



Inspire confidence and trust: Image makes the difference

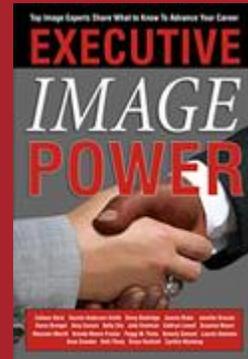
Dressing for that first job

You've landed your first real job. Suddenly you realize you haven't a clue what to wear.

Every office has a dress code--usually unwritten except for general comments like "no flip flops, please". For the first few days, play it safe (choose what you would wear to an interview.) Pay attention to what everyone else is wearing, including the CEO. (Note: there is always one person who is not a good role model) While clothing choices may range from dark suits and pearls to chinos and golf shirts, you'll get a good sense of what is (and isn't) considered appropriate. If the answer isn't obvious, ask your supervisor for guidelines.

When you set out to buy some clothes, here are some tips:

- Start with the basics--2-3 pairs of dress pants or 2-3 skirts, 4-5 shirts/blouses, a couple of sweaters/cardigans, a jacket and two pairs of shoes (closed toe to start).
- Focus on neutral colours, black, taupe, grey, navy or khaki (very "in" this fall).
- Think about styles that suit you instead of the latest fashion, e.g. wider pant legs vs. narrow.
- You may find that a fitted jacket feels a bit formal, even "stiff". Try on different styles and shapes. For women and men, there are jackets in softer fabrics that don't make you feel like you're wearing your parents' clothes.
- If a jacket doesn't fit your budget, consider a cardigan (and not that worn, oversized one you wear watching TV.) Look for style and shape, in the best quality you can afford. Layered over a shirt or blouse, today's cardigans look professional (and keep you warm!).
- Nothing screams student louder than a back-pack. Replace it with a cross body or messenger bag.
- Confidence is important when you're new in a workplace. Buy only clothing that fits and makes you feel good, even if your best friend or parent says it's perfect.
- Test-drive your outfits: pants that dig in at the waist when you're sitting, shirts popping open at the wrong spot.
- Think of styles and accessories that give people insight into your personality. For example, some women are known for their beautiful scarves or what they do with black and white combinations. Men can choose ties with unique patterns or button down oxford instead of dress shirts.



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T. 416-429-8028

E. info@hereslookingatyou.ca

- The final step is to take care of your clothing. Wrinkles, last night's pizza, pet hair and scuffed shoes make you look disorganized, and even worse, as if you don't care.

Whether you like it or not, you do have to dress in sync with others at your place of business on similar career paths. But you can do so while remaining authentic to who you are. What you wear evolves as you and your career grow. Over time, you establish your own work style. That, combined with your skills, is the route to career success.

Project your personal and professional best every day.