

'Terrible Too's' That Can Sabotage Your Career

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Everyone knows that in business, success depends more on the brain that's in your head than the hairstyle on your head. Or does it? In a new book on personal branding, **Fame 101** (Sutton Hart Press, 2010), publicity and branding expert Maggie Jessup argues that even the most hard-working and talented women can create their own glass ceiling by ignoring four 'Terrible Too's' of appearance.

What are these potential career killers? Too much style; too young; too bad hair; and too slumped. According to Jessup, 'As with other career-building efforts, you must present your best possible self—and this takes strategy. Your goal must always be to dress appropriately for your role and for your audience, using some subtly strategic secrets to attain your own best possible look. Any of the 'terrible toos' will derail a woman's career faster than outing the boss' new hairpiece. Sadly, these career-challenged fashion victims exist in every office in America, and no one will tell them that they are creating their own roadblocks to career success.'

Fortunately, says Jessup, correcting the 'Terrible Too's' can provide a quick career fix.

The 'Terrible Too's':

1. Too much style. Some women in business believe that because they spend their paychecks on the latest styles from the fashion magazines, they've achieved the perfect career look. If anyone doubts how great they look, they must be mistaken, because they are wearing 'this year's colors,' the look that's all the rage in New York City, or those fabulous shoes from Sex and the City.

Unfortunately, many of those styles look

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good only if you're an underweight, six-foot tall 19-year-old—and very few business women fall into that category. If you truly want to look great and have presence, you must follow just one style rule: make wardrobe decisions based on what looks good on you. What's in style should be only a secondary consideration.

2. Too young. This wardrobe trap can snare even the smartest of women in business—and it is deadly for a career. A simple example will make the point. If you are a 40-year-old executive assistant, don't shop at Forever 21. For some reason, a surprising number of women believe they can take 10 years off their real age by dressing 20 years younger. Actually, the exact opposite is true, and they end up looking ridiculous. It may be fun to dress in those 'junior' styles, but save those clothes for your off hours, or you will never achieve the look you need to be respected in your field. Unless you dress appropriately, for your age and for your position, the people who could put your career on the fast track won't take you seriously.

3. Too bad hair. Sometimes it seems as though we live in a hair-obsessed society. Make sure yours looks great, or

at least really good. Have you ever had someone look at your new cut or style and say 'Ouch, that's too bad?' Likely not, because even your best friend will lie to you about this career-builder or career-killer for women in business. So what can you do to get that great look? Follow a few simple rules: Never do a home perm and under no circumstances let your best friend color your hair. Furthermore, if you have the same cut you had in high school, it is wrong! Work nights at the Dairy Queen if you must so that you can afford a quality style, cut, and color. (Note: here, too, watch out for the 'too much style' trap, because a look that would rock in New York can make you look foolish in Phoenix.)

4. Too slumped. Want to lose 10 pounds and take 10 years off your age? Maintain good posture—it's that simple. It turns out your mother was right: you should stand up straight, sit up straight, keep your chin up and keep your shoulders back. Bad posture is a presence-killer. It makes you look frumpy at best, but even more important, it sends out a message of low energy and personal defeat. Practice good posture for just 30 days and it will become an asset for life.

'You can make a powerful lasting impression in a business setting by using fashion wisely,' advises Jessup. 'While the image errors that make up the 'Terrible Too's' are the most commonly overlooked elements of building great careers for women, fortunately, they are also the quickest, easiest, and least expensive to fix.'

For more information about **Fame 101: Powerful Personal Branding & Publicity for Amazing Success**, by Maggie Jessup and Jay Jessup (Sutton Hart Press, 2010) visit www.fame101book.com ■