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## Does Casual Dress Hurt Your Income?



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Posted by **Bridget Quigg**

Do you dress for success? It's no secret that most people will formulate an opinion of you based on your appearance within minutes of an introduction. But can that short space of time mean the difference between a lucrative career and a low-paying job?

### Well-Paid and Well-Dressed

Do the folks in the suits really make more? Many times, they do. Here are five senior level jobs where you may not get the casual Fridays but it you can afford the dry cleaning bills:

<a href="#">Regulatory Affairs Associate Director</a>	\$132,000
<a href="#">Sr. Research &amp; Development Manager</a>	\$132,000
<a href="#">Product Management Director</a>	\$125,000
<a href="#">Vice President (VP), Engineering</a>	\$123,000
<a href="#">President and CEO</a>	\$113,000

The buttoned up bankers and lawyers of the world can draw a straight line between spit-shined shoes and a big salary. Though many legal professionals are jumping on the business-casual bandwagon, according to a recent Robert Half Legal survey, nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of respondents said they don't like the trend and would prefer more formal dress in the office.

Here are five other positions where a polished appearance correlates to pay:

<a href="#">Commercial loan officer</a>	\$69,300
<a href="#">Nursing Home Director</a>	\$75,700
<a href="#">Diagnostic Imaging Manager</a>	\$68,900
<a href="#">Healthcare Risk Management Manager</a>	\$78,200
<a href="#">Information Systems Auditor</a>	\$76,100

Buttoning up doesn't always reap immediate rewards. [Bank tellers](#) earning a median pay of \$24,600 per year and [personal bankers](#) making \$37,300 per year are still likely to dress up for work, according to PayScale's research.

### Big Paycheck in the Back Pocket of Their Jeans

The advertising industry is one in which everyone from account executives who interact with clients to and vice presidents can wear jeans and earn between \$67,000 to over \$100,000 per year. Here are some examples of well-paid workers in comfortable clothes.

<a href="#">Associate Director, Creative Services</a>	\$71,700
<a href="#">Advertising Account Supervisors</a>	\$67,000
<a href="#">Advertising Creative Directors</a>	\$67,500
<a href="#">Interaction Designer</a>	\$70,800
<a href="#">Engineering Design Supervisor</a>	\$71,500

### Smart Dressing on Smaller Paychecks

Here are jobs that have potential for greater earnings one day, since they require workers to "dress for success" right from the beginning.

<a href="#">Primary School Teacher</a>	\$33,400
<a href="#">Bank Teller</a>	\$26,400
<a href="#">Front Office Supervisor</a>	\$30,100
<a href="#">Assistant Manager, Customer Service</a>	\$30,800
<a href="#">Sales Associate</a>	\$31,000

### Comfortable, Clean and Clearly Successful

Recreation coordinators, landscaping and nursery managers and construction project assistants, all score high on the casual dress scale earning a median pay of over \$35,000 per year.

Here are some other positions that don't bring in big buck but don't have a strict dress code, either:

Supportive Residential Counselor	\$25,200
Library Technician	\$29,800
Archivist, Curator, or Museum Technician	\$32,200
Youth Director (Church)	\$32,500
Bookkeeper Head	\$33,700

### Need More Advice on What To Wear To Work?

**Dress up if you want to move up.** "Wearing jeans and a sweatshirt every day does not make most people think that you are ready for management," says career coach Cheryl E. Palmer. "Although looking the part will not guarantee you a promotion, it does carry some weight in the process," Palmer says.

**Do your boss proud.** Your boss needs to feel comfortable putting you in front of other people as a representation of your company. Lisa Quast, a certified executive coach, says, "If he or she doesn't think clients, customers, or a management team will take you seriously, you're not getting promoted."

**Stand out, even in uniform.** Even individuals who are required to wear uniforms each day can stand out from the crowd by ensuring that the clothes worn are always clean, pressed and worn well, says Kathie B. Martin, president of The Etiquette School of Birmingham.

**Not too fancy.** Manual labor, says Quast, is one example when dressing too formally could spell the end of opportunity. Wear a suit to an interview and she says you risk looking over-qualified or too good to get your hands dirty. Instead, she suggests finding out the most appropriate attire, but stay away from wearing jeans.

**Dressing up doesn't mean selling out.** Even freelancers in creative fields shouldn't discount the power of a professional makeover, says author of The Intentional Networker Patti DeNucci. One client got a new haircut and updated and upgraded her wardrobe. DeNucci says she began attracting a higher caliber of client "with the healthier budgets to pay her the fees she wanted."

**Techies take it easy.** There are some careers that offer six-figure salaries and encourage casual attire, these are often jobs in technology. Jan Slater, a career coach for over 30 years has worked with a number of medical device start ups where even shorts are acceptable in the summer. "Executives only wear nice pants and shirts if there is a board meeting," says Slater.

**Source:** All salary data is provided by [PayScale.com](http://PayScale.com). Salaries listed are median, annual salaries or median, hourly rates for full-time employees with 5-8 years of experience. Salaries listed include all bonuses, commissions or profit sharing.

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