

Recession Dressing

How to manage your personal branding in tough economic times ...

Let's face it. Times are tough. We have entered a phase where you need to get savvy about doing more with what you have. The time has come to be more aware of how to spend your hard earned dollar. Most people want to do more with less in these tough times. So let's check it out then shall we?

During the great depression of the 1930's fashion set minimal trends. Shapes and colours had quite a conservative edge to them. Nothing stood out in the crowd – and that was the intention.

Kevin 07 has declared our recession. Despite the best intentions to keep the economy afloat, our media is full of bad news. It's time to rethink your personal branding to ensure you are 'top of mind' for your current employer or in the running for a new position. Employers will rationalise their work force and retain only what they need to keep afloat. Growing the business will not be an option for so many.



Investment dressing is the solution. Many will legitimise their human desire to spend by purchasing less and better quality. This means you will wear it longer and the cost per wear will be considerably lower over a period of say 2-3 years. The challenge with this concept is that you *will* need to get more creative with how you wear these items.

- Discover new combinations within your wardrobe
- Consider bringing some smart casual tops into your suit combinations
- Get innovative with accessories
- Learn how to fashion a scarf into a garment under a suit
- Challenge your hair stylist to try something a little different this winter.

The key to getting this right is to *know* your personal style expression. This is about combining your career direction, lifestyle and unique personality and values into your personal branding. Once you have this nailed, you actually can survive with *less* in your wardrobe and discover how to do *more* with it!

Don't be frightened to purchase a few quality items. They will speak volumes about the value you put on yourself and the salary you are worthy of. Remember that a huge chunk of your first impression is visual.



Fashion ...Recession directs fashion to a return to simple values. We will see purity and simplicity in design. This means less detail – fewer buttons and pleats. Think clean lines – Audrey Hepburn. The same rules will apply to mens dressing. Consider tie and shirt combinations that will work harder for you. It's about doing more with less.

The good news is that this is an opportunity to revisit Australian designers. Consider where your garment is made. There are options to purchase Australian made and owned at reasonable prices.

<http://www.australianmade.com.au/australiangrown>

www.almarker.com.au

www.motto.com.au

<http://www.fashionreview.com.au/>

<http://www.visitvictoria.com/displayobject.cfm/objectid.0007D8DE-B563-1A6B-B64F80C476A901F2/>

www.constas.com.au

Consider the option of clothing exchanges and good 2nd hand stores. There are some innovative pieces to be found!

www.clothingexchange.com.au

www.sizeexchange.com

Prediction ... There will be a huge shift towards buying Australian. As a nation, we will turn our back on disposable fashion that comes in from our neighboring shores. Environmentally, we can no longer afford it.

What not to do ... Bargain shopping and being lured with 'recession stimulus' sales. This hits an emotional chord and is not a solution for a savvy professional. Most of our clients shop only twice a year (ok, the guys generally get out to shop once a year). This way, many dollars are saved on impulse shopping. Those items are usually orphans that don't go with anything else in your wardrobe anyway – you know that.

What to look for ... labels that give you added value, for example: another garment free of charge when you purchase a certain value. Quality and cost per wear are important factors to consider. If you are going to wear it as a base piece, it will serve you well.



Flashy branding – In recessional times, blatant expensive branding is not appreciated. This applies to your Prada shoes and Gucci briefcase with their logos emblazoned all over them. Overdoing expensive brands will do some harm to your personal branding in a professional setting.

Image Quest support www.fittedforwork.org for the good gear that is no longer serving you. Someone else will be grateful to wear it for a job interview.

The Image Quest team work with leaders in service based organisations to ensure that your people in client facing roles are managing first impressions and protecting the business branding. Our client list:

<http://www.imagequest.com.au/professional-image-clients.php>