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DRESS FOR SUCCESS

By Naja Rickette,
Celebrity Nail Artist

Dressing for success is not relegated to business boardrooms and more traditional corporate style desk jobs. Dressing for longevity and a successful career is for anyone in business. Even if your name is not on the door or the service menu, if you are building a clientele then you are in business. Whether you pay a booth or room rent, work on commission, earn a salary or get paid by the hour, dressing for success is a necessity.

As independent contractors or even employees, you will always benefit from preparation. Dressing for success does not mean being bound in uncomfortable garments, full makeup and painful shoes. Rather, it's about presenting yourself and your talents in their best light. Ever hear of the shoe cobbler who wore shoes with holes in them? Well, some in the beauty

and wellness industries act the same way: hair stylists with ratty hair, skin therapists with unclean skin, nail technicians with nails not groomed, body workers with a cold temperament or dirty nails. Many service providers hang on to the old adage, "I give to everyone else and cannot find the time for me." Well, it is now time to give to yourself and to your business. Take a moment to reflect on how many opportunities you may have missed by dressing how you feel rather than dressing for success.

Potential Clients Everywhere

In this industry, there is no guaranteed paycheck coming at the end of the week in most cases. Because your financial compensation varies on how many clients you service, it is in your best interest to create

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a consistent clientele. So, where are these clients? The answer is, potential clients are anywhere and everywhere you go!

To ensure consistent revenue, it is important to always be representing your business with your personal appearance. Within your normal, daily routines, other people are present, and people equal clients. Think of all the potential clients while grocery shopping, hiking, doing yoga, dog walking, dental appointments and even dropping the kids off at school.

Life will happen. There are good days and bad days in every life. Ups and downs will come and go, but your dressing attire does not need to reflect your internal state. It is easy to put on a spectacular outfit when you are feeling on top of the world, but what about on days when you are blue, devastated or feeling like not being seen. These days will happen and being prepared for these days is the smartest way to ensure a successful career.

Go into your current closet utilizing what you already have and choose the following five go-to key outfits for each of the following occasions. These, in essence, will be your self-appointed uniforms.

Outfit 1: On Display

A snazzy, dressed-to-impress look is essential for any successful businessperson. This is for an important meeting, a big opportunity, an interview, an industry event or an appearance leading an education class or seminar. Think of the little black dress (LBD). If dresses are not your thing, a black suit jacket or professional pantsuit is a great option. Have your best accessories on hand along with a statement or classic shoe.

An all-black, go-to costume is always a sleek and safe option. The guideline is to make sure the black

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coloring is of the same hue. Overly washed black garments or lesser quality fabrics may have a gray or greenish faded hue, and these should not be worn when you will be in the spotlight. By purchasing go-to dressy looks before you need them, you will always be prepared. Become a clearance rack queen to build up your “on display” wardrobe at a fraction of the price. When opportunity arises, your clothing is already set, freeing up time, energy and finances to focus entirely on your delivery and travel.

Outfit 2: Service Provider

Select movable and breathable outfit options for workdays when you’re providing services to clients. Choose workable, professional-looking clothing that you can easily move in. When scrubs are appropriate, have fresh laundered, stain free selections handy. If a complete or partial uniform is provided or required, still make plans for footwear, jewelry (i.e. small earrings, slim necklace etc.) and clean, comfortable pants. A rule of thumb is on any given day dress as if you will be blessed by servicing the client of your dreams. With this rule in effect, you are consistently always ready and set up for success.

Outfit 3: Days Off

Just because you are not on the clock doesn’t mean you have to look like you’re having an off day. Activities on your days off may include running errands, performing daily routines to keep your life in order, attending children’s sporting events, relaxing or hanging out with friends and family. Choose casual options with light accessories and comfortable shoes. Think sweaters, fun fitting t-shirts, jeans, good quality sweat suits or a loose fitting dress. High-quality, clean workout or yoga clothes are a great option too. If it’s a day where you want to lay low, using some of the accessory options below will be a great fit.

Outfit 4: Lounge Around

These well-deserved days where you declare, “I am doing nothing today,” most likely still require attire. When a self-mandated pajama day is in order, make your pajamas flattering to your self worth. It’s been said, “Women do not dress for men; they dress for



Wearing an all-black outfit is a sleek and safe way to look professional in any occasion.

other women.” Dressing for yourself and the success of your business, even when alone in the privacy of your own home, has energetic effects and intangible messages to your overall self-care and esteem. Think light fabrics, loose fitting gowns or travel clothes, plush robes and pieces you would wear if you were enjoying a spa day. There are clothes specifically designed for lounge wear and others marketed as ‘wake and wear,’ which are dually created pieces that function for sleep and are presentable enough for daily errands.

Outfit 5: Down Day

These options are for days where you feel down and not at your emotional best. It could be a passing mood, menstrual cycle, breakup, death or other life changing moment, so choose clothing options that make you look and feel comfortable. Just because you feel unpresentable does not mean you have to look unpresentable. Think loose fitting pants, tights, an oversized shirt, sweatshirt or cardigan or a colorful caftan. Choose matching or complimentary patterns and fabrics alternating solid colors with prints. Discard overly worn garments with holes, tears and stains to optimize self care during these blue times. Having an already planned outfit for these guarantees days delivered by life will keep your spirits stable.

Accessorize to Make Life Easier

Here are some key tips for using accessories to keep you looking good, even if you aren't feeling good.

Sunglasses. These are a good option on days when you don't want to apply a full face of makeup or may have been crying due to any of life's events. Sunnies with transparent lenses can be useful for lunch events or meetings, as your eyes can still be seen.

Light makeup. Use highlighter on your cheeks and either a lipgloss or bright lip color to brighten your look.

Even when you're having an off-day, don't let your wardrobe show it.

Hair rescue. An easy solution for bad hair days is to throw on a headscarf, hat, fashionable turban or a decorated headband.

Jewelry. A fun way to add a bit of flair, especially to an all black outfit, is by incorporating earrings, a big chunky necklace, bangles or a large ring. On workdays, wear subtle, classy pieces that may have a story behind them to share with your clients.

Footwear. A necessary way to pull together an entire outfit is shoes. A snazzy pair of flats can make a lounge outfit look great. Clean sneakers make running errands comfortable and can be dressed up by wearing lace or fishnet socks. Thong sandals or flip-flops with a little bling are a great option too. Investing and proper maintenance of statement heels for your “on display” days will pay off and last decades.

Be Prepared

If you are truthful, resourceful and practical, you most likely have everything you need in your current wardrobe to fulfill these differing options. Do not spend any money or break the bank establishing these five go-to outfits. If you recognize items missing that are needed to complete your wardrobe, you can create a budget and a plan to purchase them over time. A savvy way would be to set a financial service goal and use those funds when achieved to upgrade your business fashions.

Planning now, while you are in an upswing of life for how you will present yourself to the world in any and all situations is great for both your self-esteem and your business. Being prepared and ready to market yourself at a moment's notice is integral for a long and prosperous career. ✂



Naja Rickette, a.k.a. the Naja, is a celebrity manicurist with 14 years of experience in the industry. She is a former spa owner and is an international educator. She is recognized for her role in reality TV show LA Hair. Rickette is a nail artist often tapped for photo shoots, magazine spreads, music videos, fashion shows and advertisements. najazone@gmail.

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