

# Promotions, pet peeves and proper summertime dress for the office

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What could possibly be more stressful than getting a divorce? Being promoted.

Climbing up the corporate ladder was cited most frequently as life's most difficult event - beating out calling it quits with a spouse, adjusting to a relocation or even grieving a death - by nearly 20 percent of business leaders in a recent survey.

While usually cause for a slap on the back, promotions also force us to deal with more office politics, greater job complexity and increased reliance on others, said Matt Paese of Development Dimensions International, which conducted the study.

Despite the hand-wringing promotions can provoke, almost half of those surveyed said a move into a leadership position positively affected their personal life.

The online survey was conducted in late 2006 among nearly 800 U.S. and foreign business leaders.

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**PRESENTATION EXASPERATION:** If you want to drive your co-workers crazy at a business meeting, interrupt someone, answer your cell phone or fall asleep. If you really want them to curse your name, drag them into a meeting and blather away, absent any planning or sense of direction.

Disorganized, rambling presentations are workers' greatest source of frustration at meetings, a new survey reports.

"If you're going to ask someone for time, make sure you're using their time like you would use your time," said Jeff Resnick of Opinion Research USA, which conducted the survey.

Domineering colleagues, cell phone interruptions and co-workers who fall asleep were runners-up on the list. Pet peeves differed between generations, with workers over 55 complaining about long meetings with no bathroom break, while the 18-24 set wanted food and drinks in exchange for their attention, Resnick said.

Only 4 percent of people complained about meetings starting late, so take heed presenters: Better to be late than long-winded.

The random telephone survey of approximately 1,000 people was conducted in mid-April.

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**SUMMER STYLE:** With summer just around the corner, now's the time to make sure your hemline doesn't rise along with the temperatures.

Too much exposed skin is never appropriate at the office, even in warmer weather, according to business etiquette expert Mary Crane.

"If you would even consider wearing any particular item to the beach or to a picnic or to mow the lawn, it's probably not appropriate to wear to the office," she said.

To make sure your summertime dress is more stylish than scandalous, heed the following workplace wardrobe guidelines, Crane said.

Check the culture of your organization; what's acceptable at a hip Internet startup may prove inappropriate at a

conservative law firm.

For women, skirts, dresses or shorts should rise no higher than two inches above the knee. Sorry men, nothing above the ankle is acceptable for you.

Plunging necklines have no place in the office, on men or women. The same goes for flip flops. Ladies, you might be able to get away with a strappy sandal.

Sleeveless tops can be attractive on women, but anything with straps should be saved for the long-awaited weekend.

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**DOLLARS AND SMARTS:** Take a look around the parking lot of your local university, and chances are you'll spot more Honda Civics than Rolls Royces. While professors tend to be a brainy bunch, they don't necessarily have the bank accounts to match.

And they're not the only eggheads strapped for cash. According to a new nationwide study, the highly intelligent among us aren't necessarily wealthier. While people with higher IQ scores tend to earn more, they don't always save and invest their money wisely, said study author Jay Zagorsky, a research scientist at Ohio State University.

"Individuals with higher IQ should not think that they have any particular advantage," he said.

People of below-average intelligence, meanwhile, are just about as wealthy as those in similar circumstances but with higher IQ scores, the study found.

Even among the smartest people, those with IQ scores above 125, 6 percent have maxed out their credit cards and 11 percent sometimes miss bill payments.

The study is based on data from more than 7,000 Americans who participated in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which is funded primarily by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and conducted through Ohio State University.

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**YOU'VE GOT MAIL:** You're sitting in a meeting, trying your best to give the boss your full attention, when you hear that little ping -- a new e-mail. The boss surely won't mind if you check it, right?

Wrong. While the majority of executives report that colleagues commonly read and respond to e-mail during meetings, many disapprove of it, according to research performed by Robert Half Management Resources.

Follow these tips to avoid ticking off the boss man, said executive director Paul McDonald:

n Be discreet. Set your mobile device on vibrate to avoid disturbing others.

n Consider your audience. Your co-workers might understand your need to respond to a message more than a client would.

n Respond only when necessary. "If it's really urgent, then excuse yourself from the meeting. Then go outside the room," McDonald said.

n Know when to stop. Constantly checking e-mail can make your colleagues feel unimportant, so bow out of a meeting if you'll be distracted for most of it anyway.