADMIT THAT  
EMPLOYEES WHO  
DRESS MORE  
PROFESSIONALLY  
TEND TO BE  
PROMOTED  
MORE OFTEN

The economic and professional impact of your dress can have far reaching effects that may hinder your career advancement. The abilities to effectively communicate and build professional relationships are often leading indicators of future success within an organization, 41% of employers admit that employees who dress more professionally tend to be promoted more often.<sup>2</sup> This statistic is even more valid in service and financial industries that require a high rate of exposure to the media or the general public. In the financial sector, it is estimated that employees who dress less professionally, in comparison to their counterparts, lose out on over \$1 million in deals over the course of their career. Not only is this a significant financial hit to the organization, but it can take a toll on employee morale and productivity.<sup>3</sup>

When you are perceived by others, either for the first time or over several interactions, you are often judged. This initial judgment can and often does influence your initial and future interactions with that person. Feeling confident in your dress will enable you to not only

exude confidence and authority but can also boost your overall communication effectiveness. Audiences, in general, are more likely to listen and respond favorably to a speaker that is properly dressed for the occasion and has control over their voice and tone.

Though the exact type of dress may vary, depending on the audience, one biological principle still holds true:

**ALL ANIMALS, INCLUDING HUMANS, RESPOND TO SIGNALS OF DOMINANCE AND FOR HUMANS THAT IS THE BUSINESS SUIT.**

To help you make the most of your visual image and enhance your interpersonal communication, the communication coaching experts, at Speakeasy, have compiled these clothing recommendations.

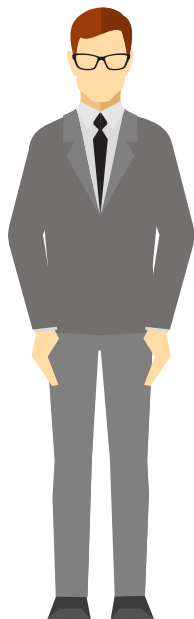
## 1 WEAR A SUIT

**Dressing in business professional or business casual wear has been linked to higher self-confidence and authority.**

**Wearing** a suit complete with a matching jacket tends to send the signal that you know what you are doing and that the quality of work that you do is above average.

**In high** stakes negotiation situations, formal wear often enhances negotiation success rates as these employees are able to command respect and the attention of their audience.

**In a recent** psychology study, it was found that employees dressed more formally were able to engage in higher level abstract thinking, similar to that which a senior executive or CEO would use.



In addition, study participants dressed in suits were able to see the bigger picture faster and make more accurate decisions.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 OPT FOR THE TAILORED OR FITTED LOOK

**Business suits may not be the most flattering clothing options for some body types.**

**To make** the most of your business attire, consider getting it altered to better fit your frame, or buying fitted styles that can accentuate your body better. Ill-fitting suits can have just as much of a negative effect on your visual image as wearing casual clothing to work.

**It is a best** practice every year to ensure that your suits fit appropriately and are not too tight or too loose. Being prepared, ahead of time, to look the part is key.



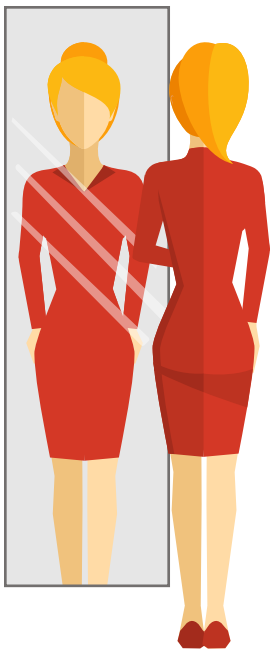
Don't wait until the morning of a high stakes speaking engagement to find out that your once fitted suit is now too small.

## 3 CHECK YOUR VISUAL IMAGE OFTEN

**The visual image you portray is key for two reasons.**

**First**, it is what others will see and this will often influence, positively or negatively, how you will be perceived.

**Second**, your visual image will likely impact how you feel about yourself and this perception can spill over into how you interact with others.



9 Out of 10 employees admit to not looking at themselves in the mirror throughout the day.<sup>5</sup>

**It is important** to keep in mind that looking in the mirror in the morning when you are first getting dressed is essential, but so is checking your visual image throughout the day as you move about. Taking a few moments to think to yourself, “what does my visual image look like” can go a long way in making sure you are physically portraying exactly what you want others to perceive.

**Remember**, what may have began in the morning as a tailored look, may need to be readjusted after lunch, or as you stand and sit throughout the day.

# CONCLUSION



Your visual image is just a part of a larger communication package you have to work to assemble. Effective communication is achieved by being committed to a journey of professional development and practice. It is essential to remember that communication is rooted in authenticity and trust and creating a visual image that commands respect is one step in becoming a master communicator. Consider the power your visual image conveys and work to enhance your communication with others by taking the time to dress for success. The business communication consultants at Speakeasy are experts in helping communicators, at all levels, master all of the important facets of communication to generate business results. Our dynamic business communication skills training programs provide participants with real-world opportunities to practice key communication strategies to enhance both their professional and personal communications. Our full-time, credentialed faculty welcome the opportunity to unlock the master communicator within you.

**Register today for one of  
Speakeasy's proven communication programs.**

To learn more about our dynamic communication classes visit our website at <http://www.speakeasyinc.com/>, or call one of our communication advisors at **1-888-375-1801**.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2016/03/18/469669877/power-suits-how-dressing-for-success-at-work-can-pay-off>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/worklife/07/30/cb.dress.for.success/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2016/03/18/469669877/power-suits-how-dressing-for-success-at-work-can-pay-off>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-dressing-for-success-leads-to-success-1456110340>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2097717/Looking-mirror-DOES-make-anxious-looks.html>