

CASUAL FRIDAY: DON'T LET IT ERODE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR COMPANY!

By Clare Spiegel

Yes! Lifestyles have become more casual all over the world! And quickly the workplace has become a reflection of that feeling. If there has already been a decision to allow Casual Fridays in your organization, have there been **guidelines** established to give this new freedom some **direction**? Or is it up to each employee to determine what Casual Friday means?

The First Impression! Whether we agree with it or not, or whether we feel it is fair or not, studies have established that 93% of a first impression is derived from personal appearance and body language. Words spoken are as little as 7% of the perceived package. Thus it is very important how we look and act.

As customers walk through your doors they can be dressed any way they choose because they are in the ownership role. However, they want to be greeted with a message of trust and caring. How we look will have much to do with that confidence perceived.

Change Marches On! Now, our head would certainly be in the sand if we didn't realize that life and business is full of constant change. We either move forward with change and make our businesses grow or we stagnate and create a backward decline due to the lack of coping with change.

FACT: Our lifestyles are definitely moving toward more leisure living and many work situations are quickly following that trend.

So the change is upon us, but how do we handle this when wearing our "business hats?"

I am in favor of Casual Fridays BUT ONLY with well thought out direction and structure.

Appropriateness is the answer. There are many levels of leisure wear between "Corporate Career Clothes" which is the routine professional dress for those in business, and "Going to the Ball game Clothes" or "Work Out Clothes." The latter two categories of dress are not appropriate for most workplaces at any time. It's the "Nice Casual" category we are looking for so that we will still project professionalism, trust and caring to our customers and coworkers.

Don't feel bad if this is all news to you, it is a totally new phenomenon happening within the fashion world. Learning to dress comfortably yet handsomely for Casual Friday is a learned skill and can be acquired by all with a little help. Following are some of the general rules that will help in setting up acceptable guidelines for your relaxed Casual Fridays.

Here are 25 Do's and Don'ts to get you Started!

Do's For the Guys!

- Blazers nice for officers and management. Open collar shirts worn closed at the neck are also great.
- Khaki casual pants.
- Luggage brown casual belts.
- Loafers.

(More)

- Sox with subtle intargia patterns. Match or blend with pant and shoe.

Don'ts For Guys!

- No Jeans.
- No Shorts.
- No Tee Shirts- solid color or printed with logos or messages.
- No Tennis shoes.
- No white sport sox.

Do's For the Girls!

- Cotton or silk shirts. Camisoles and tanks work well as under pieces.
- Vests worn as your top or over shirts.
- Use jackets from your career suits to mix your separates and give a completed look. Wear open for casual.
- Slim or full skirts. Slightly above the knee to ankle length. Softer fabrics.
- Trousers or Soft Pants.
- Flats, slides, tie front oxfords, flat loafers, and loafers with thicker higher heels.
- Trouser sox with pants. Perfect legs can wear no hose. Age and no tan can put one in a category where hose is a necessity.
- Soft dresses with appropriate coverage on the top.

Don'ts For Girls!

- No tee shirts of any kind. Solids, painted or studded.
- No low scooped necklines or midriffs.
- No Jeans.
- No Shorts.
- No Leggings with Big Tees and Sweatshirts.
- No tight short skirts meant for night clubbing.
- No Tennis shoes.
- No large loud prints.

The look for both men and women can definitely be relaxed and comfortable. Management, employees customers and stockholders will all benefit from enhanced staff morale which in turn results in increased productivity.

Clare Spiegel is a national authority on fashion and image. She is an accomplished fashion merchant, television personality, public speaker, model and fashion consultant to corporate America. Her book, Your New Fashion Image is considered a "must-read" for all who want to look their best, feel their best and be their best! She is available internationally for warm, detailed and educational fashion and image seminars, fashion shows and training workshops. For more information, call 352-245-9350, Clare@ClareSpiegel.com or visit web www.ClareSpiegel.com

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