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Six Savvy Ways to Build Your Wardrobe



By Reena De Asis

“While clothes may not make the woman, they certainly have a strong effect on her self-confidence – which, I believe, does make the woman.” – Mary Kay Ash

Earning a living is only half of the journey to financial independence. At Dress for Success, we encourage sound financial decisions, so that women are sufficiently empowered to reclaim their financial freedom. But we also recognize that a quick fix of retail therapy is like a sugar rush! One minute you’re buzzing around on a shopping spree, and the next you’re crashing, as you start to rack up the debt on your credit cards.

Dress for Success understands that our clients are on a tight budget, and we’re on a mission to help them build their self-confidence and their wardrobe. That’s why we offer our complimentary suiting program to every woman who walks through our door. It’s the first phase in helping our women go from surviving to thriving!

Once she has a job interview, each Dress for Success client meets with a volunteer personal shopper who assists her in selecting professional attire and finding the perfect power suit. She also receives up to a week’s worth of clothing when she becomes employed, because how we look on the outside should reflect how we feel on the inside.

Still, we all need to make a little impulse buy every now and then and what woman doesn’t like to see something new hanging in her closet? Whether you’re a success-bound client or a dedicated supporter of Dress for Success, the list of places to find free and discounted clothing below can help you become a savvy shopper at a bargain price!

A special thanks to the client that inspired me to put this list together! You reminded me that one woman’s closet surplus is another woman’s basic wardrobe needs, and being a smart consumer never goes out of style!

Check out these websites to find free clothing and accessories in your hometown!

- Freecycle: Enter your location, sign-up and log-in to view items being offered for free from your community, like clothes or shoes. You can also post what you are looking for in the “wanted” section.
- Craigslist: Choose your city and under the “for sale” section is a category for “free” items. Do a keyword search for the specific clothing article you are looking for, or try something more general like “women’s clothes.” You can even post an ad in the “wanted” section stating that you want free clothes and indicate the sizes needed.
- Clothing Swap: Participate in a clothing swap event in your area. Bring unwanted clothes and swap for other items for free. You can also ask friends and family if they have any clothes to swap or borrow.
- Meet Up: Search for a clothing swap group or event on MeetUp. Other keywords to use: Clothes Swap, Fashion Clothes Exchange, Clothes Swapping and Bargain Hunters.

When in doubt, shop the sale! Here are my top three tips for finding the best bargain deals!

- Hit up garage sales! Go in the late afternoon or early evening to find the best deals, when people are willing to give away items that didn’t sell earlier in the day. Check out sites like Yard Sale Search or GarageSale.com to find ones happening in your hometown.
- Get thrifty! Thrift stores typically sell donated items at a much more affordable price than major retailers. Search for thrift stores in your area, and be sure to look for consignment and resale shops as well.
- Swap out the old for the new! Go to swap meets or flea markets in your area to find great bargains or trade in old items for new ones. Happy bargain shopping!



Reena De Asis is the director of west coast operations for Dress for Success Worldwide-West. She is a contributor for The Huffington Post and Maria Shriver’s website. Her work has been published on CSRwire Talkback, Forbes, Environmental Media Association, Elephant Journal and The Women’s Conference. Reena believes in being savvy with your resources and living your life as your message!

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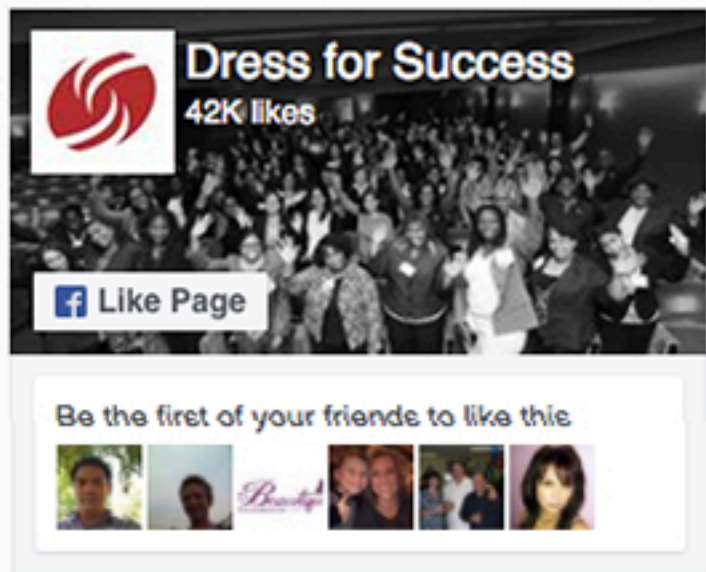
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