DRESS TO IMPRESS – MEN’S WARDROBE

How you dress for an interview can convey a lot of information to a potential employer. Plan ahead and use care when choosing your outfit. Remember that it is always better to be overdressed than the alternative. Follow these simple guidelines and you will be dressed to impress!

**SUIT:** Your suit should be two-piece, single-breasted, navy blue or charcoal gray, wool or wool blend, solid or with thin pinstripes. Single-vent American-style cut is preferable to double-vent (British) or ventless (Continental). Your pants’ hem should break at the top of your shoes and the jacket sleeve should end at the joint of the wrist and hand. Your shirt cuff should extend ¼ - ½ inch below the jacket sleeve. The bottom of the jacket should cover your seat. Take time to ensure a properly fitted suit. If you feel comfortable doing so, call the company’s Human Resources department and inquire about expected interview attire. This is not an unusual practice!

**SHIRT:** Your shirt should be 100% cotton, well-ironed, white or light blue, with a point-to-point collar. A button down collar is more casual and not the best choice for an interview. The cuffs and collar should be the same color as the body, and stripes are acceptable only if they are light blue and disappear from a distance. Striped shirts should not be worn with striped suits. Spend a couple of bucks to have your shirt pressed at the cleaners.

**TIE:** Your tie should be silk in a simple stripe or repeating pattern, with no more than three colors. The background color should be neutral; navy blue and maroon are ideal. The knot should be small, a half-Windsor or something simpler, but beware of tiny knots in ties of thin material. The end of the tie should fall to middle of belt buckle. Check out www.dressforsuccess.com for basic rules when considering ties.

**FOOTWEAR:** Shoes should be leather, black, and polished but not blinding and in a simple wing-tip style. Socks should be patternless and match your pants or shoes in color (black or navy blue) and long enough to cover shins.

**ACCESSORIES:** Belt should of the same leather and color as your shoes. You may want to purchase a professional leather portfolio and pen to take with you to the interview. Try to leave your backpack in a waiting area if interviewing on Grounds.

**HAIR, ETC.:** A short, conservative haircut is best. Be clean-shaven. If you have a beard/mustache, be sure it is neatly trimmed. Don’t wear a fragrance, as the recruiter could have an allergy to it. If you have an earring, be sure to take it out for the interview.

**DRESSING FOR THE RECEPTION**

The formality of recruiting receptions varies considerably from one company to the next. The promotional materials or invitations to the reception will normally indicate the appropriate attire. In the absence of any dress guidelines from the company, the best approach is to dress in business attire, as you would for an interview.
A GUIDE TO CASUAL BUSINESSWEAR

- A sport coat creates a pulled together look, especially in a business casual environment. It’s also an ideal choice for information sessions specifying business casual attire. Pair up a black, navy blue, or dark gray blazer with khakis or dark-colored wool pants.

- In addition to traditional dress slacks, khakis, Dockers, corduroys, wool flannel, and linen style slacks are also appropriate as casual business wear, either with or without a blazer.

- Casual button-down oxford shirts are a great alternative to dress shirts, with or without a tie. Skip the loud prints (including T-shirts with printed messages) such as plaid and opt for basic white, chambray, or pinstripe. At all times, be sure shirts are well-pressed.

- Shoes may be an afterthought, but unkempt footwear can ruin an otherwise polished look. Oxfords and loafers in brown or black are a good match for khakis or corduroys, but save the sneakers and hiking boots for the weekend.

WARDROBE TIPS FOR THE WORKPLACE

- If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot hang your suit coat up, just fold it wrong side out and lay it down. This will prevent wrinkling and will keep it from getting soiled. This works on the plane, where it can be stored in the compartment above the seat, or on the back seat of your car if you do not have a hanger available.

- Clean a suit when necessary, but avoid over cleaning! Suits may be pressed to restore their original look when needed. Select a good cleaner to prolong the life of your garment. Invest in a steamer that you can carry in your suitcase. If your suit has been in storage for some time, make certain to have it cleaned.

- Dry cleaning a tie is not always successful. To avoid spotting, try spraying your ties with a spot resistant tie care product.

- It is important to keep your shoes polished at all times – especially after wearing them. Clean them and apply a good shoe cream to bring back their luster. Remember, it takes elbow grease with a horsehair brush to get a good shine.

Commerce Career Services, 2011