

The business owner who outsourced her fashion choices

Michelle May, real estate principal, used to wear head-to-toe black. When she launched her own business, she was adamant she would be herself. In colour.

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Michelle May is a buyers' agent and business owner in Sydney. She previously worked for British Airways and co-hosts the *Property Insider* podcast.

People feel safer in black. I get that! I have people comment on my clothes all the time – in a very positive way – but it is usually followed by, “I couldn't wear what you wear”. It's like they don't want to draw too much attention to themselves. I understand that, because for the longest time I also felt that way, even though my eye was always drawn to colour.

I wear colour every day now. It enhances my mood and confidence. If I wear anything black these days, I get comments!



Buyers' agent Michelle May says wearing colour enhances her mood and confidence. **Dominic Lorrimer**

I work in real estate, and I dress for myself. Wearing colour helps me stand out in a crowd (helpful at inspections and auctions) but it also just makes me happy.

I started my own real estate business because I wanted a relaxed and healthy office culture. And part of that is being free to be myself. Clothing has a lot to do with that.

My go-to show-off outfit is a great suit with good heels. Nothing beats good tailoring. Most days, if I'm in the office, I'm in trainers – but the heels come out when needed.

I'm very good at my job, partly because I know when I need to ask for help. So I have an accountant, a career mentor, that sort of thing. Real estate is all about presentation, and I knew I would be better off if I had a stylist to help me get dressed. I've worked with Amelia McFarlane – who specialises in colour – for five years.

Amelia has taken my look and elevated it. It's not about making me a different person. It's actually much more about giving me a level of confidence I didn't have before. It allowed me to see my style as an asset, one that can grow!

I work six days a week so having a stylist is a very efficient way of shopping. Amelia puts looks together for me that I never would have considered, she's helped me invest in beautiful pieces and then taught me how to reinvent them in different ways. It actually saves me money. Rather than buying 10 shirts from Zara, Amelia will help me buy a beautiful shirt from say, Bianca Spender. I'll have it forever.

I like shopping local. Australian brands such as Zimmermann and Carla Zampatti are definitely high on my list, for their cuts and the quality of the fabric and workmanship. I'm a big fan of Nataljia Rushidi, a Sydney designer whose pants are just cut beautifully.

After many years of wearing heels for work, I'm done. Trainers are my go-to now for running between inspections and appointments. You'll find me in Woden; I love that they are sustainable.

I know some people think style is frivolous. But I think, when you feel good about yourself you can focus on your job.