

JVSToronto  
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# Ask the Employment Specialist: How Do I Dress for an Interview with a Casual Employer?

Posted on September 29, 2014 by Joanna Samuels



## Ask an Employment Specialist

Dear Joanna

*What should I wear to an upcoming interview for a social worker position with a large non-profit organization? When I went to visit their offices this summer, everyone was dressed casually and wearing jeans, and sandals. It seemed like an informal environment and workplace, a big plus for me!*

*However, I have learned from job search skills facilitators at JVS that it is important to dress up for an interview. What do you recommend?*

Signed: **Dress for Success (DfS)**

Dear DfS:

Since, I wrote a [post](#) on a similar topic a year ago, I have heard a rumour that when interviewing for a job at Apple, they require you to wear jeans! Award-winning author and blogger [Lisa Quast](#) confirms that “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”. I would definitely follow the eight tips she offers to dress for a positive impact in an interview, and add a few suggestions of my own.

- Research the company, the industry and competitors on the internet, to see what would be a suitable interview outfit.
- Tweet employees this question, ask employees on LinkedIn individually and through groups.
- Keep in mind that the appropriate interview attire depends on the industry in which you’ll be interviewing, as well as the geographic location and time of year.
- Call the company’s HR department and ask what they recommend you wear. Drop in to the office if you are able to have access. Ask the receptionist what to wear.
- If you are not sure, rather be slightly overdressed, rather than show up looking too casual.
- If you don’t have an appropriate outfit then borrow from a friend or family member.
- If this is not possible, then shop at discount stores like Winners, Marshalls and Value Village. Google other similar stores.
- “[Dress Your Best](#)” is a non-profit organization that donates professional clothing for eligible men and women for interviews and work. Referrals are made through an



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employment counsellor at [JVS Toronto](#) or any other employment centre.

- Make sure that your clothes are in good condition: cleaned and ironed. Your clothes can influence your landing of the job!
- Avoid wearing anything scented — included perfume or cologne.
- Chose makeup and jewellery that are suitable to the job, company and industry. For example, if you are going for an interview for a fashion designer position, the hiring manager would be looking for someone who “projects an image of creativity and wears clothing, makeup and accessories that are fashion-forward”,
- Make sure your attire is appropriate not just for the position and industry, but also for the season, weather and location.

Best of luck,

***Joanna***

