



## Dress for Success!

*Each month we will feature a column from Tammy, our Image Consultant, on various topics related to how to dress successfully for the job of your dreams. This week's premiere focuses on how to integrate your personal and professional styles.*

When dressing professionally, people often feel as though they need to give up their own flavor or flair in order to blend in and "fit the part". This is a **fallacy!** On the contrary, it's critical that you use clothing and style as an opportunity to **express yourself** while at work. How you dress is another form of communication and is a way to present yourself and send a message to others.

**So here's the dilemma:** How do you express your unique sense of self, the one that makes you feel confident and secure, yet still have it fit into your work world?

**Answer:** You can dress in ways that both express your unique style and flair, while also meeting the requirements of the workplace you're in.

Let's take a look at a recent client of mine who is case in point. Mary is a Principal Business Analyst at a local technology company. She's at a point in her career where she's ready to expand and take on more challenging work. The environment she works in is currently conservative with value placed on their professional culture. Mary is confident in her professional abilities and wants to grow with the company. In addition, Mary has long term aspirations to spin off and create her own start-up company in the future.

### Key Style Elements

She came to us because she wants to blend both her current work environment style with her own true self and was at a loss as to where to begin. After our initial consultation, **key style elements** began to emerge (they always do)! Mary shared that she spends most of her Saturdays at local art auctions trying to find the latest (and relatively inexpensive) works of art from modern local artists in her area. Navy, gray or black pantsuits with basic shell tops underneath have been Mary's typical work attire but the problem was this style didn't accurately reflect her aspirations or her true sense of self.

### Here's what we did with Mary and you can too:

- Keep the conservative pant suit (you spent a lot on that suit!) and pair it with a bold colored top with abstract patterns
- Use jewelry, such as a large artsy ring and accessories to accentuate who you are personally, yet is appropriate professionally
- Add brightly colored scarves and layer it onto a cable knit sweater set with a unique item such as an heirloom pendant
- Shoes, shoes, shoes - can be such fun and a great way to express your unique self. Try using a funky snakeskin design to jazz up suits
- Put your best face forward and highlight and experiment with lip colors, eye shadows, hair cut and color that express your inner self. For example, in Mary's case we went with an auburn red color cut into a choppy shag style.

By using clothing, jewelry, accessories and even make-up as a form of self expression, you are able to better match who you are on the inside with how you express yourself on the outside. Don't be afraid to have fun with it!