Dress for Job Success

An important part of the first impression you make at a job interview is your physical appearance. An employer might think a job candidate that does not care about his or her appearance will not care about the job.

Neat, clean and conservative is a safe standard for dress (including footwear) and grooming. You may not be interviewing for a job that requires a suit, but you should be the best-dressed person to visit the employer's office or plant. No matter what kind of job you are applying for look professional and ready for work.

Interview clothing tips for women

- Wear pants or suits or skirted suits. If you are wearing a skirt, the skirt length should be at the knee.
- Do not wear clothing that is too tight.
- Avoid cleavage and do not wear fragrances.
- Keep make-up and nail polish simple and conservative.
- Wear conservative jewelry and keep it minimal.
- Choose clean low-heeled shoes.
- Stay away from faddish clothing.
- Remove visible piercings, if interviewing at a corporate office or similar workplace.

Interview clothing tips for men

- Match belt with shoes.
- Have neatly-trimmed facial hair.
- Match a tie to your suit or sports coat.
- Comb your hair neatly.
- Do not wear fragrances.
- Wear dress shoes that are clean and shined.

Colors send messages to employers

Consider the colors you wear to a job interview. Colors send messages that affect the way others see you, and affect your own outlook and energy level. It is especially important for people interviewing for corporate professional-level jobs. Job candidates want to wear colors that show they are confident, reliable and trustworthy.

Studies show that navy blue is the best suit color for a job interview or at work because it inspires confidence. More than any other color, you are more likely to get the job when you wear navy blue to an interview.

Here are three other colors with recommendations and messages they could convey:

- *Red.* The color is powerful and strong. It shows you're not afraid to stand out, and it gets attention. However, too much red may create a flurry of mixed messages about your business sense or understanding of the employer's work environment.
- *Green.* Dark green, such as emerald will look powerful and sophisticated. Avoid the yellow-based greens, such as khaki and lime green.
- *Black.* Is a classic look, but black may also be perceived as depressing, unimaginative or dark-spirited. So add a little color to your black outfit.

Job candidates for professional-level positions are urged to build their core wardrobe around tailored, one-color items and add the patterned items in their shirt or blouse. Your formal business wardrobe should include a two-piece navy, black or gray suit, a long-sleeved white, collared shirt and black dress shoes.

Wearing the right attire with the right colors, good grooming and carrying a professional-looking portfolio can help you create that great first impression, helping to lay the foundation for a successful interview and job offer.

Sources: Creative Job Search Guide and "Colors You Wear and the Messages They Send" by Gloria Starr