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8 Tips To Dress For Interview Success

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Struggling to decide on an outfit for your upcoming job interview? What you wear to an interview creates an image or perception of the type of person you are, so choosing your attire is critical to presenting yourself as the right candidate to hire.

How interview attire has shifted

The dot-com era ushered in a more casual approach to workplace attire, including during interviews, in the past 10-15 years. When the economic recession hit, job seekers began dressing up as a way to differentiate themselves from other candidates. The recession created a heightened awareness by hiring managers of what candidates wear to interviews. Interview attire is also often seen as a test of a candidate's familiarity of the company and industry.

Tips to dress for positive impact

The appropriate interview attire depends on the industry in which you'll be interviewing, as well as the geographic location and time of year.

Spend time on the Internet researching the company, industry and competitors to determine suitable interview outfits.

Still not sure? Call the company's HR department and ask what they recommend you wear.



When in doubt, err on the side of being slightly over dressed, rather than show up looking too casual.

Don't have an appropriate outfit? Go to a large department store like Nordstrom or Macy's and ask for help from a personal shopper or hire a personal stylist.



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Ensure that your clothes are cleaned and pressed.

Avoid wearing perfume or cologne.

Wear makeup and jewelry that are appropriate to the job/company/industry.

Your clothes can influence your chances for landing a job

If a man wore a dark suit to a job interview in California (or any warm climate) in August for a position as a construction worker, the hiring manager might think the man had lost his mind. Why? The attire is inappropriate not just for the position and industry, but also for the location and time of year.

What if a woman wore a navy pant suit, pulled her hair into a low ponytail, wore little makeup, no jewelry and flat shoes to a job interview as a clothing stylist? It's doubtful she would be offered the job. The hiring manager would probably be looking for someone who projects an image of creativity and wears clothing, makeup and accessories that are fashion-forward.

As the old saying goes: "Perception is reality." Think about the image you want to project during your interview and then choose an outfit that will create a positive perception and is appropriate, given the time of year, your geographic location, and the job/company/industry.

– Lisa Quast, author of award-winning book, YOUR CAREER, YOUR WAY!



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