Fun in the Sun, OCES Style

With summer officially starting June 21, it can be difficult to prioritize family events and work. Therefore, we focused on prioritizing life in this issue of the Extension Exchange. Summer only comes once a year and should be a time for families’ to enjoy togetherness.

Working in Oklahoma presents its own set of challenges concerning summer work attire. Therefore, we broke down ladies attire into easy to remember tips to help you stay cool and professional on the job. These tips will also help you go from work to family events without having to do an entire wardrobe change.

Going green is an international campaign to save our planet and do what we can to be environmentally friendly. Therefore, we came up with some easy to follow tips to help OCES go green.

We hope that these tips help you to prioritize your summer, be comfortable and professional at work and conserve. We hope you can kick off summer feeling prepared and excited. Let the BBQ’s begin!

From Joyce, Krista, Alexa and Leslie
The Staff and Program Development Team
How to Maintain Professional Attire in the Oklahoma Heat

The heat in Oklahoma can make it difficult to maintain professional attire. However, we found some helpful tips for the ladies to stay cool and beat the heat, without looking like a teen on the way to the beach.

Because the definition of professional dress varies, check your office dress guidelines and answer a few questions. Can you go sleeveless? Are cropped pants or long shorts allowed? Must you wear hose or are bare legs acceptable? Do open-toed or sling-back shoes fall within the dress code? The dress code policy pretty much dictates your direction. Additionally, make sure that your attire is appropriate for your job title. Or if you have a special event, such as office clean-up day, adjust appropriately.

If long shorts and cropped pants are allowed, definitely take advantage and cool off by showing some leg. Crisp fabrics, menswear-inspired patterns, and cuffs add a professional touch. Pick up short-sleeved jackets in contrasting colors for the feel of a suit. Linen trousers are always a nice summer staple, but look for tailored trousers instead of flowing pants that could pass for pajama bottoms. Also, stay away from sporty details like cargo pockets.

A white blouse or shirt is definitely a necessary summer basic. Also, dress in breezy cotton button-down shirts and light sweaters in vivid summer colors. Bare tops can be made office appropriate by covering thin lingerie-type straps with a cardigan or short-sleeved jacket, or wearing a camisole beneath a plunging neckline.

Dresses and skirts can be go-to pieces and unless you’ve got to wear hose, they’re as cool and comfortable as shorts. This time of year, you can easily find inexpensive dresses to expand your wardrobe, and you can’t beat one-piece dressing for saving time in the mornings. Shirt-dresses and wrap dresses are always professional. In most relaxed environments, you could probably get away with a sundress if you cover it with the ever-versatile cardigan or jacket.

How To Gain A Second Wind

If you notice yourself feeling run down, you may be looking to gain a second wind. Here are some simple strategies to help you get back on track and feeling up to par.

In order to recover some much needed energy, the first thing you should do is refuel. Try to snack on fiber rich munchies, such as dried apricots, bananas, baby carrots or rye wafers. Fiber slows the release of glucose (sugar) in your bloodstream and helps fight energy dips. Next, try taking a few deep breaths. For best results, spend five minutes breathing deeply once every one to two hours. This will promote calmness and mental focus as well as a renewed energy. Another thing you can do is take an “Imagi-cation” or mental vacation. Closing your eyes and imagining a peaceful scene will help you to relax. You may also want to call a friend. Make use of your personal support system—family, friends, or co-workers—to quickly unload and unwind. Take a moment to just snap out of it. Splash a bit of cold water on your face, or pop a breath mint in your mouth—mint flavors are stimulating. Lastly, create a good news inventory. At the end of the day, jot down all the good things that happened. You will be surprised at how much went right. Plus, you will set yourself up for a good night’s sleep so you can energize yourself again for tomorrow.
1. Be aware of consumption and make it a goal to consume less. For example, set a concrete goal to reduce utility bills by 2% or office supply expenses by 15%.

2. Stop wasting paper at the printer - In an age where e-mail is so widely used, why print out documents when you can just e-mail them in an electronic form instead?

3. Turn off lights, computers and appliances when not in use. When buying new appliances, look for Energy Star models.

4. Let a little sunshine into your life - If you’re lucky enough to have an office with a window, take advantage of the sunlight to light the office rather than using light bulbs.

5. Drive less. Make fewer trips for errands, shopping and deliveries. Learn how to make your vehicles more energy efficient. Ride a bike, walk or take public transportation. Support carpooling if you can.

6. Buy recycled when possible. Toner cartridges, paper goods, plastics and more are available recycled now. Recycle as much as you can and help clientele recycle, too.

7. Use recycled paper—it has many benefits. Recycled paper causes 74% less air pollution, 35% less water pollution, and it actually creates five times more jobs than does the production of virgin paper.

8. Ditch the paper cups/plates - Instead of using paper cups for your morning coffee, switch to non-paper cups, or coffee mugs, that can be washed and reused.

9. Donate unused books, ink pens, cell phones, computers and other supplies to schools, charity stores, libraries or nursing homes.

10. Reuse misprints as scratch paper and/or shred for packing materials. Print on both sides of your paper.

Source: BellaOnline

How to Teach Adults in 1 Hour

Good planning will build a solid foundation for your presentation. There are some strategies to ensure the audience gets the most out of your time. When starting your presentation, do not forget to introduce yourself and the subject matter. According to Draves, this should be kept to no more than 2 minutes or 120 seconds. Additionally, it should be interesting and grab the audience, otherwise you have lost them before you began.

In your first five minutes, there are some do’s and don’ts to remember. Maintain a positive, calm demeanor and don’t appear rushed or frazzled. More importantly, do not point out inadequacies in the presentation room or criticize the sponsor for starting late. These may seem common sense, but occur all too often. Next, be sure to introduce your material and explain that you will leave time for questions. Draves said a minimum of 15 minutes is necessary for a thorough dialogue.

Finally, in your first five minutes, humor can be used to put the audience at ease. If humor is not your strong suit, saying “I am so glad to be here today, thank you for coming,” will put the audience at ease.

When setting up a closing for your presentation, be sure you have a strong closing, a fact, figure, or anecdote to drive the message home is essential. Summarizing your presentation with something to tie all of your points together will leave the audience feeling a sense of closure and satisfaction.
Often we find ourselves struggling to determine what should take up our time, and determine all things are equally important. This is not true, despite what it might feel like. Each task should be prioritized. Doing so takes into account several things such as, deadlines, the size of the task, the time required and payoff. In an effort to help you better prioritize your life, try using this system to establish an appropriate rank for your tasks.

Apply numeric values and score each task to determine an appropriate rank based on deadlines and payoff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Payoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1= long term</td>
<td>1-2 = low recognition/impact/visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2= short term</td>
<td>3 = moderate recognition/impact/visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3= immediate</td>
<td>4-5 = high recognition/impact/visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another way to prioritize is to compare the importance of a task and time investment. Apply numeric values to determine what action will best suit the task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1= high payoff/impact</td>
<td>3 = significant time investment</td>
<td>Act = prioritize immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = moderate payoff/impact</td>
<td>2 = moderate time investment</td>
<td>Reduce = use less time or delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = low payoff/impact</td>
<td>1 = brief time investment</td>
<td>Eliminate = don’t waste time on it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, you may not have these exact items on your to-do list, but chances are you have similar items. After completing these charts use your own to see if you can prioritize your schedule. Who knows, you may even find extra time once everything is in order. Let us know what your priorities are.

Source: The Superproductivity Conference
Twenty Time Management Strategies

1. Learn to say “no.” You can’t do everything, so if possible say “no.”

2. Learn to delegate. Learn to use other workers effectively.

3. Create goals and prioritize your work so you can meet those goals.

4. Use a software planner to help you manage your time.

5. Break larger tasks into smaller more manageable chunks.

6. Recognize your limits.

7. Put tasks in priority order. It is often helpful to label your daily tasks as essential, important, and less important. Work on getting your essentials done first.

8. Restrict and time your coffee breaks. Avoid times when you know you will get involved in long conversations or distractions.

9. Be sure to take some time away from work, refresh your mind and spirit.

10. Don’t rush from one thing to the next.

11. Be aware of how you use time. Being aware of time will help you manage it.

12. Limit or reduce distractions—close your door, silence your phone, shut down your e-mail, ask visitors to check with you later, etc.

13. Follow a work routine. One of the best ways to manage time is to have a routine and stick to it when you can.

14. Reserve your high energy times for your toughest or most challenging tasks.

15. Plan your day ahead of time. Before you go home at night, get a jump on the next day by gathering needed materials, looking up phone numbers, setting priorities, etc.

16. Control your telephone and e-mail—put them on hold until it is convenient for you. Don’t allow them to interrupt your work.

17. Avoid perfectionism. Be sure you set realistic and achievable priorities for yourself.

18. Set time limits for work that you do regularly.

19. Get control of the clutter in your office.

20. Don’t procrastinate—look the tough stuff in the eye and get it done.

Source: Time Management Guide
Students from Thailand introduce themselves to Joyce.

Mr. Matvee Vonguevapant (left), Mr. Suraehai Salimt (second from left), Mr. Chalermchai Sukchitt and Miss Weeraporn Tokeree (right)

Fifteen students participated in a tour of Oklahoma, which consisted of touring various sites and learning various facts about the state. They also listened to many presentations throughout their two week stay.

Thailand students talking with Joyce about Oklahoma and learning about OCES.
Quick Tips to Beat Job Burnout

One of the best ways to conquer burnout is to make your job more enjoyable. Sometimes you just have to change the way you think. No matter how boring or depressing your job may seem at times, you have to find chances to laugh. Laughter breaks the tension of difficult situations and helps cut stress you feel and tension you may be under. Also, become more social. Talk to people. Find activities to do with co-workers, friends and family members. Feeling connected to others is a great way to reduce stress and burnout. Adding some fun to your day will help decrease burnout. Here are several easy things you can incorporate into your workplace:

◆ Consider putting up a bulletin board in a break room or employee lounge. Ask everyone from entry-level employees up to administrators and supervisors to bring in baby pictures. Post the pictures on the board. Everyone will enjoy looking at the photos and laughing at each other. It’s fun to guess who’s who. It also shows that no matter where anyone is in the hierarchy of the facility, everyone started out as someone’s baby.

◆ Create a stress free zone for when employees are feeling burned out. It doesn’t have to be a big space—even just a hallway outside a conference room. Consider putting in a hammock or lounge chair and perhaps an inflatable palm tree or ocean picture.

◆ Schedule activities you enjoy in your day and week. Buy one perfect flower, and keep it in your workplace to view. Take a walk outside during a break. Take a mini visualization vacation and go where you want to go, even if it’s only for five minutes.

◆ Plan a visit to the zoo, movies, gym, a spa or local café. Go window-shopping by yourself or with a friend. What’s important is having something to look forward to doing after work.

You can’t control everything, but you can control what you are able to and forget the rest. You can beat the burnout before it beats you. You just have to try.

Source: Monster

Proofreading Strategies Anyone Can Use

At some point, everyone is asked to proofread something at work, whether it is on a daily basis or just occasionally. Here are just a few strategies to make this task a little simpler. First, seek help from others. When you have multiple sets of eyes read your work, you have the best chance of catching as many errors as possible. Seek out people you trust and that you are willing to take criticism from. Second, separate yourself. Do not proofread your work right after you finish writing it, give yourself some time away from your writing. Also, you might consider proofreading in another area from where you wrote the first time. Third, take it one step at a time. Do not try to proofread everything at once. Look at the work more than once and check for something different each time. Fourth, read out loud. Often it is easier to catch mistakes when you read out loud to yourself. If you read very quickly, however, you may read what should be there instead of what is actually there. Fifth, double-check details. Check all numbers, calculations and any technical information. Sixth, read backwards. Start at the end of the document and check each sentence in reverse order. Finally, know your weaknesses. Check for mistakes that you know you make often. It is hard to break habits of making certain mistakes.

Source: Proofreading
**Wise Owl**

*Words of Wisdom*

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.

~James Dent

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**Simple Summer Activities for Anyone**

Since summer is finally here, you may find yourself asking “What can I do today?” Here are a few suggestions that will help you spend a little of that extra time on something fun and worthwhile.

1. Plan a vacation or trip. This is a good way to spend time bonding or creating memories with your family.
2. Visit a local zoo or museum. While you are there you may see or learn something new.
3. Go biking, hiking, swimming or fishing. All of these are great sources of exercise.
4. Invest time in community service work. You can pick up trash, serve food at a shelter or donate clothes, etc.
5. Take a trip down to your local library and pick out a few interesting books to read.
6. Start a journal. Writing down your feelings, experiences or goals can be a great way to wind down and relieve stress.

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**Reminders**

- Taggart Scholarship Application Due June 11th.
  - The William F. Taggart Scholarship applications are due on June 11, 2010 for the summer and fall semesters. Funds for this program are to be used for courses leading to an advanced degree. For complete details and the application form go to: [http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/scholarship](http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/scholarship)

- OCES Secretary Conference—October 27th & 28th 2010—ConocoPhillips OSU Alumni Center. For more information visit: [http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/secretnaries(secretary-conference-2010](http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/secretnaries(secretary-conference-2010)

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**Send us Your Exchanges!**

We’d love to hear from you! Please contact us with any feedback. All efforts will be made to include your ideas in *The Extension Exchange*.

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**Until our next exchange!**