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## SIMPLE WAY #2: “BUSINESS CASUAL”— DECODING THE DRESS-UPS

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*You need to dress for the job you want. If you wear trendy clothes, it may not be appropriate.*

Meghan Kwasniak, Enrollment Manager, Laureate Education, Inc.

Meghan’s comment was part of a lively discussion I had with a group of Laureate Education, Inc. managers, many in their twenties, about how the clothes you wear make a positive or negative impression.

“Younger workers think they are dressing up,” Meghan continued. “They believe it’s okay as long as it’s not excluded in the dress code.”

According to Jim Fulks, corporate director of HR and Facilities with Under Armour, employees need to understand unwritten rules regarding appropriate dress.

“You dress up to start with, look around and see what others are wearing, and conform if you are dressing differently,” Jim said. “It’s not written down. You just get it. Your reputation is at stake.”

Jim talked about an employee at a hotel where he previously worked. She appeared to be very skilled in the interview and wore appropriate business attire. But she wore miniskirts on the job. There was a lot of gossiping, and nobody spoke to her about it.

She soon was not getting enough challenging work or responsibilities because her appearance was influencing how people felt about her. They stopped trusting her, and this situation disrupted the workplace. After 90 days, she was let go.

In college, dressing up may be your trendy clothes. But appropriate dress in the workplace is often very different. Your clothes determine how professional you appear. According to the Laureate Education managers and many other employers, professionalism is highly desired in their employees.

People form an impression about you when they observe your dress. The good news is that you have control over this by observing others and carefully deciding what you will wear.