

STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES

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In honor of PVH's new "Dress for your Day" dress code policy, PVH Archives looks back at the 135-year-plus history of dressing for work at our company. From three-piece suits and factory-issued frocks to "Corporate Casual" button-downs and logo jeans, our workwear has prepped us for decades of business and world-class style, Monday through Friday!



Every so many years, all businesses and institutions have to stare down a familiar conundrum: how to present a unified, professional appearance but also allow associates to be themselves and best carry out their individual roles? As leaders in the apparel industry, PVH and its brands and businesses have been uniquely suited to navigate this tricky question—not just responding to changing standards but actually setting new trends for how all of America and now the world dresses for the workweek.

Our businesses with the longest histories, what are now our ARROW, Warner's, and Van Heusen divisions, started out as localized factories, where garment workers and business chiefs clocked in only doors apart. An 1876 photograph of The Warner Brothers Co. factory in Bridgeport, CT, taken just two years into their corset-making business, shows the aproned women workers with corseted waists





and draped overskirts—the fashionable look despite their active lifestyle.¹ To the right, the male cutters, who enjoyed a high status with their specialized skillset, are shown wearing top hats with their work smocks—very dapper!

Cluett, Peabody & Co. Inc., owners of the *ARROW* brand, grew into a major employer in Troy, NY and 20+ other American cities that opened *ARROW* plants. The company implemented specialized dress for specific roles, such as the white dresses worn by these starch room workers circa 1900, softened by feminine ruffles.²

Uniform cuts and hemlines were updated to keep up with fashion. These workers at the Atlanta plant in 1930 wore snappy cotton frocks with pointed Peter Pan collars, a cool option for summers before air conditioning.³

Women office workers made it their business to look polished with coiffed hair, tidy stockings, and coordinating shoes, bags, hats, and gloves.⁴ With limits to women's career mobility, gaining male favor—or a spouse—could be part of the prize.

Meanwhile, their male counterparts had opportunity to wear the merchandise. Apparel businessmen, especially salesmen, were their own best advertisements for *ARROW* and *Van Heusen* shirts and neckwear. (The two brands were competitors for much of the 20th century.) These photos of Phillips-Jones executives⁵ in 1941 and Cluett associates⁶ about a decade later show the subtle tweaks in collar, lapel, and tie styles that we tend to overlook today.

The countercultural 1960s left their mark, and both PVH and Cluett led the industry in offering new takes on the traditional business shirt, with vivid color, lively patterns, and extreme collars. This mid-'70s *ARROW* sales team didn't shy away from loud, super-wide ties, slim sports jackets, and hair worthy of *Saturday Night Fever*.⁷

It could be said that Van Heusen outfitted Main Street and Wall Street for the business booms of the '80s (think contrast collars and suspenders) and when dress codes grew more relaxed in the '90s, they literally wrote the book, publishing *Dress Casually for Success ... For Men* in 1996, a full-length guide to dressing with authority and comfort, boosted by



Muzak operator at Troy, NY office, 1942



their own line of versatile “Corporate Casual” shirts.⁸ Even Warner’s got in on the Casual Friday action, launching the soft-structure “Friday’s Bra” to “capitalize on the growing trend toward the casual workplace.”⁹

Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger’s Fashion Avenue cred cultivated very different dress standards for their associates. Calvin Klein’s 1998 welcome guide recommended elegant basics like dark suiting with lightweight knits, ideally in a palette of black, gray, and white, with subdued hairstyling, makeup, and jewelry. In a striking echo, *Fortune* magazine looked back at how much office dressing changed in the ‘90s, observing how women “in the name of minimalism” replaced their power suits and intense accessorizing with pants and sweater sets, primarily in black and gray. The classic *CALVIN KLEIN* look had permeated stylish work-



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The New Dress Code

Forget everything your father told you. The new dress code blurs the age-old distinction between dress and casual. Shirts from the Corporate Casual Collection by Van Heusen feel as comfortable in the boardroom as they do in your home office. Worn with or without a tie, their relaxed tailoring, all-cotton fabrics and impeccable styling make it a pleasure to do business.

Clothing by Catherine Farnas for Price Inc. and their country of Wonder Gallery. Lamp courtesy of Vico Anipani.

Your meeting with the client has been rescheduled. Again. No problem — you’ve got the freedom to juggle appointments, relaxed in the easy comfort of dress denim. Ice blue denim straight-collar shirt with horn buttons, available at Chappell’s, Lamont’s and ZCMI. About \$34.

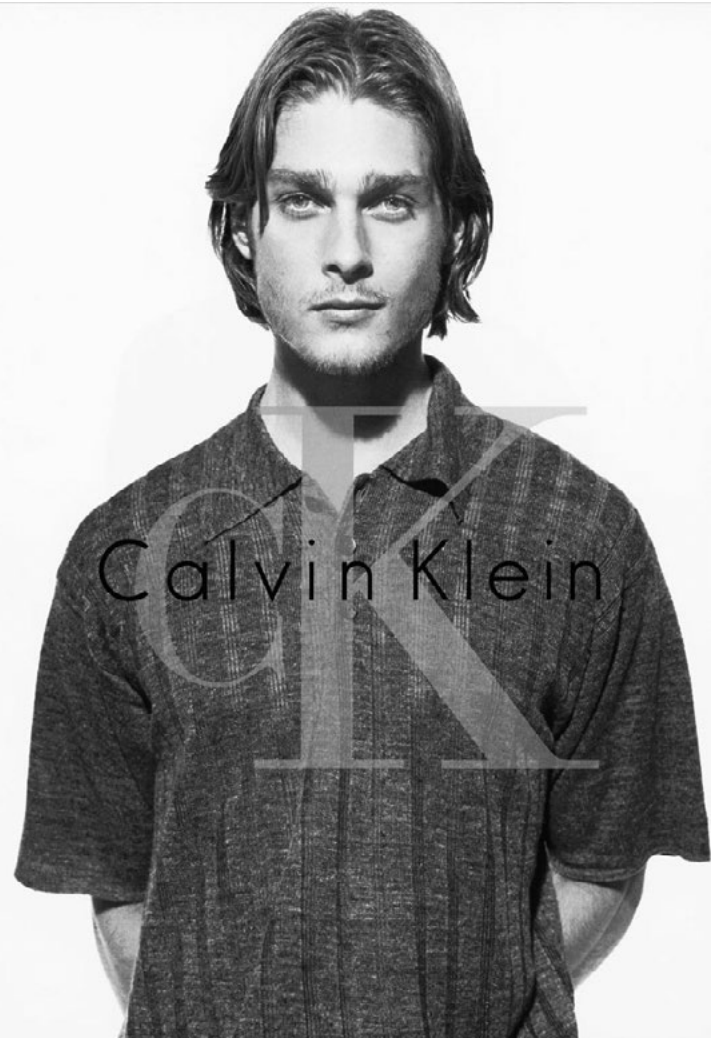
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Friday’s Bra

The soft, easy fit and support of cotton and lycra. It’s a great new way to make your self comfortable.

WARNER’S

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places around the world, neatly captured by these Spring 1995 *ck Calvin Klein* ads¹⁰ and others campaigns like it.

As one might expect, Tommy Hilfiger headquarters operated with more of a casual, sportswear twist. A *New York Times* reporter who visited Tommy's Manhattan office in 2001 characterized many of the young designers as “surfer-skateboarder-D.J. types” wearing an abundance of *TOMMY HILFIGER* logos. In turn, those designers produced an array of career-casual staples for a pulled-together but relaxed look favored by many young professionals, a style philosophy that continues today.¹¹

To an extent, we’ve always “dressed for our day” at PVH—it’s just that our roles were less flexible, our days more prescribed. Today we embrace day-to-day adaptability and individualism as never before—here’s to great work and style each PVH day!



WWD review of H Hilfiger, 2003