

Young workers must learn how to 'dress for success'

DEAR ABBY: You're in a position to do young people a great service by educating a generation that has grown up in a casual-dress world that there's a line between how one dresses in one's personal life and how one dresses for work. Cross it, and it could negatively affect your career.

I work for a large multination-



DEAR ABBY



al company, and I am often shocked at the way people dress. Although there are clear business/casual guidelines, these lines are crossed by men and women alike. Talks behind closed doors have no effect. Sending out the corporate dress code to the staff has yielded no change in behavior.

I finally consulted the HR department and came up with an approved solution. The dress code was again sent out to all employees in my department, with the warning that the next violation would mean being sent home and deducting the time as a vacation day.

Sure enough, "Disco Dolly" showed up in a sheer, low-cut, sleeveless blouse with a micro-

mini skirt and strappy sandals. When I sent her home, she complained that she was saving her vacation days. I told her she had violated the company's dress code — again.

I also pointed out that her chances of promotion were now compromised thanks to the demonstration she had given that following simple instructions was beyond her capabilities. If you want to be regarded as a serious professional, dress like one! Some "suggestions":

1. DRESS FOR SUCCESS, not sex. Women should not dress like streetwalkers. Leave the sexy, short, filmy dresses, cleavage-baring blouses and spaghetti straps for your personal life. This is an office, not a cocktail

party.

2. COVER UP. No sandals or designer flip-flops. We don't want to see your pedicure, your toe rings, the crust on your heels, or smell your feet.

3. MAKE IT FIT. Anything that hugs the body too tightly is not right for the office. We have a woman working here who looks like a sausage stuffed in a floral polyester casing. It's hard to take her seriously. The same goes for a man whose pants are so tight that you can tell his religion. Ditto for pants that are so loose and low-slung you can see his underwear or her thong.

4. DON'T POLLUTE. By this I mean go easy on the fragrance. Some people have breathing problems and allergies. Do not pollute the office with a scent

that arrives 10 minutes before you do and lingers hours after you've gone. This applies to men as well as women.

5. BATHE. There seems to be a new "natural" cult popping up whose adherents believe that washing removes vital oils from the skin and should be avoided. This phenomenon is more often, but not always, a male habit. Anyone in close contact with others should bathe or shower DAILY. — TRYING TO RUN A BUSINESS IN FLORIDA

DEAR TRYING: I'm willing to wager that your letter will be posted on millions of bulletin boards in the business world. Your "suggestions" make good sense. While many companies allow

employees to dress down on "casual Fridays," any business that wants the people it hires to be taken seriously should impress upon them that they must present themselves in a professional manner. Some companies do this in the form of an employee manual that lays it out in black and white. Because your directive was ignored, you were right to let "Disco Dolly" know there would be a penalty for noncompliance.

• Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.