



DRESS FOR SUCCESS[®]

COLUMBUS

Volunteer Manual

September 2015

Mission Information

Dress for Success Columbus promotes the economic independence of women in need by providing professional attire, a network of support, and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. Dress for Success is a worldwide organization founded in 1996 by Nancy Lublin. This all began in the basement of a church in Harlem with a \$5,000 inheritance she received. Dress for Success has 130 affiliates in 16 countries and growing! Every affiliate is independently run. All affiliates have the boutique in common, additional programs may vary.

Since opening our doors in 2007, Dress for Success Columbus has been blessed with the opportunity to empower more than 8,000 women in Central Ohio who are beginning their journey to economic independence. **Any woman referred to our mission by a non-profit community partner is eligible for service; all programs are free of charge.**

Interview & Employment Suiting

When women initially come to Dress for Success Columbus, they are preparing for a Job Interview. Clients are referred to us by many non-profit partners throughout Central Ohio who have witnessed first-hand what a difference Dress for Success Columbus' encouraging programs make with women. Women are assisted by appointment only for their suiting.

During the first appointment we introduce clients to our Career Center where women can search for jobs, create or polish their resume, use software tutorials and improve their data entry skills. The Career Center is a self-lead resource center, open and available without an appointment during agency hours that is equipped with 6 computers with internet, printer, fax, copier, and a library of career development and personal growth publications. We encourage women to reserve an appointment with volunteer HR specialists who assist women with career path and interview advice during one-on-one consultations every Friday.

Once registered in the Career Center, clients work with a personal shopper who selects a few interview suits or coordinating separates to try on in a private fitting area. Once the 'perfect' ensemble is found, including a suit and blouse, women choose shoes, jewelry, a handbag, nylons, and an accenting scarf. Women are given personal care products, too.

Items are wrapped with care, and before the appointment is finished we again encourage participation in the Career Center and confirm that women have information regarding our additional programs. Women are then on their way to looking and feeling great on the upcoming interview!

Together, with our clients, we experience hope renewed and dignity regained. We hear stories of courage and determination. All the while, we encourage and share a common bond all women who have rebounded from challenging circumstances can understand.

Women contact us as soon they secure employment, the celebration begins! Clients are invited to our 'boutique' to go shopping for a weeks' worth of complimentary workplace-appropriate apparel.

During their Employment Suiting appointment, women select from business suits as well as separates and medical uniforms/scrubs; pants, jackets, skirts and tops that will fulfill their day-to-day work attire requirements. Additional shoes, handbags, nylons, jewelry and accessories are added to their wardrobe, along with personal care products. It's important that women feel as confident and empowered when entering the workplace as they did on their job interview.

Employed clients are eligible to join our Professional Women's Group, known as PWG. This peer-to-peer networking, mentoring and instructional group is for women who have received Interview and Employment Suiting through Dress for Success Columbus and are now employed. Sessions are hosted once a month and membership is free for life. Member clients can attend meetings at any Dress for Success affiliate throughout the world. Workshop topics are based on 3 components that focus in on real-world issues that we all face in our everyday lives:

- Financial Literacy
- Professional Development
- Health & Wellness

Dress for Success Columbus Team



Molly Preston, Contributions Coordinator

- Queen of drives, donations, and volunteerism
- Need help finding inventory for a client? Questions about inventory in the donations room?
- Questions about volunteering with Suiting, Career Center, Donation Drives, Donation Sorting, Special Events, or Mission Outreach?



Kendra Lesley, Front Desk Coordinator

- Queen of managing front door and client appointments
- Questions about client appointments and paperwork?
- Need help suiting a client?



Jessica LaBarge, Program Services Coordinator

- Queen of suiting and career center programs
- Questions about clients, including appointments and paperwork?



D. Malone Jones, Director of Career Development

- Queen of Going Places Network (GPN), Professional Women's Group (PWG), & Women 2 Women Mentoring (W2W)
- Questions about volunteering with Professional Women's Group or Going Places Network?



Vicki Bowen Hewes, CEO

- Chief Empowerment Officer
- Questions about development, leadership, or community partnerships?

Personal Shopping

Dress code: Dress to inspire! Suits not required. We are suiting women for all professions- inspire them to “dress the part” and let their personality shine through their wardrobe. Set the bar high! Don’t forget to accessorize- the best way to inspire clients- finish your look with a belt, scarf, and jewelry! Elevate denim with a blazer, dress shoes, or boots. No gym shoes, please.

Upon arrival, check the Volunteer Update board in the volunteer check-in area for new and exciting changes in the boutique! Parked at a meter? Set a timer (found at the front desk)! Don’t forget your nametag- this helps your client feel more comfortable!

Check in with our receptionist to meet your first client. Some clients may be nervous or shy so try to make them feel comfortable! “Nice to meet you Shelly, we’re going to have fun!” or “Ready to find the perfect suit?!”

Show them to their fitting room & write their name on their inventory sheet.

To reference while you’re suiting, you’ll find this cheat sheet on the last page of the clipboard:

Interview Suiting:

1 Suit (or set of separates)	1 Coordinating Blouse, Shirt or top
1 Pair of Shoes	1 Pair of Pantyhose, Tights, or Knee-Highs
1 Handbag	Assorted Jewelry (up to 3 pieces)
1 Coat (weather appropriate)	1 Set of Personal Care Products
2 Accessories (scarf, belt)	

Employment Suiting:

5 outfits that are mixed and matched including:

Not more than 1-2 Suits	Not more than 2-3 Pair of Pants
Not more than 2-3 Skirts	Not more than 3-4 Blouses, Shirts, or Tops
2 Pair of Shoes	1 Handbag
3 Accessories (scarf, belt)	Assorted Jewelry (up to 3 pieces)
1 Set of Personal Care Products	

***Remember 1 dress = 1 outfit

Use the style assessment while choosing items to bring back to your client in her fitting room!

Have a hem that’s just a smidge too long? We have fashion tape for those quick fixes!

Don’t forget to take pictures! Make sure her blouse is tucked in, jacket is buttoned, and jewelry is on- nice & polished for her photo. Stand up straight, shoulders back- feel free to pose them! They will feel amazing when they see how professional they look! 😊 For employment suitings capture each of the fabulous outfits you put together!

At the end of the appointment, transfer your client’s clothing to the plastic colored hangers (in black bin next to wrap stand), use all same color. Stack boutique hangers neatly on bottom rung of wrap stand. Wrap client’s clothing in garment bag. Put shoes, handbag, accessories, & Someday folder in clear tote, hanging on wall next to wrap stand. Don’t forget her personal care bag! (Found in bottom drawer of receptionist desk.) Hand client her new goods & wish her luck on her interview or new job! Make sure you tell her how amazing she looks! You’re going to rock it! 😊

We have client feedback forms, have her fill one out while you wrap up her items!

After your appointment:

Clean fitting room of excess clothing & hangers, put back clothing by style and color. Refold scarves that you didn't use. Reorganize jewelry. Re-space shoes. Restock any items your client didn't take.

Low on plastic totes, Personal care bags, or plastic colored hangers? Simply restock from back stock.

Waiting for your next client to be checked in? Familiarize yourself with new inventory on the floor. Steam and restock new inventory waiting to go on the floor (hanging clothes and bins in hallway)! Have a break in between clients? Utilize the volunteer checklist (next to the volunteer updates bulletin board) for boutique restock/reset needs! Your assistance in keeping the boutique stocked and organized is critical to us empowering as many women as we do. Thank you! 😊

What not to do

- Please don't discuss your personal lives in front of or with clients (recent vacation, newest designer bag, etc)- remember they don't have the resources for these luxuries. We want this appointment to be all about the client- make her feel like a queen!
- Do not take clients into the donations room
- Clients enter & exit front door only (you may meet them at the backdoor with their items)
- Do not remove clothing from window mannequins labeled "display only"
- Avoid using negative language- we want to keep their appointment positive & upbeat! Instead of "We don't have many coats right now" or "We don't have many coats in your size" try: "Want to look at coats" or "Let's see if there's a coat you like" If they find one, great! If not, let them know we can mark it on their inventory, "We always have new inventory coming in, you can always come back for a coat!" This stands for any merchandise (i.e. clothing, shoes, and accessories), sometimes we have plenty of choices but the client is picky. That's OK! We want each and every client to select a look that they LOVE! Either way keep it positive!
- Avoid negative comments about the client's size or shape. Instead of "we don't have a lot of bigger sizes right now" or "the bigger sizes are here" Try, "let's start with jackets right here" or if we really don't have many in her size try "let's try on jackets and cardigans!" The same goes for all merchandise- instead of "we don't have any suits in your size" try "want to try a dress?" or let's do a mix and match suit!" No one wants to be called "bigger"! 😊
- Clients should never be asked confidential questions such as what social service benefits they receive, or have pointed out to them any flaws in their appearance, undergarments, hair pieces/wigs/extensions or clothing work to the mission

Emergencies: Locate first aid kit (above kitchen sink). Locate binder for emergency numbers including Vicki Bowen Hewes and CHN (landlord) ***red binder found on receptionist desk and on donations counter***

Wardrobe Basics for the Professional Woman

Having the following items clean, pressed and ready to go will have you prepared to face any work day with poise and confidence!

- Charcoal grey, navy, black or camel suit
- 2 shells, blouse and underpinning that coordinate with your suit
- Skin tone & black hosiery
- Black & brown belts
- Black & brown leather pumps / dress shoes
- Shoes should be closed or peep-toe and heel height no higher than 3"
- Knee – length skirts
- Charcoal grey, navy, or black, khaki pants
- Dress shirts/blouses
- Trench coat
- Accessory scarves
- Dark colored umbrella
- Watch with black leather or metal band

What NOT To Wear



Avoid these common mistakes.....or you'll wind up a *'Fashion Don't!'* in your workplace!

- Too tight, too short and/or too low cut
- Showcasing your brassiere, panties/thong
- Excessive use of bright colors
- Noisy jewelry that signals your arrival with a clinking sound
- Spiky, strappy sandals and/or Flip Flops
- Scuffed shoes
- Poor personal grooming
- Overly trendy styles that will leave you looking 'dated' once they have fallen out of fashion
- Logo-mania. Your future boss is not impressed with your Gucci, Louis Vuitton or Baby Phat Handbag

- Briefcase / professional handbag
- Simple Jewelry
- Accessories that stand out and express your individuality without being garish or outlandish
- Personal grooming is critical! Hair should be clean and in a professional style. Nails should be either natural, groomed and buffed to a shine or painted conservatively. Extra-long nails, nail 'decals' and/or nail designs detract from your skills and aren't appropriate for most business environments. Make up should be applied conservatively and appropriate for daytime.

Remember to be yourself and express your personality and uniqueness through 'finishing touches.' Embrace your style tastefully. Everything in moderation is a good rule to live by!

Fashionable and Professional!



Personal Shopper Inspirations: Accessorize it- add a scarf or jewelry to finish the look! Belt it! Try a belt over a blazer! Showcase a belt on a dress with an open blazer! Layer it! Add a cardigan and a belt! Mix complimentary prints! Make it pop with your signature color- on your blouse, belt, shoes or handbag!

Quick Fashion Fixes!



Client Quick Fixes: Fashion tape will provide a quick fix for blazer sleeves that are too long! No bare shoulders- layer a blazer or cardigan! Keep skirts at a professional length- to the knee! Accessorize- don't forget the jewelry, scarf, or belt to finish the look!

Donation Intake and Sorting

Dress code: Come as you are! Be prepared to help unload and sort donations and reset the boutique floor for suiting appointments!

Donations room: All inventory is tracked/counted in for our tax reporting and client tracking purposes. You'll note the donations intake countertop & adjacent wall labeled "Sorted NOT counted in" these items are not ready for the boutique. The items in the wall have been checked over & deemed boutique appropriate by volunteers- but have not been counted in yet. The opposite two walls have inventory labeled "Counted in, back stock" personal shoppers can access these items as needed for their appointments.

Donation Intake area: Donations are hanging in the hallway (labeled "unsorted") and stacked neatly on & under the countertop (labeled "unsorted donations") on the right.

Listen for the donation doorbell (traditional "ding-dong"). Greet donors with a smile & "May I help you with your donations?" ***Direct any clients to use the front door for safety purposes.

Capture donor info on the iPad, "If you fill this out, we will email your tax receipt." Hand donor any fliers from the shelf & "thank you for your donation!"



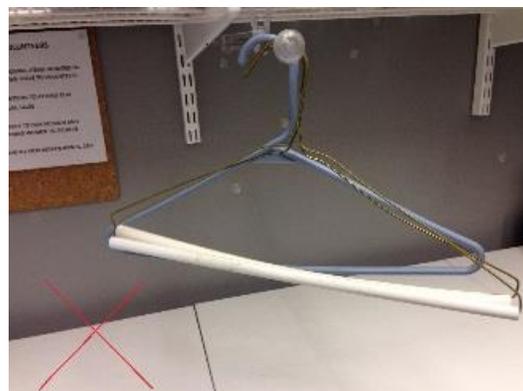
Sorting:

- When sorting donations, we have 3 categories “keep” (work appropriate), “sale” (not work appropriate but nice- we host 2 sales to fortify the mission each year), or “donate” (these items are not appropriate for our boutique- see below “how to sort donations” for more details).
- All inventory is sorted into the wall labeled “Sorted, NOT counted in”. All inventory is sorted by style (i.e. all shirts together, all pants together, all dresses together, all sweaters together, all suits together, etc)
- Hang all inventory facing the same direction
- Not sure about an item? Hang it up- it can be edited when counted in. We get some wild donations, have fun with it!
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags (extra buttons can remain)



Hangers:

- Use black hangers (with metal head)
- Shirt hangers for shirts, sweaters, dresses, and blazers
- Suit hangers for suits
- Pant hangers for skirts and pants



Blazers:

- Check for stains on the front and back
- Check for holes, snags or pilling
- Check for stains inside armpits & inside collar
- Button all buttons before hanging up
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags (extra buttons can remain)
- Check pockets for stains and items



Blouses:

- Check for stains on front & back, check for holes
- Check for stains inside armpits & inside collar
- Button all buttons before hanging up
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags (extra buttons can remain)



Pants:

- Button all buttons, clasps and closures
- Zip the zipper
- Check for stains on inside & outside
- Check for broken seams or torn lining
- No capris or shorts
- Hang pants on hanger as you would wear them
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags (extra buttons can remain)
- Check pockets and inseam for stains and items



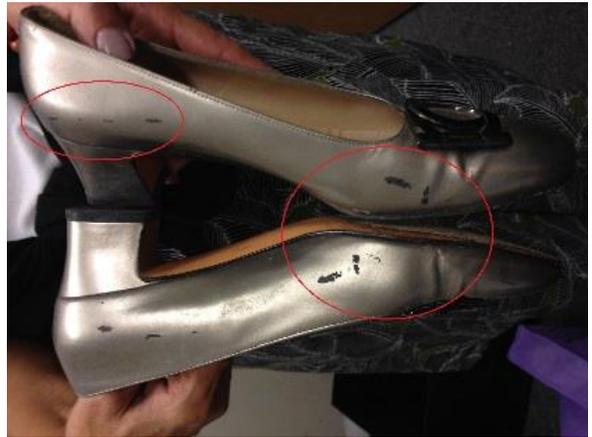
Suits:

- Check for matching size (if different sizes, hang separately and sort with blazers or pants)
- Inspect pants and blazer individually as explained above
- Zip all zippers
- Button all buttons
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags (extra buttons can remain)



Shoes:

- Are they work appropriate?
- Clean off scuffs, dirt, dust on OUTSIDE of shoe
- Clean off scuffs, dirt, dust on INSIDE of shoe
- Put size sticker inside heel of shoes
- Put size sticker inside zipper of boots
- Remove all price tags inside or on sole of shoes
- Sort into "sorted" shoe bin



Purses:

- Check for stains, tears, missing hardware
- Check inside for major stains
- Throw out any/all contents
- Wipe off dust/dump out dust
- Remove all price tags
- Sort into "sorted" purse bin



Scarves:

- Check for holes, tears, stains, or snags
- Remove all price tags or dry cleaning tags
- Fold neatly into sorting bin



Jewelry:

- Stack in box of jewelry at end of donations counter- to be sorted at a later time



Hosiery, Shapewear, Undergarments:

- We only accept Hosiery & Undergarments that are NEW, WITH TAGS
- Hosiery needs to be in the original packaging
- Sort neatly into sorting bin

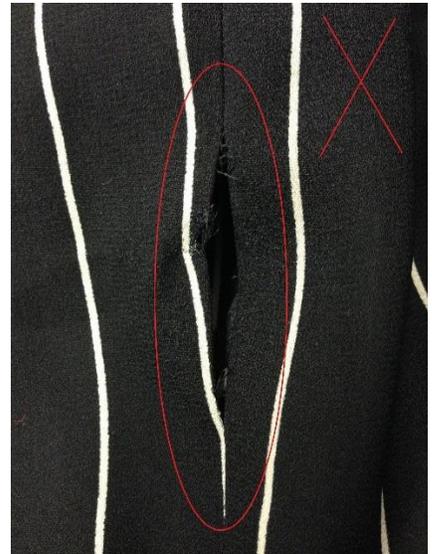


How to Sort Donations:

- **Is the item contemporary?** If it is a visibly dated style – large shoulder-pads, tapered pants, pleats – place item in “sale” or “no, thank you” piles.



- **Is the item business appropriate?** Keep in mind that clients range in age from young adults to seniors and have a variety of positions. If it is not business appropriate, place in “sale” or “no, thank you” piles.
- **Is the item in season?** Layering pieces (shells, tees, cardigans) are ALWAYS accepted. Out-of-season apparel can be placed in “no, thank you” or “sale” piles.
- **Is the item stained, ripped, pilled, or have other signs of wear?** Can it be fixed? We have sewing kits, Tide To-Go pens and baby wipes for your use. If it cannot be fixed, place in “no, thank you” pile. A few hairs? Grab a lint roller! Covered in cat hair? “no thank you!”



- Some leeway is given to plus-sized donations. However, please remember, we want ALL clients to have equally fabulous items!
- Please check pockets and inside of pants and jackets for stains or any items.
- All undergarments, hosiery, cosmetics and personal care products are to be unopened and unused.
- Check insides of purses and shoes for stains and other damage as well as items left behind, and wipe down dusty outsides.



Most important thing to remember:

**If you *wouldn't* wear it,
they *shouldn't* wear it!**

How to Sort Donations:

- **Items to be kept:** Clothing is placed on clear, plastic hangers and placed on “sorted, not counted in” rack. When clear plastic are depleted use black plastic hangers- all organized by bin under donations intake table. Button all buttons, clasps, and closures. Shoes need to have yellow dot stickers placed on the inside heel OR inside top of boot and placed in bin labeled “sorted, not counted in”. Purses are to be placed in bin labeled “sorted, not counted in”. Clothing is sorted by style (blouses together, skirts together, etc & all facing same direction)



- **Items for sale:** Clothing is hung on hangers not appropriate for boutique and placed on rack labeled “sale”. Shoes and purses are to be placed in the bins labeled “sale”.

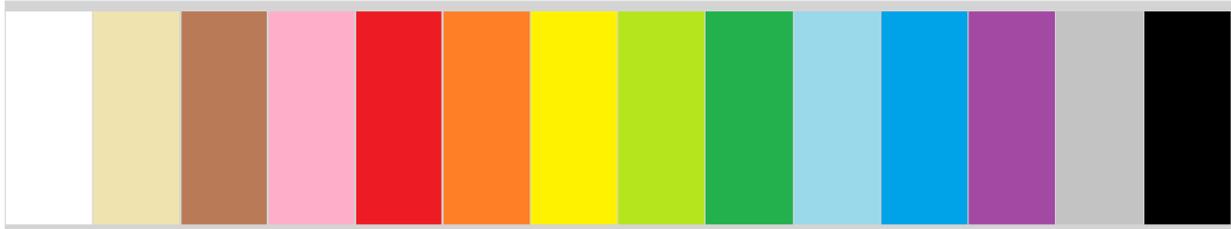


- **“No, thank you” items** are to be placed in thin, black bags (located on shelf above donations table) and set in neat line stacked across from bathrooms in the hallway- to ensure clients/volunteers can still access bathrooms.



- **Trash:** Open/used undergarments, hosiery, personal care and cosmetics as well as items badly damaged, shoe boxes and excess hangers. Please do not over fill!

- ***The Contributions Coordinator will check items in “Sorted, not counted in” area and count items in.***
- Once items are counted in, items can be placed on boutique floor. Clothing is to be put away in the proper size and is to be color-blocked, lightest (white) to darkest (black) within each size section. All hangers are to be facing the same direction.



- If all items do not fit on the boutique floor, new items can be switched with old to refresh the floor. All excess is back stocked in donations room by style and size.
- All inventory on the boutique floor should be wrinkle free- if not, steam it before stocking it! 😊

We are thankful for all that you do – together, we empower women to achieve their goals & dreams!



Dress for Success Cleveland and Vocational Guidance Services are founding partners of our local mission.