

Woman

How to dress for success in a fierce job market

Graduates entering the workforce will have to trade student togs for more grown-up gear. Our advice for them, and for anyone looking to bag or hang on to a job, is to put workwear on your fashion agenda.

Dressing inappropriately is the biggest turn-off for employers, with 57 per cent turning candidates down because of their fashion faux pas, according to research by jobs board *CareerBuilder.com*.

So whether you have to spruce up with smart shirts and suits or flaunt your creativity with individual pieces, dress to impress with a designated working style.

JOB STYLE SPEC

Want to stand out from your army of fellow 9-5ers? Match your wardrobe to your job description.

"Professional dress is critical in business," says Lisa Talbot, personal and corporate stylist (www.lisatalbot.co.uk).

She adds: "Workwear does vary from one industry to another; for example, media, marketing and advertising operate in a more artistic, casual environment, so that what those workers wear will reflect their business."

Why not impress the boss with a job-specific workwear brief? Choose from the following tailor-made options ...

BOARDROOM BABE

"Held in high regard, women executives and directors must represent professionalism, authority yet femininity," Talbot says. "At this level, investment pieces like suiting should be the perfect fit, cut and design."

Softened hard lines with pleats or frills to add femininity and use accessories to inject personality into



La Redoute navy T-bar shoes, £49



Betty Jackson Black at Debenhams animal print satchel, £65

bland suiting.

MUST-HAVES: Trouser or skirt suit, tailored mac, designer-inspired bag.

CREATIVE CREATURE

"The environment of a creative organisation tends to be more casual as their employees tend to be younger," Talbot explains. "They will follow fashion trends carefully and some employees may even start new trends."

Individuality is key to your look. Opt for clashing prints, bold accessories and surprise flashes of colour.

MUST-HAVES: Oversized blazer, print



Barrel Crombie coat, £259, patchwork dress, £149, Holly T-bar shoes, £169, robin brooch, £19, all NW3 at Hobbs



Premium suit shift dress, £85 and urban stud bag, £38, Warehouse

dresses, statement jewellery.

OFFICE ANGEL

"All office staff are a representation of the organisation they work for, so it's important this is reflected in their business-wear," Talbot advises.

Invest in neutral separates you can mix and match daily with accent colour tops and accessories to vary your look. Play around with uniform-style trends such as military for a smart catwalk-inspired look.

MUST-HAVES: Tailored trousers, smart tops, colourful heels.

WARDROBE ESSENTIALS

Don't exhaust yourself styling potential outfits before you've even clocked in for the daily grind; put



Wool/silk blend jacket, £269, ruffle blouse, £69 and wool/silk blend trousers, £139 all Elegance

together a corporate capsule wardrobe that performs for you. "We all lead very busy lives and a capsule wardrobe will make your life so much easier every morning," Talbot advises.

"It's important to have an array of outfits that have more than one job - you can do the school run, go to a business meeting and still look fabulous when your partner walks through the door."

HER HARD-WORKING PICKS:

Smart tailored trousers: "Beware of turn-ups as they can give the illusion of a shorter leg."

White shirt: "Don't stop your sleeve lengths on the widest part of your arm as this will make your arms look bigger."

Skirt: "Look for the style that suits your body shape, whether it's pencil or A-line."

Smart/casual dress: "These are a great one-piece wonder for work or play."

Boyfriend blazer: "A workwear staple that's bang on trend. If you want to look slimmer, a single-breasted jacket is better."

Statement accessories: "Shoes, jewellery, belts and handbags add the finishing touch to any outfit, so don't forget about them."

A cup of coffee with....Chantelle Znideric

How did you get started as a personal stylist?

I was a graphic designer, but I'd got to the part of my life and career that I wanted to do something that I loved. I have always been really into clothes and shopping - I am always making over friends. I started out just doing a fashion blog called topstylista, where I was like a fashion agony aunt. It helped me know this was what I wanted to do. I did a professional development course and launched my own business three years ago.

What do you love about being a stylist? I love staying up to date with the industry, and also it is fulfilling for me to know that I'm helping people and making a difference. I get to travel all over the UK and internationally.

Have you ever advised anyone famous? Yes, I guess I've helped what you could call "B-listers". I've done a red carpet event.

Chantelle Znideric is launching a new Westcountry personal styling business in Exeter in September.



Can you tell us who?

I don't think so!

What sort of people seek out a personal stylist?

Most people who find me online have come to a crossroads in their life. Many of them are mums whose kids have grown up, and they have lost their identity a bit. They want a new image that reflects them. After people have kids their styles change and often their body shape too, so they need some advice. I help professionals who don't have time to shop, or people who have changed jobs and maybe have to find a smart casual

wardrobe now rather than a formal one.

Why should they pay for a stylist rather than shopping with friends?

I guess it's my area of expertise, and also I can be more objective. Some people are really opinionated about what looks good and you have to show them to change their minds. They might think red looks terrible on them but if I find the right shade, it can look fantastic, and a whole new range opens up for them.

How does it work?

People can hire me for different types of consultations but, if it's a full one, I

would start by having a chat to them to ask where they want to go with their new image. I would ask to see photographs, and talk to them to work out what they need. Then I would take that information and spend some time prepping different outfits for them. Then they would come around with me and try on the outfits, and we can start building from there.

How much does it cost?

It's based on about £75 an hour for a minimum two-hour session. There are different packages.

What are your favourite shops?

I like everything, but I guess I'm more of a High Street shopper than a designer shopper. I like Reiss, All Saints, House of Fraser, Zara, and Top Shop, to name a few. But I'll also go to second-hand shops and vintage shops. The trick is to buy different elements and then make them work for you.

How much time do you spend shopping a week?

It depends - if I'm fully booked it could be up to around 20 hours.

What would you advise everyone to have in their wardrobe?

I encourage clients to build a capsule wardrobe. What you want are pieces that can be adaptable: really good trousers, skirts and jackets. Then you can change the details and the colours, and dress them up or down.

What is your favourite trend at the moment?

I'm loving the lace trend right now, and the womanly, femme fatale look. If people only buy one thing to update their look this autumn, what should it be? Sheepskin aviator jacket!

Chantelle will be conducting a "style clinic" at the Princesshay style event on September 24 and 25, where she will be offering free advice to shoppers. To see more about Chantelle and her services, see www.personal-stylist.co.uk.

Jewellery with a touch of the Warhols



Fun and kitsch 'pop art' jewellery made by Giselle Thompson of Foundlings Jewellery based in Penzance

At a recent Westcountry design fair, Giselle Thompson's work stood out like a cheery Andy Warhol in a gallery of tasteful prints.

A drapery black bead necklace was adorned with a jewelled cross, a hoop earring, a black velvet bow, and a tiny Hello Kitty playing rock guitar. Army soldiers in combat poses, painted pink, dangled from earring hooks, and a bracelet sported Barbie high heels wreathed in tiny bows.

"I love to find things that are reminiscent of my childhood - so the jewellery is fun and silly but not so over the top that grown ups can't wear it," said Giselle, 30. Her label is called Foundlings, and indeed her little figures are like a cast of characters from the 1980s: from My Little Pony to the Care Bears, GI Joe to Barbie.

These she combines with chains and beads, crystals and sequins, piling on the glitz until she gets a smile.



"I'm really inspired by pop art: I love Andy Warhol and Frieda Kahlo. In school I studied art, photography and sociology.

"I think everything has to be bright and fresh and colourful." Giselle is always on the lookout for her cast of characters, especially the teeny weeny ones. "I am a massive scavenger - I've always been a real magpie of little things. I'm always on eBay and at car boots.

"I'm also a mobile hairdresser, and I'm trying to build the jewellery business up. My clients all know about my collecting habit and give me loads of stuff. I try to recycle everything - it's fun giving old unwanted things a new lease on life.

"A lot of it is trial and error. Some things that I buy at car boots need a lot of cleaning up - once the cleaner I used on some big chains ended up stripping off their silver coating altogether. But what was underneath was this interesting grey colour, almost like a pewter finish. So, I went with that instead.

"You have to improvise. It's hard to know when to stop. Sometimes I just keep adding things."

It's sustainable, it's ethical, it's creative, and it's affordable: Giselle's jewellery ranges from £3.50 to £25. So invite a smile and a slice of the 80s with Giselle's wearable kitsch.

See www.foundlingsjewellery.co.uk for more information.



What do you do when the (micro) chips are down?

It has been a week of biting bullets, throwing in of towels and depletion of savings. First the computer blew up. Then the car.

The technology meltdown, to be fair, had been a long time coming. Just last week we had only one computer between the whole family. I know, I know... ridiculous. But I have always suffered this fear of a family which communicates only by webcam from room to room so I have resisted all upgrades and pleas for laptops.

So I had this bright idea, given the poor performance of our old computer, to install an internet security upgrade which I imagined would further protect my family from the ruin of cyberspace.

I paid my money over the internet after the ten o'clock news and pressed the install button. Gone midnight and yawning over my third coffee we were barely 80 per cent done.

In the wee hours, the computer finally announced the download was complete. Just the download? Ye Gods

True installation then began. Oh dear people. I cannot begin to describe the array of weird symbols, creaking and groaning that went on.

Eventually the tower practically began smoking. If it could speak it would be screaming "help me... help me." Next... blue screen.

There was no option but emergency shutdown.

The following morning all was frozen. Even the teenager could not get anything to work. Nothing.

I spent a very long time on the phone to India where a "consultant" eventually concluded the new software was incompatible with my old computer. Brilliant deduction.

So would they help me fix things... given it was their software which caused the problem? Er... sorry no. Would I like a refund?

Fast forward and somehow - worn down by the family - we have gone from the sublime to the ridiculous

I blame the husband who is remarkably relaxed about the biting of bullets and the smelling of coffee. Why scrimp now when we'll only regret it in a few years, he argues. Why not get this sorted properly... once and for all.

So to cut a long story short, we now have THREE new, all-singing, all-dancing, computers... and no money.

The teenager has a laptop in his room which I always swore I would never allow. He has never been so happy.

I am writing this in the kitchen on my own laptop which the boys are never allowed to touch.

Ever. And there is a communal computer being installed today in the family room by an expert from the shop on the grounds that I cannot face the trauma of trying to set it up ourselves.

Also... the car has been fixed. So let's just pray that things don't always happen, gulp... in threes. The plastic won't take it...

Ladies Pedalling it Pink to raise money for breast cancer charity

Local cyclist Louise Bennett from Honiton will gear up to beat breast cancer this September by taking part in Breast Cancer Campaign's women's cycling event, Pedal it Pink.

The customer services adviser and her close friend Sarah Chipping, also from Honiton, will join hundreds of women at Exeter Quay for the South West's first ever Pedal it Pink on Sunday, September 26. Both women have had friends or family affected by the disease.

Louise said: "Without the support of charities like Breast Cancer Cam-



Louise Bennett (right) and Sarah Chipping, who are doing Pedal it Pink in Exeter

paign, I'm sure the fantastic care that breast cancer patients receive would not continue.

"By taking part in Pedal it Pink, not only will I be supporting a worthwhile cause but it will also be a great way to get fit and have fun at the same time.

"This will be the first time Sarah and I have done Pedal it Pink and we are very much looking forward to raising money, keeping fit and enjoying the day with all the other ladies that take part."

Louise and Sarah, who will be cycling the marathon distance of 26 miles, are grateful for any donations for their fundraising effort. Visit

www.justgiving.com/louisebennett13. Pedal it Pink, sponsored by Santander, has a variety of cycle routes, from the 5k Family Lap (open to men and children) to the half (13.1 miles) or full (26.2 miles) marathon distance.

All routes are completely enclosed in the park, so it's free from traffic.

If you would like to join the event, visit www.breastcancercampaign.org, or call 020 7749 3700.

Entry fees are £15 for the marathon, £10 for the half marathon and £5 for the family 5k lap.