



DOES YOUR APPEARANCE COUNT?

Name _____

YES!! Appearance does count. You want to stand out among the candidates for a job—but you don't want to stand out because your appearance detracts from your professional demeanor.

Employers given a list of physical attributes were asked to indicate what type of influence each attribute has on their opinion of a candidate's suitability for employment. The results? LOOK AT THE CHART

Employers say, be conservative in your appearance. In fact, the results of this year's survey show less tolerance for less-than-professional appearance than it has in years past.

First, your overall grooming is very important. Before your interview, take a shower or bath. Be sure your clothes are clean. Iron your clothes. Shine your shoes. Comb your hair. Don't wear too much jewelry. Don't wear perfume. One employer commented that

personal hygiene—having dirty hands and fingernails—has a strong influence on an employer's opinion of a candidate (not good). Brush your teeth and be sure your breath is fresh! Almost half of employers noted that nontraditional interview attire—anything other than business suit or dress—would strongly influence their opinions (and not for the good).

Employers said that individual—"trendy"—looks such as tattoos, odd hair color, unusual hairstyle, or body piercing might influence their opinions of candidates. Odd hairstyles and unusual hair color can have a strong influence on the impression you make on about a third of potential employers. Earrings on men, or beards or mustaches have very little influence, employers noted.

Dress to project the image you want the employer to receive. If a position requires maturity, don't dress like a college student going to class. Let your clothing reflect your knowledge of the type of job for which you are applying.

Here are a few more tips. Men should wear a conservative suit for business interviews. Socks need to match the suit, shoes neutral color to coordinate with the suit. Conservative tie – no cartoon characters. If you go business casual, a pair of neutral color dress pants and a crisp oxford shirt works best. Women should wear a dark business suit with matching shoes. Never wear a short or tight skirt or anything revealing. Light makeup, minimal jewelry, polished shoes, conservative hair style, and natural color. Avoid perfume and bright colored or designer fingernail polish. Both men and women can carry a lightweight briefcase to put in extra resume copies and portfolio.

Figure 9	How looks influence an employer's opinion		
	No Influence	Slight Influence	Strong Influence
Grooming	7%	23%	70%
Nontraditional Interview Attire	13%	38%	49%
Nontraditional Hair Color	27%	41%	32%
Body Piercing	25%	43%	32%
Handshake	28%	44%	28%
Obvious tattoos	24%	48%	28%
Unusual hairstyle	33%	45%	22%
Earring (male)	49%	37%	14%
Beard	78%	19%	3%
Mustache	88%	11%	1%

DOES YOUR APPEARANCE COUNT? PART II

Two applicants have similar resumes and credentials. One gets the job over the other...and let's just say it wasn't you. What gives? For starters, maybe your clothes weren't pressed or your shoes weren't shined or your perfume offended the interviewer. Sound trivial? According to *Barbara Glass, Image Wardrobe Consultant and Fashion Editor for Chicago's NBC 5*, it's all in the details. "Why does everyone want to unwrap the present that's the most attractive during the holidays? Believe me, they'll pick that one first. It's how you wrap yourself. It can be the determining factor between which candidate is chosen."



Most people don't have a clue that these details can affect the way an interview goes. You need to package yourself appropriately. Barbara explains, "The idea here is to keep the focus on YOU, not what you're wearing. It's about blending in with the culture you're interviewing for, not setting trends. Impress the interviewer with your ability, not with your clothing." She offers 12 crucial tips to keep in mind when dressing for the interview. Lucky for us, we never make the same mistake twice!

Glass's DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW 101

1. Avoid trends, stay with modern classics. "You're not on a runway! If you want to walk around with funky outfits and pierced body parts... fine, go into advertising! But if you want to be in an executive role, it's not going to fly."
2. Invest in one good suit. Keep it neutral. Black, navy or grays always work. "When you're Donald Trump, you can wear pink. When you're the CEO, you can wear whatever you want. Until then, follow what the culture does."
3. Your clothes need to be tailored to fit. Don't wear short skirts or roll up your hems! A simple white or blue shirt under your suit is appropriate. "If you have to think about it, don't wear it. Go with your instincts."
4. No Distractions! Keep the noise level down. Avoid bangles that clank, backless shoes that clunk, earrings that dangle. "Pearls may sound boring, but there is a reason they still sell at Tiffany's."
5. No Logos. You never know who you're going to offend. "Stay away from symbols, initials or pictures."
6. Groomed, healthy hair is important. "Anyone dealing with money---keep your hair off your face in a knot or French twist. The point is when you are talking to someone and dealing with money, people want you to look serious. You can wear your hair down in the evening."
7. Nails should be clean and clear, at a reasonable length. "I'm shocked at the number of people I see wear nail polish. Red is a no-no."

8. Keep makeup minimal. No heavy mascara or eye shadow. Neutral lipstick is fine.

9. No heavy perfume! It's offensive to the interviewer and you never know what allergies they may have.

11. Arrive 15 minutes early for the appointment. Check yourself out in the bathroom. "Make sure you didn't get splashed from a cab going by or have a run in your nylons. It will also give you a chance to relax."

12. Have a good attitude. "People forget to smile. No one wants to work with people who are unpleasant. This is as elementary as shaking someone's hand firmly or looking them in the eyes when you speak. They may be old rules, but they sure haven't changed for most people!"



Does your appearance count? Part III

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

By Colleen Kay Watson

This is the reality of how to dress for an interview as told to us by the leading Minnesota employers:

- 1. Dress one level higher than the work environment. If you are uncertain as to the dress code; call ahead and ask the receptionist what the typical dress code is for the company.**
- 2. Business casual does not apply for interviews. Some employers wear open collars and khaki pants. They still expect you to wear a suit.**
- 3. Men: Suits are better than sport coats. Women: Skirted suits are better than dresses or pantsuits.**
- 4. Neatness counts more than usual in an interview. Press your clothes and polish your shoes. Wrinkles and scuffs show lack of attention to detail.**
- 5. You can be creative on your clothing budget. You can wear the same outfit to the second and even third interview, with a different shirt, tie, blouse, necklace, or other jewelry.**
- 6. Women: Body piercing should only accent the ears. If you have other piercing that is visible, remove any studs and rings from those locations prior to the interview. Men: Rings on fingers is the only acceptable jewelry you should wear to an interview. You can wear all of your jewelry after you get the job, but not a moment before.**
- 7. Don't wear perfume or cologne to an interview. Allergic reactions can put a damper on your interview. Also, what if you are wearing the perfume or cologne of the ex- girlfriend or boyfriend of the interviewer. Their memory can be most easily triggered by a fragrance and you don't want them to have unhappy thoughts while they are meeting you.**

■ By Colleen Kay Watson, CEO and Co-Founder of Career Professionals®, which helps job seekers find entry-level opportunities in Management, Marketing, Sales, Customer Service, Finance and Administrative position