

Directions:

Read the following text and answer the questions by choosing the most suitable subheading from the list A-G for each of the numbered paragraphs (41-45). There are two extra subheadings. Mark your answers on the ANSWER SHEET. (10 points)

No matter how formal or informal the work environment, the way you present yourself has an impact. This is especially true in first impressions. According to research from Princeton University, people assess your competence, trustworthiness, and likeability in just a tenth of a second, solely based on the way you look.

The difference between today's workplace and the "dress for success" era is that the range of options is so much broader. Norms have evolved and fragmented. In some settings, red sneakers or dress T-shirts can convey status; in others not so much. Plus, whatever image we present is magnified by social-media services like LinkedIn. Chances are, your headshots are seen much more often now than a decade or two ago. Millennials, it seems, face the paradox of being the least formal generation yet the most conscious of style and personal branding. It can be confusing.

So how do we navigate this? How do we know when to invest in an upgrade? And what's the best way to pull off one that enhances our goals? Here are some tips:

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As an executive coach, I've seen image upgrades be particularly helpful during transitions – when looking for a new job, stepping into a new or more public role, or changing work environments. If you're in a period of change or just feeling stuck and in a rut, now may be a good time. If you're not sure, ask for honest feedback from trusted friends, colleagues and professionals. Look for cues about how others perceive you. Maybe there's no need for an upgrade and that's OK.

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Get clear on what impact you're hoping to have. Are you looking to refresh your image or pivot it? For one person, the goal may be to be taken more seriously and enhance their professional image. For another, it may be to be perceived as more approachable, or more modern and stylish. For someone moving from finance to advertising, maybe they want to look more "SoHo." (It's OK to use characterizations like that.)

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Look at your work environment like an anthropologist. What are the norms of your environment? What conveys status? Who are your most important audiences? How do the people you respect and look up to present themselves? The better you understand the cultural context, the more control you can have over your impact.

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Enlist the support of professionals and share with them your goals and context. Hire a personal stylist, or use the free styling service of a store like J.Crew. Try a hair stylist instead of a barber. Work with a professional photographer instead of your spouse or friend. It's not as expensive as you might think.

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The point of a style upgrade isn't to become more vain or to spend more time fussing over what to wear. Instead, use it as an opportunity to reduce decision fatigue. Pick a standard work uniform or a few go-to options. Buy all your clothes at once with a stylist instead of shopping alone, one article of clothing at a time.

- [A] Create a new image of yourself
- [B] Have confidence in yourself
- [C] Decide if the time is right
- [D] Understand the context
- [E] Work with professionals
- [F] Know your goals
- [G] Make it efficient