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TIE TIPS FOR MEN: BEST FASHIONS FOR 2005

By Ann Conway, Bates Communications Senior Consultant

Men's fashion within the business world can often be dominated by the traditional whites, grays and blacks—but the one item which gives men the opportunity to throw a splash of color onto their outfit is the necktie. Men can express themselves and stand out from the crowd through their ties. So how do you turn your necktie collection from standard to striking? We look to some local fashion experts for advice.

One of the keys to projecting a professional image is to remember that first impressions are lasting impressions. According to the Newbury Street, New York and Palm Beach couturiere Alfred Fiandaca, "The tie is a man's way to make an immediate impression. People judge you in the first two seconds and see the tie before they look at the design or tailoring of the suit."

Fiandaca, twice nominated as one of the country's best dressed men, says aside from making a great impression, "ties give the wearer a chance for a little fun with his wardrobe." For instance, Fiandaca gets raves on a pink print Brooks Brothers tie with a matching pink shirt he wears to evening events.

As with all facets of fashion, different colors and styles of ties are popular at different times. Fiandaca currently recommends the following tie fashions for 2005:

- Ties with hues of red or yellow in them. However, use yellow in moderation to avoid overpowering the outfit—a simple hint of yellow in the background of a necktie can spice up a plain suit without being overwhelming.
- Small print designs. The Hermes small print design is the best tie for board meetings, while the Versace big print is dead.
- Stripes. Fiandaca recommends stripes, especially for attorneys. Check out Brooks Brothers for striped ties with enough varied color to make them interesting.

Mary Lou Andre, CEO and founder of Organization by Design, adds that the smaller the print on the tie, the more powerful the image presented. And Mickey Mouse and theme ties should be saved for Disneyland and vacations, she says. Also back in style are narrow ties that work well with the more fitted suits and shirts in men's fashion today.

While fashion connoisseurs recommend replacing ties at least every 4 years, for the sake of style and wear-and-tear, it's ok to hold on to a few of your favorites. Fiandaca admits to saving many of his ties, hoping they will come back in style. "At Christmas, I wear a beautiful green and red paisley tie of my grandfather's," he adds.

So throw out that tie you've been wearing since your first office job, and follow some of these tips for buying and wearing neckties like a pro.

- Plan to spend at least \$100 or more.
- Spot clean ties, because dry cleaning ruins them. Fiandaca's preferred spot cleaner is Ever Blum, an all purpose dry cleaner with a hot pink label.
- Change your tie and shirt between day and evening. For evening ties, shop at Ricardi's on Newbury St or Alan Belzerian at Copley Place.
- Tie your tie correctly. You want a dimple just below the knot.
- Check out store mannequins for ideas on how to match ties and shirts.
- Replace ties at least every four years.

Source: "Buying a Necktie With Joseph Abboud" by Ellen O'Brien, Boston Globe.