

Spring clean your image

Stuck in a wintry rut? Time to show the world a new face, no matter your lifestyle

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For those looking to get ahead at the office, a closet full of office-appropriate wear for specific occasions can take the stress off. (Shutterstock.com)

Springtime is upon us, and it is the perfect time to finally match who you feel you are on the inside with what you see on the outside.

Image is not just about physical appearance. At its core, it's meant to stem from your personality and translate into communication and behavioural style, as well as appearance.

The difficulty in finding your true image may not be so much in seeking out the perfect pair of jeans or little black dress; rather, it's in identifying who you are, stripped of the jeans and the dress.

While image consultants may sound like the kind of people only hired by Hollywood celebrities, these professionals are in fact the ones who can help you snap out of the appearance doldrums.

Tamara Glick is the owner of Trademark Image Consulting, and explains her role as helping you become the "star of your life." Typically, the style coach would sit down with clients for a style story session, but today, she passes on some essential tips to help out some of the most commonly concerned customers:

The stay-at-home mom:

It's all about simplicity for this woman. Priorities have shifted. She's still herself, just in more comfortable materials. Find clothes that flatter; for example, shirts that skim, but don't cling to the body. Look for washable materials - that aren't pajamas or workout clothes. And don't forget the face! A little moisturizing face primer and punchy lip gloss will take seconds to apply, but give a fresh and lasting glow that can remind her there's life outside the crib.

The just-back-to-work mom:

When women come back from maternity leave, they often wonder how to keep their edge in the workplace and show they still know about the latest trends. Focusing on a more refined image can help with this transition. Glick suggests an updated hairstyle, and natural, polished makeup. Investing in key pieces for a more sophisticated wardrobe can help with this more mature look. Essential items include: a knee-length skirt, two colourful shells, a simple fitted day-dress, a dress pant with pattern, and a tailored jacket with special details.

A few accessories can also mark the difference between a newbie and a seasoned pro. So, add a functional leather bag large enough to hold files and smartphones, a new pair of soft leather or patent pumps, and look for detailed pieces that pop for a hint of personal style.

The first date guy:

Perhaps his ex-girlfriend always dressed him, or he relies on girl friends to find clothes for him. Sometimes this works, but often doesn't, as it reflects someone else's tastes. Either way, it means that he is lost on his own. A personal style analysis will teach him to choose apparel that matches his style, Glick stresses, but for an immediate fix, just make sure the clothes fit well.

Not everyone can have clothing made to measure, but shoulder seams in shirts and sweaters should always rest atop the shoulder by the outer edge. Purchasing a pair of properly fitted dark wash jeans (sales associates can help), and investing in a quality belt and nice pair of shoes can go a long way toward a pulled-together look. Then call an image consultant - not a friend.

The person looking for more professional impact:

In the working world, looking the part can often be almost as important as hard work, and investing in a personal brand is what can propel you to the next level. The proper professional impact depends on knowing the industry, the audience, the job function, and the desired job function, explains Glick. Build a style to satisfy these components and "dress in your sweet spot." Create an arsenal of clothing for each business occasion, which can mean a suit for meeting with clients or the right golf gear for a corporate event. And remember, don't dress for the position you have; dress for the position you want to have.

Whether you're unsure about your image, a time-starved individual, a professional looking to succeed, or someone looking for a relationship, an image consultant can offer you the guidance to combine clothing types and colours for your best impact.

This can positively affect how you build relationships socially and professionally, and will help you get recognized for who you are and what you want to contribute.

So, save yourself time and money, by investing in yourself, and finally complement who you are on the inside with who you are on the outside.

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