



Executive Recruitment
Outplacement
Human Resource Consulting
Assessments
Talent Management

Flip Flops Can Trip You Up

Flip flops could ruin your career.

Today's business casual world has blurred the lines as to what is appropriate for the workplace. It used to be so easy. Men dressed in business suits, white shirts, ties, and dress shoes (shined) to the office. Women wore dresses, skirts, pants suits and pantyhose. Now, according to some employers, fashion chaos reigns.

Some say casual Fridays are to blame. "It started with casual Fridays and got out of hand," says June Webb, a fashion consultant. "Now companies are starting to clamp down a bit. They've found women tend to show off too much skin, and men tend to show up in clothes that are wrinkled."

The number of employers that allow casual dress every day is declining. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 53% of employers in 2002 permitted casual dress. In 2006, the number has declined to 38%.

Two other factors that are contributing to the confusion as to appropriate workplace attire are the warm summer weather and the younger generation. When the temperature rises, the tendency is to wear not only lighter, more casual clothing, but less of it. One company's policy is that body parts below the shoulders to the knees, except for arms, are not to be seen. Their goal is to keep cleavage and belly views at a minimum.

Younger workers tend to be more fashion conscious. Today's trends are definitely more casual and include women's skimpy shirts that display plenty of cleavage and stomach. Feet are also frequently on display. It's not unusual to see some employees wearing flip flops year round in all types of climates. Dressing too casually can not only be an irritant to employers and co-workers, but can affect your paycheck. It can be detrimental to both getting the job you want, and if hired, your career progression.

How someone is dressed was the third most important attribute in getting a new job, according to a study by Syracuse University and Total Executive Inc. of 300 executive recruiters, chief executives and directors of personnel. That's behind communication and presentation skills.

"Our image can tell others that we are creative or dependable or conservative or all of those and more," said image consultant Carolyn Gustafson, owner of Image Strategy for Men & Women in Cary, North Carolina. "We make quick decisions about people based on their appearance. Whether or not that's right, that's the reality of it. We can't wear our resume around our neck."

Your image is not only judged at interview time, but once you land that job. When you're polished and professional at work, it says, "I play by the rules," Gustafson said. "The decision is almost always made in the first few minutes. If you look the part, you'll likely get the part."

Once you know what is appropriate for your office, be consistent, experts say. When in doubt, watch how others who are successful dress and model your clothing by them. It only takes a few seconds to make a first impression; be sure that your attire reflects the professional that you are.

phone: 920-432-7444
920-738-7055

2611 Libal Street, Green Bay, WI 54301
54 Park Place, Suite 200, Appleton, WI 54914

fax: 920-436-2966
920-738-1842

www.thehsgroup.com