



# Interview Dressing

## Part One

Today we're exploring the dress codes for different types of job interviews. However, the overall goal for interview dressing is always the same: you want your outfit to be a help, not a hindrance, for your chances of success.

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**W**HICHEVER POSITION YOU are applying for, your image is always going to play a powerful factor in helping your interviewer decide whether you are the perfect candidate for the job, or not.

Within the first few seconds, your interviewer will have made unconscious judgements about you. More than ever, it is essential to make a good first impression. You want like your interviewer to be able to easily visualise you as 'the one for the job', but for this to be possible you need to have done your homework first! For example, how much do you know about the company culture? The perfect interview outfit

for a serious legal firm will be completely different to what you might choose to wear if you were applying for a job at a creative design company!

Before asking the question, "What should I wear for my job interview?" you should first ask yourself:

- What are the key aspects of this job?
- What are five key words that best describe this company and what are its values?
- What are the attitudes of the company leaders?
- What message would I like to portray?
- How do I want to feel?

These questions may not always be answerable just from viewing a company's website alone, but often it is an ideal place to start! In fact, you can usually tell a surprising amount of information about a company just from something as simple as their website design, the tone of the website copy, the images used, and the choice of vocabulary.

For example, some companies adopt a quirky, playful and conversational tone for their website. Key members of the team may be featured on the website with casual profile pictures or slightly bizarre details like the name of their dog, or their favourite biscuit to dunk in a cup of tea! These kinds of details tend to indicate a little bit about the laid-back 'character' of the company and, accordingly, the interview may take on a less formal approach.

There is a good chance that the interviewers may look for quirky playfulness and individuality in your wardrobe choices! Your image can be used as a creative tool to demonstrate that you 'fit in' with the company culture and your interviewer will be able to imagine you in the job position. Your image may even help you to build rapport because in some ways you are 'aligning' with the company and 'matching' the team who works there!

A counter-example might be a company website which has a strong, traditionally corporate look. The tone may be very formal with carefully scripted website copy and a conservative colour scheme. Profile pictures of the directors will often portray them as executively dressed and perfectly groomed. No personal details will be mentioned, but there will be highlighted details of awards and qualifications each person has received.

An interview for this company will have a very different approach and will be strictly regimented. Your image should reflect the

serious and traditional attitudes of the company. Clothes and shoes should be of good quality, in neutral and conservative colours. Traditional etiquette should be observed and your attire should be both inoffensive and appropriate.

In every case, your clothing choices should reflect a forward-thinking attitude. Many people are guilty of having one suit in the wardrobe for years, and they naturally turn to it for their job interview. However, if this suit has become outdated and ill-fitting then it will portray you as 'out of touch' and 'behind with the times'. This is never a good message for any potential employer to hear! >>>





In truth, every interview has different requirements: it would be almost impossible to give a set of guidelines which would be applicable for all situations! The world of interview dressing is a diverse and exciting world, and requires a flexible approach and a positive attitude!

I always believe that in order to find powerful answers, you have to start by asking the right questions! Instead of, “What should I wear?”, it is more empowering to focus first on what you know about the company, clarifying the message you wish to communicate about yourself, and visualising the way you would like to feel during the interview. These questions direct your focus towards the answers you are looking for. They will lead you to discover the ‘perfect interview outfit’ for any scenario (in fact, the perfect outfit will start to materialise in your mind almost effortlessly), and you will be

able to enter the interview room feeling confident and self-assured.

If you’re still not sure what to wear, consider visiting the company and watch employees coming in and out of the building to see what they are wearing. It might help to give you an idea of how formally, or casually you ought to dress. Also, be sure to check with the hiring company if they have a dress code for the interview, as they may be able to give you some guidelines to work with.

In my next article, due out in a fortnight’s time, I will run through some general tips for casual and formal interviews, as well as a list of the ‘What Not to Wears’, most of which are almost always applicable!

Until then, I hope this week’s article has given you some ‘food for thought’ and a slightly different perspective on how to approach this topic.



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