

The Job Interview: Dress for Success

Matt | July 14, 2015 | 0 Comments



You have invested several years in university, and now you are ready to start looking for your first full-time job. Alternatively, maybe you have completed an apprenticeship programme or vocational training that has prepared you for a long career in your chosen field. Either way, you want to parley your education or training into a good paying job as quickly as possible. Here's a word of advice: do not forget to dress for success whenever you go to a job interview.

Long before you speak your first word or give the interviewer a handshake, you will present an image of who you are based on your personal appearance. How you dress is critically important to the first impression an interviewer will have. Dressing for success is more important than most people realise.

Appropriateness Is the Key

Prior to the dot-com boom of the 1990s, it was generally accepted that formal dress was appropriate for every job interview – regardless of what the job entailed. A candidate would wear his best suit or her best dress whether interviewing for a professional office position or a construction labourer job. That is the way it was. However, according to Forbes contributor and former Fortune 500 executive Lisa Quast, things have changed.

Dressing for success today means two things: dressing appropriate for the job and presenting a neat, well-groomed appearance. Let's start with appropriateness for the job.

Quast offers the example of showing up for a construction job wearing a dark coloured suit. Not only would this suit not impress the hiring manager, it might also call into question your critical thinking skills. A dark suit is not appropriate to the construction environment. A better choice would be a nearly new pair of jeans or casual trousers, along with a clean and pressed button-down shirt.

Conversely, interviewing for a sales associate position at a fashion outlet while wearing jeans and a t-shirt is likely to get you dismissed before the interview ever officially starts. That kind of job requires dressing in your absolute best.



Regardless of what you wear, the idea is to convey an image that says you care about your personal appearance. If you care enough to present a neat, well-groomed image, you are more likely to also care about your performance while on the job. So dress appropriately for the job you are interviewing for and in a way that tells the interviewer that you care about the image you present.

Other Things to Think About

Not to go all fashionista on you, but we cannot forget about accessories when talking about dressing for success. Those subtle additions to your main wardrobe can have a profound effect on the interview experience by further enhancing the image you project. Celebrities should be viewed with caution, certainly not the best choice to mimic as they will change watch as often as they change their clothes as seen [here celebrities tend to match the watch](#) to the current days choice of clothes.

One example is the wristwatch. Wearing a watch says that you pay attention to time; it says that you can probably be relied on to keep your schedule and complete your tasks according to plans. The great thing about the wristwatch is that it goes well with any attire. You would look equally at home with a watch interviewing for a construction job or an office position.

Other accessories to think about include jewellery, neckties, shoes, and little things such as pens in a pocket or a Bluetooth ear bud. Do some research to find out when such accessories are appropriate and when they are not. The more you know about how to dress for a particular kind of job, the more likely you are to present the right impression during your interview. Remember, dressing for success really does work!

Sources:

1. Forbes – <http://www.forbes.com/sites/lisaquast/2014/01/27/8-tips-to-dress-for-interview-success/>

