

RETAIL

Saks helps consumers embrace business' modern dress code

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Chris Colls for Saks Fifth Avenue

By STAFF REPORTS

Department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue is responding to more relaxed trends in business dressing with the launch of an editorial guide.

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The New Office Casual Manual will be available in-stores and online, allowing consumers to use the tips to build a wardrobe that reflects today's norms in workwear. Meant to position Saks as the go-to retailer for professional attire, the guide may inspire men to revamp their wardrobes or be more sartorial daring at work.

Putting it all together

The Manual runs through seven different pieces acceptable for a business casual office. These include the sporty suit, easy layer, refined top, perfect fit pant, dress shoe hybrid, clean sneaker and leather bag.

In a series of photos, a model wears five different outfits built from these key garments and accessories. These show the versatility of the pieces, as well as showing the different interpretations of the same item.

For instance, the "easy layer" is depicted as a cardigan in one look, while it is a knit blazer in another.



The New Office Casual booklet; Chris Colls for Saks Fifth Avenue

"The New Office Casual' movement has worked its way into the fabric of professional attire, and at Saks, we are fully embracing the trend," stated Tom Ott, senior vice president/general merchandising manager, menswear, Saks Fifth Avenue, in a statement. "We are confident Saks will continue to be the expert on menswear at work with the fashion, advice and items necessary to pull off casual but fashion-forward looks."

Beyond consumers, the manual also has use value for Saks staff.

"The casual office trend can be realized in several different ways, so we wanted to provide our customers with plenty of inspiration and guidance," stated Eric Jennings, vice president/fashion director at Saks Fifth Avenue. "And, the manual is not only for customers we are utilizing the manual as a training tool for associates as well."

According to a study prepared by the now-shuttered men's lifestyle publication Details, the menswear market topped \$450 million for 2015. The study also found that for 2015, men's clothing sales via ecommerce have grown at an annual rate of 17.3 percent since 2009 ([see story](#)).

Reflecting this growing focus on menswear, Saks Fifth Avenue has plans for a dedicated men's store.

Scheduled to open in spring 2017 in downtown New York, the retailer will be dedicating 16,750-square feet exclusively to men's products. Other retailers have already launched dedicated men's stores, but as the menswear market continues to show rapid growth, Saks will likely see benefits from following suit ([see story](#)).