

Dressing For Success

Whether you're looking for work or are seeking a promotion at your current job, dressing the part can make all the difference.

Though it's easy to say that appearances shouldn't matter and that a candidate should be judged on their merit and accomplishments rather than their chosen style of dress, the truth is that your wardrobe choices do reflect upon you and speak to your character in the professional world. This is especially true in the case of job interviews, where a first impression and a relatively short conversation are all that a hiring manager has to base her opinions around.

Dressing For Interview Success

Scoring a new job in today's struggling economic climate is challenging enough. Don't stack the deck against yourself by dressing inappropriately for a hard-won interview. Keeping the following tips in mind can, along with your qualifications and ability to be personable, help you land a job while everyone else is looking for one.

Err on the Side of Conservatism.

If you're not quite sure of how to dress for a specific interview, it's best to err on the side of conservatism. Some companies are proud of their laid-back, no-fuss attitudes about clothing, while others have strict expectations regarding their employees' appearance. If you aren't sure which of these two camps the company you're interviewing for falls into, it's always better to be a bit overdressed than under-dressed.

Skip the Novelty Ties.

There's a guy in every office that's known for wearing kooky ties, but chances are he didn't wear one printed with bananas or a piano keyboard on the day that he interviewed. Meeting a prospective employer for the first time is not an ideal moment to break out the novelty tie you got for your last birthday as a gag gift. Instead, look for something simple and straightforward in a solid color or with a subtle print.

Use a Light Hand with Toiletries.

Gentlemen should be sparing with aftershave and cologne to avoid spurring any allergies or sensitivities to strong scents. Ladies should also make a habit of using little to no perfume when going on job interviews, and to tone down their makeup routine if it normally includes heavy eye shadow or bright red lipstick. Excessive makeup can be very distracting and can make you seem frivolous. Instead of layering the makeup on, opt for lighter touches and less dramatic colors.

Understand the Corporate Culture.

You'll need to know a bit about the company you're interviewing with before the big day in order to offer informed answers to relevant questions an interviewer may pose to you. During your research, it's a good idea to thoroughly research how the company came about, how long they've been in business, what their long term goals are and how you can be an asset to helping them achieve those goals.

Dressing for Professional Success

Landing the job doesn't mean that you should be less mindful of your appearance, especially if you hope to rise through the ranks or get a hefty raise in the near future. Keeping the following tips in mind can help you to continually make a great impression on the higher-ups.

Remember Old Adages.

The old saying that instructs professionals to dress for the job they want, not the job they have, does actually hold quite a bit of water. Dressing just slightly more professionally than your contemporaries sends an accomplished, "together" vibe that can help your supervisors and managers take notice.

Conditions Do Apply.

The condition of your clothes is just as important as their style. Even a designer suit looks sloppy when it's rumpled, so be sure that you're always pressed and wrinkle-free when you walk out the door, that your clothes are in good repair and that no buttons, cufflinks or other items are missing or damaged.

Grooming is Key.

It may be wise to keep your aftershave, cologne or perfume muted or non-existent at an interview to avoid triggering sensitivities, but that doesn't mean that you should skimp on your grooming habits after landing the job. Maintaining your appearance and high grooming standards will continue to set you apart, even after you've landed the job.

Casual Friday Advice.

Many companies embrace the concept of Casual Friday, but it's important to know what that means to your company. You don't want to show up in sweats when everyone else is in khakis and cardigans, but you also don't want to wear a three piece suit under those circumstances. Maintaining your policy of dressing just slightly above your current position, even on casual Friday, is the best policy.

* <http://www.youngupstarts.com/2013/02/08/dressing-for-success/>