

# RESOURCE MAGAZINE

For the Professional Photo Productionist

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*flockin up*



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HOW TO:

# Work the Wardrobe

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Shoes from RRRentals

It's cold out there and we are hairless little freaks, not prepared in any way to head face-first into the icy, icy winter like our ancestors, the apes. They were equipped with fur and mittens and a complete lack of logic, which—as any male archaeologist with a ponytail will tell you—combined nicely with their ravenous promiscuity, enabling them to survive the Ice Age and meteor blasts without much effort. Fast forward to 2009 and here we are, all brains and no fur, which brings us to wardrobe.

Let's get this over with. As always, the first thing you want to do is consider your station in life. Cover the basics. Along the lines of Abe Lincoln's "house divided" concept, one must be in full accord with one's mind, body, and soul before organizing wardrobe. Start the cleansing process by denying everything, and repeat aloud..."people respect me, I respect me, I'm happy, I'm a good person, my parents love me, I have goals and I achieve them, strangers don't laugh at me, I voted, I care about the well-being of others, America is the last hope of the free world"... Okay. Now you're fully cured and you didn't even have to cut a check to L. Ron Hubbard for nine hundred thousand dollars. Imagine the savings. Admittedly, reading further won't deliver you to a higher plane of space-monster consciousness or enlighten you in any significant way, but you will pick up some useful wardrobe tips, which is really the point of this whole deal. Here's how we do what we do.

It's all come down to this: your job is to cover human bodies that most people want to see uncovered. No small task. In the fifties you could have just slapped some overalls and Chucks on a kid with a crew cut and hit lunch, but these are not simple times. Let's give it everything we've got.

**First order of business: Preparation.** A client who tells you what they want is a good client, because clients who tell you what they want make your job easier. Simple. They are easy to work with, and maybe even likable. They have a vision, an idea. Based on their specifications, make a legible and detailed list of everything you may possibly need including items, colors, styles, sizes, this, that, and everything else. Prepare for all contingencies. Now get your act together and look where you can get this stuff.

#### Showrooms.

They represent specific designers and get pretty fancy pants deals. Sometimes you can borrow stuff for free, and sometimes you can't. But it's not your money so you don't care.

#### Rental joints.

They work specifically with stylists for photo shoots and films.

#### Department stores' Studio Services.

They rent clothes directly from the stores for a fee.

#### Stores.

Stores are places with goods and services where you go and, with legal U.S. tender, either buy or rent these goods. In this case you're looking in the clothing genre.

Your best bet here is a rental company or studio service because of the bulk factor. You can knock a lot of work out in a single stop and the costs are much lower than retail. An added bonus is that, if you ever have to return anything, you don't have to go to any stores, which are filled with people, and people, as you know, should be avoided at all costs.

#### Super Wardrobe Tips the U.S. Treasury Department Doesn't Want You to Know About: These are trying financial times.

**Tip One:** Always leave room in the budget. If the client hits you with some last-minute requests, it doesn't instill confidence if you have to ask them up for extra cash, like some freeloading deadbeat twenty-seven-year-old who lives with his parents in a small town outside of Philadelphia. They will consider you one of life's losers, and they will be right.

**Tip Two:** Keep all receipts. If you really want to be an all-star, make copies you can take notes on.

**Tip Three:** Do not invest your income tax return in precious metals.

#### Some Thoughts on Shoot Day Display:

For the sake of convenience, arrange five to eight full outfits for each model. From there, select two "first choices" for each talent. Easy. Toss the rest on a back-up rack and shove it in the corner like a misbehaving kid. Every once in a while, glare at it to let it know what a disappointment it is.

#### Always keep a "working rack" for client-approved items that are likely to be shot.

You don't need to be told that you want to use clear plastic hangers, but please always use clear plastic hangers. If you see someone using wire hangers, kill them.

**Keep a no-traffic zone sectioned off for items that need to be shot.** Keep them separate from un-shot items to allay confusion.

**Shoes.** Get ready: line them up on the floor facing outward. Amazing.

**Have some respect for yourself:** Keep everything neat, organized, functional, and professional. Keep it clean. We're not launching telescopes, but this is a fast moving business. You need to know where everything is when you need it, when someone else needs it, and when no one needs it at all.

#### Returns and Budget: Last Order of Business.

Find a starving subordinate who can't afford another mistake and pawn this awful task off on them. Tell them they're the only person you trust. Once you tally up your budget (including non-returnable items), write that number down and circle it. It means something. Then go through the least expensive items and see, according to your handy arithmetic, how many you can afford to keep.

Make certain you've got items corresponding with receipts and bags corresponding with the finely folded items inside. Returning items doesn't have to be an unfriendly experience as long as you don't abuse the stores' return policies. Always attempt to keep some of the items as a sign of good faith. If the studio service has a return policy—they may require a certain percentage of the items be kept, for example—notify the clients: all worn, kept and purchased items should be sent to them. They love that stuff. It's like bagels in the break room. You may not know it yet, but you've done it again: you saved the day and everyone loves you. Let them.

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