

career profile

Name: Sarah Donges
Position: Personal stylist/owner,
The Beauty Tutor

What does your job entail?

One-on-one personal styling for both men and women. One aspect of the business is working with clients to help them improve their appearance through a number of processes. The Beauty Tutor doesn't dictate a style to you but helps and guides you through the process of discovering what works best for you. The services include wardrobe detox, body shape analysis, personal shopping, style guide and make-up lesson. I also do corporate presentation, which includes appropriate attire for work, and etiquette training.

How did you become involved in this industry?

I have always had a passion for design and fashion and from an early age I learnt to sew and made clothes for my dolls. After school I studied colour and design and started my career as a buyer for TM Lewin in London. It was here that I had the opportunity to be mentored by some of the best in the industry and had the opportunity to work with the finest fabrics, creating designs and fitting them to the 'real woman', sourcing new designs and cuts, creating new season colours and learning about retail. From there I worked in the cosmetics buying department for David Jones where I learnt all about make-up and cosmetics brands, ingredients, formulas and the competitive world of retail in Australia.

How did you get your business started?

I always wanted to start my own business, it was just a matter of combining my passions, natural gifts and skills together which let me start The Beauty Tutor.

What is the biggest challenge working in this industry?

One would be introducing colour into clients' wardrobes. A lot of people have the misconception that black conquers all. This is certainly not the case and in fact it can make some people look a lot larger than they are! [Other challenges include] educating people on style instead of fashion and moving clients away from shapes that do not work for their figures.

What is the greatest misconception people have of this industry?

That fashion and style are superficial and not necessary. With 93 per cent of a first impression based on what we see and only 7 per cent based on what we say, personal appearance is extremely important.

What skills and educational background does it take to work in this field?

A knowledge of figure types, an understanding of colour and fashion design, and compassion to work with people one on one. Being able to sew is important but not [crucial].

Which area of this industry is currently growing the most?

Actually my whole business is. My clients are the best spokespeople for my business. Their increase in confidence brings them new relationships, new careers and a change of life direction. They give positive feedback to new people and so my business is booming.

Where do you see this industry going in the next 12 months?

The personal styling and services industry will experience a boom as more people become aware of personal styling as an option. It's not just for celebrities and people in the public eye.

