

Insights, News & Events

DRESS FOR SUCCESS, EVEN IN THE SUMMER

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Summer officially arrives this month, but in many parts of the country it's been blazingly hot for weeks. In much of the deep South and the desert Southwest, it's easy to break a sweat walking from door to door, and the AC in our cars always takes too long to kick in. On the weekends, it's all about sundresses and bathing suits, but what about Monday through Friday? How *hot* is too hot? When are you supposed to ditch the hot pants and switch to a more conservative look while still trying to keep your cool?

This may not be an issue in some states, but here in Arizona and elsewhere in the Sunbelt, it certainly is. Sure, you are told by your HR department or supervisors to just use your best judgment when deciding on what to wear, but when the temps far exceed 100 degrees on a daily basis, sometimes your best judgment goes missing.

If your employees are not required to wear a uniform to the office, and there is no official dress code, how do employees decide how to dress for success? Most of us want to appear professional, and we want to be taken seriously. But with these high temperatures, most of us just want to be cool and comfortable. Can your company have it both ways?

The following suggestions should help with your decision making during these scorching summer months. Because at the end of the day, heat or no heat, the bottom-line is staying prosperous in business.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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1. What kind of working environment are you hoping to achieve? Based on this answer, perhaps a “summer casual” dress code is in order.
2. What has been the practice within your area and industry? Don’t reinvent the wheel – what works for others in your industry will most likely work for your business.
3. Is there any risk of implementing a policy that alienates employees? Always be respectful of employees to ensure that they, in turn, respect the policies of the organization.
4. How big an issue is this among employees to begin with?
5. Where are you prepared to draw the line, and what steps are you prepared to take to enforce it? Always make a plan before jumping into any new policy. A policy that isn’t enforced is no policy at all.
6. What is the most effective way to communicate company standards to employees? Have fun with this. Try to get away from an inter-office memo and call for a summer breakfast meeting or mid-day iced coffee talk to communicate any new policy.
7. Are you prepared to live with your dress code guidelines?

Answering honestly to these questions can save your employees from some embarrassment and awkward looks at the water cooler. Try to implement a look that is comfortable, but meets your business needs. For example, would your casually dressed employees still be presentable if a client were to make a surprise appearance at the office. If you can successfully follow these guidelines, you are well on your way to keeping your cool while still looking stylish and professional this summer.

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