



Point of View

How to Dress for Success

Appearances do matter. How you present yourself forms the foundation of how you are perceived and the impressions others have of you. Dressing for success can be a critical factor in a business setting.

In any business setting, impressions are critical. Should you be judged by what you wear? Perhaps not, but the reality is, of course, that you are judged. A person wearing jeans and flip-flops may be as competent and intelligent as the one wearing a formal suit, but we may not think so simply based on their appearance.

What you wear actually sets the tone of how you are perceived at work on a daily basis. You want your personality, drive, commitment to profession, and understanding of the business world to make you stand out, not your appearance. Here are some hints on how to dress for success whether you are venturing out on job interviews, seeking a new position in your company, or plan to remain in your current job:

- **Neatness counts**
No matter what you wear, your clothes should be neat, clean and fit well. Keep your shoes in good condition. Have cleaned and trimmed fingernails, well-brushed teeth and fresh breath. No body odor. Use minimal cologne or perfume. Dress as you want to be seen - serious, professional, upward-bound and ready to meet clients. If you show pride in yourself, it shows you care for your work.
- **Less is more**
Keep your look simple and successful. Try to fit in with the organization and be aware of the company's dress code or culture. Use simple or minimal jewelry, and remove facial and body piercings. Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled. Avoid styles that cover your face or one that you have to constantly brush back. For women, make-up should be subtle.
- **Women's attire**
It's always best to keep your outfit on the conservative side. Skirts that hit just above the knee, slacks, a tailored dress with a jacket and pantsuits are the traditional business look. Select blouses or sweaters that provide visual interest but avoid those that are transparent, tight fitting or have low necklines, revealing waistlines or details that detract from you. Do not wear overly high heels or too many accessories. If pantyhose are office standard, carry an extra pair in case of runs.

- **Men's attire.**

A button-down shirt, polished shoes, a white or light blue dress shirt and a suit or jacket with dress slacks is traditional business wear. Selecting a subtle or simple patterned tie enhances credibility. Wear socks. Select a leather belt that visually blends or matches your shoes.

- **Making choices.**

Choose professional apparel that you like and for which you receive positive feedback from people who are knowledgeable about the industry standard or specific company policy. The overall rule of thumb is to dress for the task at hand - if you're heading to a construction site, dress differently than if you are part of an office presentation. For dress-down days, 'casual' does not mean sloppy.

Remember that no matter what position you hold, you are being judged all the time. Little things do count, so attention to detail is crucial. How you dress will tell the boss how you see yourself and how you approach your job.