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## Dress For Success

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### General Guidelines

- Research the company's dress code. You can ask when you are offered the interview, call an administrative assistant and ask, or ask someone in your network that is familiar with the company culture.
- Dress two levels higher than the job for which you are interviewing.
- Select apparel, fragrances, jewelry, hairstyle, etc. that do not detract from your professional image. The interviewer's attention should be focused on what you say and your qualifications.
- Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled. Avoid styles that cover your eyes or ones that you have to brush back.
- Remove facial and body piercings other than single ear jewelry.
- Tattoos should be covered to avoid distraction.
- Apparel should be clean, neatly pressed, and fit well and remain in place while sitting and/or walking.
- 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.
- Less is more. Keep your look simple and successful until you become accustomed to the environment and learn about the company's dress code.

### What NOT TO WEAR for Women and Men

1. Earphones and transit pieces

Transit pieces are iPods, sunglasses, headphones, etc. They don't characterize a person as a professional. So take off the transit gear before entering the lobby. You want to impress interviewers with their focus on the interview and the job, and wearing an ear phone does not send that message.

2. BlackBerry devices and cell phones

Do not bring it; leave your cell or BlackBerry in the car. If you bring it in, put it in silent mode. And never answer your phone in the middle of an interview.

3. Cigarettes and coffee

Do not bring your drink into interview. It's OK to have your coffee, but don't bring it in with you. That goes for water and soda as well. Do not smoke before the interview, as you will end up smelling like smoke and potentially offending the interviewer.

### What NOT TO WEAR for Women

1. A short skirt

Remember this is an interview, not a party. A skirt is too short when it rises higher than just above the knee cap. Select a skirted suit, pantsuit or conservatively tailored dress that draws the eye to your face.

2. A revealing top

Avoid tops that are transparent, tight fitting, have low necklines, revealing waistlines, and/or details that detract from your face as a focal point. Typically, arms are covered at least to the biceps.

3. Strappy sandals and stiletto heels

Backless and open-toed shoes are too casual. They could force an interviewer's eyes to focus on your feet rather than on your face and the conversation. If you wear heels, make sure they are not too high - that means leave the 4-inch stiletto heels at home. Wear flat, low or medium heeled pumps. Be sure shoes are clean and polished. Avoid shoes that hinder you from walking fast. If you wear pantyhose, wear plain-style, non-patterned hosiery with a flattering color. Carry an extra pair in case of runs.

4. Fancy nails, excessive makeup, and overwhelming perfume

Your nails should not be so long that they prevent your fingers from hitting the keyboard when you type. If your nails are painted, pick a conservative color, or stick to clear. Be conservative with your eye makeup and lipstick. Perfume should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear perfume.

5. Too many bags and accessories

If you don't have one, invest in a professional, small briefcase. Don't bring a purse and a briefcase to the interview. Jewelry can accentuate your personality and can be an asset if worn in moderation. Avoid dangling earrings and wear no more than one ring per hand and a dress watch. A scarf or necklace is an effective way to focus on your face. Keep it simple!

## What NOT TO WEAR for Men

1. A tight suit

Tight clothes can stifle an interview. Clothes are too tight when they have horizontal wrinkles. Wear a matching suit in navy, black or gray (pinstripe or solid) or wear a navy blazer and gray dress slacks. They serve as a visual background that draws the eye to the face. Wear a white or light blue dress shirt that contrasts with the jacket and/or tie. Typically, arms should be covered to the wrist. Exposing arms by rolling up your sleeves is less formal.

2. A ski or casual coat

Either wear a nicer coat that looks professional with your suit or leave the jacket in the car.

3. Excessive accessories

Stick to a watch, one ring, and a simple belt. Do not wear a loud tie; pick a tie that coordinates with the jacket and pants and strongly contrast with the color of your shirt. Your briefcase is part of the visual effect; consider a simple portfolio as an effective substitute and try to select a color that supports your visual effect.

4. The five o'clock shadow, messy hair, and heavy cologne

Shave your face. A professional haircut is expected; take the time to either get a haircut or style your hair. Cologne should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear cologne. The stakes are too high to allow an overpowering fragrance to distract an interviewer.

5. Unpolished shoes and non-matching socks

Socks should be calf-length or above the calf. Choose natural-fiber blends that allow a flow of air and do not hold in perspiration and heat. Choose colors such as dark blue, black or gray. Wear conservative, clean and polished shoes. Select lace-up (not slip-on) dress shoes. The color should be dark or blend with pants.

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