
THE ETIQUETTE OF HEEL-WEARING

Embargoed until 0001 hours Thursday 17th September 2009

Press release from The Aziz Corporation

The right high-heeled shoes can be an essential part of the female executive's armoury argues one of the country's leading image consultants.

While the TUC questioned the role of high heeled shoes in the work-place, executive image consultant Debbie Gray claims the unions may be putting put their foot in a very important and sensitive part of the successful woman's work persona.

"What you wear on your feet speaks volumes about you. Just because it's down there doesn't mean it doesn't matter," says Debbie.

"The right heels can give a woman stature, poise and highlight her physical strengths – but get it wrong at your peril.

"Higher shoes can elevate a woman giving her more presence. Moreover, if you take time walking into a meeting rather than striding forward like male colleagues, that actually can enhance a woman's status showing she is worth waiting for."

As a consultant for the Aziz Corporation, Debbie trains many of the FTSE 250's top women executives in improving their image in the boardroom.

"A female executive needs to recognise her physical strengths and the heels need to reinforce these," says Debbie.

"The heel width needs to reflect the shape of your legs. If you have long thin legs then these will be accentuated by long thin heels. Sturdier legs look better with sturdier heels.

"Ankle straps widen the leg and are fabulous for willowy legs as well as providing physical support but are absolute faux-pas for short stumpy legs. Open-toed shoes show far too much flesh and are inappropriate in the boardroom."

"In presentations you have to ensure that the shoes are not too bright and do not detract from your delivery. Do you really want delegates looking at your feet rather than your face? While the shoes should enhance your physical stature, the eye is drawn to the areas of brightest colour – which should be around your face."

But Debbie recognises that not all female executives are comfortable wearing high heels. Elegant, untextured flat shoes can be very appropriate in the boardroom.

Helen Anderson, a Performance and Presence coach for the Aziz Corporation, says female executives need to be cautious of "killer" heels which throw them off balance.

"If you wear very high heels, there is a danger you will be want to cross your legs which creates a barrier between you and others. Some women's posture is affected by heels which can then affect their breathing and their delivery.

"If you are going to wear heels, you need to be able to stand properly." Said Helen



Author: Helen Glanville

Senior Consultant

The Aziz Corporation

Contacts

Debbie Gray, Image Consultant at The Aziz Corporation: 07944 815301

Helen Glanville Senior Consultant 07813 687234

- ENDS -

Notes for Editors

¹ Suits on the decline as Britain goes Business Casual <http://www.azizcorp.com/press-27-may.html>

The Aziz Corporation

The Aziz Corporation is the UK's leading independent executive leadership and development consultancy. Its mission is to add value to businesses by ensuring their people are effective communicators. Consultancy services offered by The Aziz Corporation include presentation skills, media training, crisis management, image consultancy and voice development.

<http://www.azizcorp.com/>

Contact:

Helen Glanville
The Aziz Corporation

Tel : 07813 687234
Email: heleng@azizcorp.com

Professor Khalid Aziz
The Aziz Corporation

Tel: 01962 794 540 / 07703 345 401
E-mail: khalid@azizcorp.com