

## Dress for Success

Different companies and industries have varying norms with regard to appropriate business dress. For example, a financial analyst at an investment firm may not wear the same work attire as a civil engineer working as a surveyor. Likewise, a journalist's work clothing may be far different from that of an agricultural sales representative. The majority of organizations in all industries, however, have very similar expectations when it comes to interview attire. The standard protocol is professional dress, which means a conservative, well-tailored suit.

This standard is derived from an important rule of thumb in business. As a sign of respect for the person that you are calling upon, always dress at a level of professionalism. When working with representatives in Human Resources, or coordinating with departmental Administrators to schedule an interview, it is appropriate to inquire about appropriate business attire. This applies to telephone interviews as well. Dress as though you were visiting the person. It will impact professionalism that your prospective next employer hears through the telephone.

First impressions are lasting impressions. Although a business suit may not be the everyday work attire for an organization, recruiters expect candidates to look their most professional during a job interview. You want to impress your contact with your skills and abilities to meet their needs, but more importantly, you must immediately demonstrate your "fit" as a member and representative of their organization. If you don't look the part, it is rare that you will get the opportunity to prove your abilities to meet their needs. Research their website to view the appropriate dress.

It is always best to err on the side of conservative dress. Your clothing or accessories should not draw so much attention that they are distractions to the true purpose of the interview. Employers hire for the qualifications, skills, and ability to meet their needs; rarely for a prospect's personality. You do not want a recruiter to remember you for the fact that you wore white socks or too much perfume.

### **WOMEN**

- Pants or skirted suit with skirt length at or just above the knees. Single or double-breasted jacket.
- Navy, black, or charcoal gray are preferred colors.
- White, off-white or light blue cotton or silk blouse with conservative neckline and buttons.
- Low to medium leather heel closed toe.
- Neutral hosiery.
- Matching scarf is acceptable, but should be understated.
- Moderate amount of jewelry or accessories. No more than 1 ring on each hand.
- Professional briefcase or portfolio if needed.
- Minimal makeup and perfume.
- Trimmed fingernails with conservative color, if any.
- Neat hair style with hair away from face.
- Remove visible body piercing, except for one conservative earring in each ear.
- Cover tattoos.
- Your cell phone should be turned off before you enter the facility.

### **MEN**

- Single-breasted navy, black, or charcoal gray two-piece suit. A subtle stripe or tone-on-tone pattern is acceptable.
- White, long-sleeved oxford cloth shirt. Some executives view collar-buttoned shirts as inappropriate for the Board Room.
- Conservative silk tie that matches well with the suit.
- Dark socks that, when seated, will remain above pants cuff.
- Belt & shoes of matching color, typically black or cordovan.
- Shoes polished, with well-maintained heels & soles.
- Professional briefcase or portfolio if needed.
- Minimal cologne, neat hair style, & trimmed and clean fingernails.
- No more than 1 ring on each hand.
- Professional watch, without an alarm that may sound during the interview.
- Do not wear theme clothing, such as a cartoon tie.
- Remove visible body piercings, including earrings, and cover tattoos.
- Your cell phone should be turned off before you enter the facility.