

Dress For The Job You Want



Adrian Ackerman

Dress For The Job You Want



Copyright © 2010 Briefcases Direct LLC

Website: www.BriefcasesDirect.com/dress

Email: book@briefcasesdirect.com

Layout by: Creative Chaos

All rights reserved.

United States of America

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Suits	11
Chapter 3: Shirts	21
Chapter 4: Accessories	29
Chapter 5: Caring For Your Wardrobe	41
Chapter 6: Fitting In	49



Chapter 1

Introduction

People start judging you from the moment they first observe you. After the first two seconds they have formed conclusions. This is particularly true during the job interview process where recruiters are forced to make snap decisions on your skills and abilities. And in job interviews there are no second chances.

When confronted with this simple truth, I hear many objections:

How could this be true in our meritocratic times? This doesn't happen any more. My GPA is a 7.3 and I have a nobel prize, who cares what I wear. Everyone is much more casual these days. I am interviewing at a startup ... they work sitting on beanbags!

You, dear reader may have years of experience and education. You may have exceptional talents, be hard working, and be pure of heart. Your prospective employers may be laid back hacky-sack playing dudes or gals. But, when you go to a job interview you

are going to be judged on your appearance. This is true whether you are sitting on a startup's beanbags or a law firm's wingback chairs. You are still going to get judged on your appearance in that first two seconds.

We agree that this is all terribly unfair. But, instead of outrage the more useful response is to acknowledge the situation and to ask how can you turn this to your advantage. How can you make sure when interviewers start judging your appearance, they draw the most favorable conclusions?

I recently had the opportunity to see things from the other side of the desk when my company needed to do a bit of extra hiring. I interviewed over one hundred candidates for five positions we were filling. The candidates were heavily pre-screened, had excellent resumes and glowing letters of recommendation. But, I was surprised at how many of these highly qualified, highly educated candidates instantly put themselves out of the game based on their appearance. At times, their manor of dress and overall presentation was inappropriate as showing up to a baseball tryout wearing ice-skates.

There are dozens of studies demonstrating that well dressed people are perceived as being more attractive, more likeable, and more organized. We would expect that. But, the studies also show that well dressed people are rated more highly on a variety of other completely unrelated traits like being more competent, more caring, and more trustworthy.

Here is a quick test. Think about the last time you met someone that had that aura of success. Certainly their words were important, but what was the first thing that popped into your head. It

wasn't their words - it was their appearance. Do you even remember what they said?

Think about people that sell high end clothing, real estate or expensive cars. Have you noticed that most of the salespeople look like they are worth millions themselves. They looked like they are consumers of fine luxury goods when most of them are not. Most of these salespeople probably know a lot less about homes than the average handyman and less about cars than the average teenage gearhead. But, who is perceived as the expert? And who do you think would sell the most? When you go to a job interview and try to sell yourself, do you want to look like you are selling a Manhattan Penthouse or a rusty Pinto?

Unfortunately, even though appearances are so important in our world, we all like to pretend that this is not the case. Your potential boss is never going to criticize your attire, even if they cared enough to give you the feedback - appearance is one of those minefield topics that every boss avoids in these politically correct times. Instead, capable people who don't understand the importance of appearance are passed over for jobs, they are not considered for promotion, and their work is generally devalued.

I have noticed this is particularly problematic for people from a working class family. Unlike the children of affluent professionals they miss the parental modelling of the unstated dress code of success. Dress is no longer taught in our public schools, and university campuses are becoming sartorially indistinguishable from homeless shelters.

Now, let's not pretend that appearances alone can land you a job. The global job market is a ruthlessly competitive place. You need

to be able to perform. But let's not pretend that appearances aren't important. If you were trying out for a baseball team, you wouldn't show up wearing hockey skates. Showing up with the right gear won't get you on the team - but it will get you a try-out.

This book is designed as a style guide for men serious about their careers, they are willing to be educated about how to make a strong first impression by virtue of their appearance. They are serious about getting their next job or their career moving and know that it is intensely competitive to obtain the best jobs no matter what the job market. Dressing well for an interview is likely the easiest and best investment you could ever make. For example, the best companies easily pay 10 – 20% more than their competitors for top talent, that's thousands of dollars a year in returns on a nice outfit. But that is really a superficial assessment of the value of a job in a great company versus a good company. The best companies lend their brand to your resume in perpetuity – that is, once you have worked for a great company it is forever part of your personal brand and the connections that you make last throughout your career.

“ The way you dress for a meeting is an indication of how you perceive the importance of the interaction. ”

Al Cotrone
Director, Career Center
University of Michigan

Denim Denial

It was perhaps the most important day of Jorge Espinoza's adult life. Jorge had graduated in the top of his Ivy-League university class and was immediately courted by two world-recognized biotechs. Jorge landed a job in a laboratory researching a new treatment for Muscular Dystrophy. He worked directly in clinical trials and felt a great sense of accomplishment when the positive early results started to come in.

Although he had greatly enjoyed working in the lab during his two year tenure, Jorge's desire was to enter management at his company. Most employees were not guided into management until they had demonstrated at least some management capabilities – something that was hard to come by during the two years Jorge had dedicated to the lab.

Jorge was thrilled when he received a request to interview for one of three management positions in a new branch of the company opening next year. He had to drive some distance to the interview and left home extra-early to avoid the traffic he knew would clog the freeway.

He was nervous and had barely slept the night before the appointment. Jorge was already awake when his wife gave him an early morning call to wish him luck. He showered and shaved, put on his best clean polo shirt, brand new khakis, and loafers. As it turns out he did not need to be nervous, the interview was short and there was nothing he could have said

that would have gotten him the job.

The interview committee seemed to simultaneously shuffle papers and clear throats as the chairperson asked Jorge to sit down. He wondered why they all seemed suddenly embarrassed. He later realized.

While Jorge laughs at the whole thing now, it was not so funny at the time. Any candidate applying for a position in a new function should research the attire appropriate for that level and function within the company in question. By looking like a lab-employee he signaled to his supervisors that he belonged in the lab. When his chance came again six months later, he sent a different signal to the committee and the job was his.



Chapter 2

Suits

Since the 1930's the two-piece suit has been standard business workplace attire for men. A two-piece suit consists of a jacket and pants. In the past it has been essential for a man to wear a suit to work to be perceived as professional and credible. In today's market, the suit is more often reserved for more formal occasions such as client or customer meetings and, of course, interviews. Unless otherwise explicitly directed by a prospective employer, a man should be wearing a suit to an interview. Make any other choice and you may as well be wearing a muumuu.

There are many variations and styles, but above all a classic cut English suit is the perfect conservative choice for an interview. A classic English suit is single-breasted with two buttons and two side vents. The side vents allow you to put your hands in your pockets. They also allow the suit to fall naturally when you are seated with the front buttons closed. Variations of the English suit may include the more modern three button or the more trendy single button suit.

The suit is like your coat of armor in the corporate world. Above all, your suit should drape well, it should sit comfortably on your frame. Everything should look fitted, but not tight.

Fabric

For an interview play it conservative and choose a suit in dark color such as a black, gray/charcoal, or navy blue. Paired with a white shirt, and a solid tie, these are safe choices that will keep you in the game for almost any interview. There are plenty of other good choices, like a subtle pinstripe or even a plaid - but they aren't right for every situation and they need to be paired with the right shirt, tie, belt, and shoes. With the plain black, gray, or navy blue suit you really can't go wrong - so if you have only one interview outfit, play it safe and choose a dark solid.

Like color, there are plenty of different fabrics you can choose from but the long standing classic is wool or wool blended with a small amount of some other fiber such as cashmere. Pure wool hangs beautifully and resists creasing. If it does crease while you're sitting, your body heat will cause the wrinkles to fall out again when you stand. Pure wool is breathable so it is more comfortable than synthetics in both cool and warm weather. Other fabrics like cotton, linen, and rayon have a tendency to wrinkle and look cheap making you look cheap.

Wool comes in various grades, usually designated as Super 100s or Super 120s. A larger number indicates a finer wool and can mean a better and finer fabric. But, there is no need to go overboard - the look and feel of the fabric should trump any numbers and anything Super 100s or higher will be fine.

A good way to test whether a fabric is good is to wrinkle a section

of the fabric in your hand and see how quickly the fabric recovers. Salespeople will often do this for you, but will just grab and release the fabric. When you do it for yourself, hold the wool really tight for at least a minute - you really want to get some heat and moisture from your hand into the wool and make a real crease to test the wool.

When inspecting a suit, make sure it is well constructed. A good way to judge the quality of a suit is to look at the stitching particularly on the lapel. Look for small, neat, but slightly irregular stitches. A good suit will be at least partly hand finished, and small, neat, but slightly irregular stitching is indicative of good quality hand finishing.

The cut of the suit should look natural. There should be two side pockets, one breast pocket, a button hole on the lapel and a minimum of other artifice. Again, above all the fit is the most important part of the suit. The suit should appear like it was made for your body. If you need to compromise, I would much rather see you in a clean simple second hand that you had properly fitted by a tailor, than an expensive suit that you just wore off the rack.



Image and fashion consultant Lori Ann Robinson recently described a surprising personal experience: “I once received a call from a financial planner who was seeking a source for a ‘cheap suit’ (his words). Imagine the kind of image a “money-man” whose prime focus is wearing cheap clothes. Success?” Robinson queried. “I think not!”

(What does an expensive suit that doesn't fit say about you?) A suit with a good fit is one that looks natural and will enhance your image.

Pants

Your pants should sit at your waist, if you forget where that is, it is about an inch below your belly button. Pants that sit higher or lower mark you as either an extra in a hip-hop video or as obese and in denial. With pants sitting at your waist and a shirt tucked, they should be snug but not tight. A good test for fit is that you should be able to get two fingers in under the waistband - but the pants should hold tight against the fingers.

Pants may be either straight or have cuffs at the bottom. Pants with cuffs are considered a bit more casual than those with straight legs - but both are fine. Cuffs tend to add a little weight to the



Cuffed pant leg



Straight pant leg

bottom of the pants and help them hang better. Straight pants create a longer line and are better for shorter men.

Pants may be pleated, meaning there are small tucks in the fabric around the front of the pants - these pleats give men with a few extra pounds a bit of space. A more modern silhouette is a flat front pant which omits the pleats and is more flattering to a trim figure.

Whether pleated or flat front, pants should be hemmed for height so that the pant leg gently rests on the top of the shoe and the pant breaks (creases) a few inches above the shoe. To make sure



Pleated pant



Flat front pant



Christopher Berend of Esquire magazine warns: “Buy the suit that fits, not the one you wish you could fit into.” Berend continues, “A suit that’s too tight will make you look fat. And while an oversized suit may seem more comfortable, in reality you’ll just look like a ten-year-old playing dress-up.”

Regardless of the price you pay, Esquire suggests checking four “fit points” for quality appearance:

Pant length: “The hem of your pants should cover the laces of your shoes and slope slightly downward toward the heel, stopping about an inch above the welt. The front crease of your trouser leg should “break” slightly at mid-shin. If the crease is dead straight, your pants are too short.”

Waist fit: Esquire points out that men have been taught to measure at the hips, while women are told to measure the waist at the belly button. However, the correct measuring place is halfway between the two.

Jacket length: Avoid very short or extra-long jacket lengths. Esquire recommends, “With your hands at your sides, the hem of the jacket should just reach your knuckles; the sleeve should rest a half inch below your wrist bone.”

Finally, fit at the shoulder: “A suit fits properly if there’s no overhang at the shoulder pad or, conversely, your shoulder does not bulge out at the top of the sleeve. A smooth, curving line should fall from sleeve head to cuff.”

the height of the leg is correct, make sure to wear your dress shoes when your pants are being hemmed.

Jacket

For an interview most men will want a single breasted jacket in a traditional cut. The two most common styles of cut are the more boxy American cut which works best for heavier or more muscular builds. The Italian style cut is more fitted with jacket coming in a little just above the waist and is better suited to slimmer men.

Heavysset men, can consider a double breasted suit jacket that can help conceal some of one’s girth, but I think a single breasted suit is still a better choice. Double breasted suits tend to look awkward when unbuttoned.

As always a great fit is key. When you try on the jacket and get it tailored, wear a dress shirt. You want the shoulder to sit naturally, the collar to hug the collar of your shirt, and the sleeves to hit at the wrist. There should be no lumps, bulges. or wrinkles.



American cut suit



Italian cut suit

“ In the 10+ years that I have been in Career Services, I have never had a student come back to us, that didn’t get a job because they were overdressed. ”

Justin Finnerty
Director of Career Services
Arizona State University

Dress As You Want To Be Seen

Jason Mowery walked into the men's department of the local Macy's store. His intent was to buy a new suit for his new job at the bank. However, as he looked across racks upon racks of multi-colored, brand-name clothing, his head was spinning. He loved the relaxed look of shirt and tie with no jacket. But is that what his new supervisor would advise?

Donald K. Burluson of Burluson Consulting writes, "Professional dress code standards are alive and well in major financial and executive management. Anyone who aspires to top management knows that personal appearance counts."

Jason may think that dressing appropriately for "business" is an adequate guideline, but "business-appropriate attire" is a much-used phrase that can be misinterpreted unless the company dress code is in print for all to read.

Forbes author Scott Reeves put it this way: "Dress as you want to be seen: Serious, professional, upward-bound and ready to meet clients."

As a bank employee, Jason would be expected to wear a suit. Burluson's own company dress policy states: "A suit means a SUIT; sports coats and slacks are not allowed. The suit must be dark blue, gray or charcoal, (pinstripes are fine as long as they are not too bold). A suit must always be tailored by a professional and cannot have loose threads, pills, or nurdles."

Chapter 3

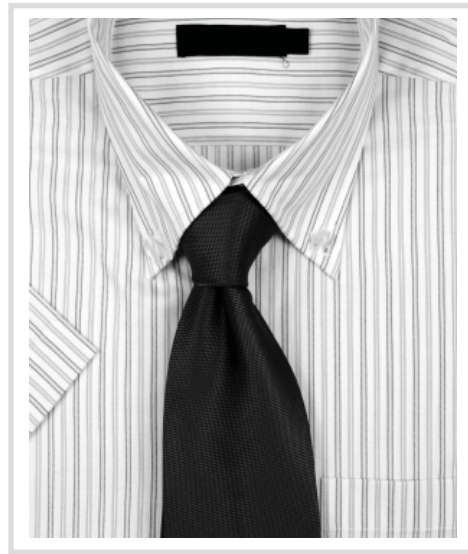
Shirts

The shirt creates a contrast for the other elements of your wardrobe. A crisp white shirt can provide a canvas for a tie that can reveal a shade of your personality, it can contrast the dark colors of the conservative business suit, making the suite more vivid. Conversely, a patterned shirt can be used to add interest from an otherwise staid suit. At an interview, a solid white or French blue are always safe choices and we would stick to one of these two choices. There are fashion colors that are often worn with suits, such as a pink shirt and contrasting or matching tie; while it may be possible that some combination of bold colored shirt, tie and suit may make the correct impression on some interviewers, one never knows when these brighter or non-traditional colors will offend or cast the candidate in anything but the best light. Just as with the recommendations on suit colors, the candidate is advised to stick to some basic, conservative colors. If you absolutely must demonstrate a little personality, save it for your tie where some color is easier to pull off.

There are a number of variations in how a shirt is cut. The collar of a business shirt can be spread, or more pointed (avoid button down collars - these are for more casual shirts). A spread collar is considered a bit more modern and a pointed collar a bit more traditional, either is acceptable just make sure the collar is not too far on either extreme. Be sure to match the knot of the tie to the style of collar -- a narrow knot will look out of place with a spread collar shirt that was intended to give a slim gentleman add a little girth to his appearance. The Windsor Knot, is a thick, bold, triangular knot that is well suited to the spread collar shirt.



Spread collar



Point collar

Shirt cuffs can either be the more common barrel cuff or the French cuff which is worn with cufflinks, again either choice is fine. Cufflinks and the French cuff offer the opportunity to add a conservative, traditional touch to an outfit, or to make the outfit more formal. In situations where interviewees are interviewing with traditional companies, such as banking or financial services

institutions, the French cuff could give an edge to the candidates level of polish and overall appearance.



Barrel cuff



French Cuff



Man without an Iron

Phoenix fashion designer Jennyvi Dizon took one look at her work supervisor and knew immediately that he needed serious help. His wardrobe seemed to revolve around “wrinkle-free” khaki pants and “wrinkle-free” polo shirts in several combinations. But he wasn’t fooling anyone according to Jennyvi! “I think everyone knew that he either didn’t have an iron or thought that he had just rolled out of bed and jumped into the nearest clothing,” she stated flatly.

After Jennyvi's supervisor was promoted to a different department, the two began dating and Jennyvi began working on her future husband's image. "Before he met me, he didn't really understand how others at work perceived him," she explained. "He didn't have a sense of style," she said. "There is nothing more professional or more attractive to me than a well-dressed, well-put together man."

While doing research for an upcoming book, Amanda Johns of Southwestern Consulting in Nashville found that both men and women reported the same thing: the majority of first impressions of another person had to do with - not looks- but their wardrobe and appearance!

Jennyvi agrees. She prefers a man who looks as if he made the effort of showering, shaving, ironing his clothes and coordinating a professional look – complete with crisply-creased pants. Her former supervisor has since become her husband and she proudly admits, "I've reformed him! He dresses so much better now."

When shopping for a shirt, start by finding a shirt to fit your neck size, the other parts of the shirt can be easily altered by a tailor. When trying on the shirt and buttoning up the collar you should be able to insert two fingers between the shirt and your neck, but not more. The collar should sit up smartly and should not dig into your neck, nor be flopping around. The shirt sleeves should

hit at your wrists and when the shirt is worn under your jacket it should protrude about half an inch out from the shirt sleeve to again create a bit of contrast. The body of the shirt should be somewhat fitted - contouring to your body without being tight.

The shirt should be cotton or made from a predominately cotton fabric blend. Some shirts will have a small amount of a synthetic added to increase wrinkle resistance. The fabric should be thick enough that it is opaque. Some shirts are not made of heavy fabric and thus prone to transparent moments in bright light or in the sun, which can provide others with more detail regarding chest hair than might ordinarily be revealed during polite interaction. Sheer fabrics are associated with cheap shirts and more casual shirts. Similarly, the shirt should not have any sheen - sparkles are for clubbing and tween girls.

A dress shirt should be worn with an undershirt at all times. A solid white, clean undershirt that is lightly worn, at most, can save a candidate significant embarrassment. This is particularly true during lengthy interactions where one must remove one's jacket for the sake of comfort. Inevitably one finds oneself in hot meeting rooms, or lengthy discussions where the removal of the suit jacket may be necessary, wearing the appropriate undershirt is an insurance policy for the wise candidate. Nothing could be worse than removing a suit jacket to reveal "pits" (damp underarms that have soaked through the shirt) or yellow stains from prior incidences of excessive perspiration in the absence of an absorbent undershirt.

Non-iron shirts have become popularized in recent years, some of which appear similar to traditional dress shirts. If you do opt for non-iron, pay particular attention to the quality of fabric - many non-iron shirts appear to have a sheen or a non-natural appearance

relative to the 100% or 80% cotton dress shirt. The non-iron shirt may be convenient for some, however, for the interview and in conjunction with a high quality suit, the non-iron shirt will likely look cheap and fail to send the same message, unless it is made by the highest quality designer in which case they may be passable but quite expensive. Thus, it is much less expensive to find a high quality, off the rack shirt in your size that is 100% cotton and well made than to purchase the highest quality non-iron shirts. This approach also reduces the risk that the candidate purchases a shirt that is obviously non-iron to the interviewer. While such detail may be meaningless to most, there are some that notice this detail just as they would notice a sports watch worn with a suit. An obviously non-iron shirt is roughly equivalent to wearing a clip-on ties.

As with a good suit, quality is in the details. Look at the stitching of the shirt. Stitches should be small neat and regular. Also look at the way the buttons are sewn on, this should be neat and with no loose threads. Better quality shirts will have thick buttons made of mother of pearl. Avoid any shirt with a thin obviously plastic button - this radiates cheap.

Avoid any visible branding on a business shirt. Business shirts are best unadorned. If you want the shirt to be monogramed, get the monogram somewhere that is not visible while you are wearing your suit such as the shirt sleeve or the shirt tail - under no circumstance should it be on the shirt pocket. The shirt is one place where you can save some money. A good quality unbranded white shirt will look identical to a designer white shirt at a small fraction of the price. The store brand shirts at higher end retailers often

get you a very nice shirt at a budget price. It is one of the open secrets in the garment world that shirts are usually outsourced - so a smart shopper can get a store brand shirt made in the same factory with the same fabrics for a fraction of the price.

“ The culture and trends today are more relaxed, but the some worlds like accounting have stayed conservative. Know your audience, but we suggest that conservative is always better. ”

Anthony Herrer
Director of Accounting Internships
Baylor University-Hankamer

Chapter 4

Accessories

He's known as "Surfer Sam" on weekends as he catches the big waves at Moonlight Beach in Encinitas, California. His time in the golden West Coast sun has made Sam Tucker a handsome, tanned fellow; the casual dress code at his place of employment allows him to show off not only his tan but his muscular, conditioned body as well.

As an upper-level executive for a very important pharmaceutical company focusing on the need for innovative cancer treatments, Sam is as intelligent as he is good-looking. Twelve years in the same business have provided him many contacts and many opportunities for career change, which he has always turned down. Now in his thirteenth year, he has decided to make a huge career move.

Surfer Sam has decided to make a coast-to-coast move and plans to interview with several of the world's largest pharmaceutical research facilities in New York and New Jersey.

Unfortunately, Sam Tucker has failed to do his research into these East Coast potential employers. “Corporate” in the East is conservative from one end of the board room to the other, and “hanging” with them requires a conservative wardrobe and serious career approach.

On the morning of his first interview in New Jersey, Sam selects his favorite blazer and coordinating shirt. Surfer Sam goes “tie-less,” exposing instead his bronzed neckline and a heavy gold chain beneath the unbuttoned shirt collar. He dresses as he feels comfortable, and comfortable for Surfer Sam is nothing but relaxed.

When Sam enters the formal conference room of the research company, the descendants of the Jersey born and bred founders remove their reading glasses and take a long look at this fun-loving, West Coast “surfer dude.”

“What you wear continues to say a lot about your work,” the experts at Salary.com remind us. “So think about your company, your teammates, clients, management, and your position when reaching into your closet, and you’ll always come out a winner.”

Likewise, what you wear to the interview may determine whether or not you are invited back for the second round with senior management (ie, your future boss’s boss).

Tie

The necktie is undoubtedly the distinction between business and business casual attire. It has been essential to men’s dress since the mid-1920’s. The first versions of the modern tie were cut along the grain of the fabric and lined in a different fabric. These ties wore out quickly and the lining showed if the tie was not lying

perfectly flat. The straight grain did not allow the knot to fall elegantly. These versions were soon replaced with what is now the modern man's tie. The modern tie consists of a strip of fabric cut on a bias, 45-degrees to the grain of the fabric. It is then folded over itself so that no matter what the position the tie is in the lining never shows. Because it is cut on the bias the knot lays beautifully as the bias allows the fabric to ease into the shape of the knot and does not resist it. The tie has a cotton interlining which helps it maintain the shape and determines the volume of the knot.

The tie, as with most men's accessories, is a place where a man can show his individual sense of style. In men's attire, individuality comes by way of the small details. It's important to show your personality but to also do so subtly. Stripes and prints are accepted patterns for a man's tie. Anything that is appropriate for the workplace and is visually appealing is acceptable. Try experimenting with texture, pattern and color. Even something as small as the variation between the texture of a man's suit and his tie can create an interesting visual impression. In rare cases a man must be careful what type of stripe he wears. In England, where the tie originated, stripes were associated with specific clubs and schools. It would be a faux pas for an American businessman to unknowingly wear the



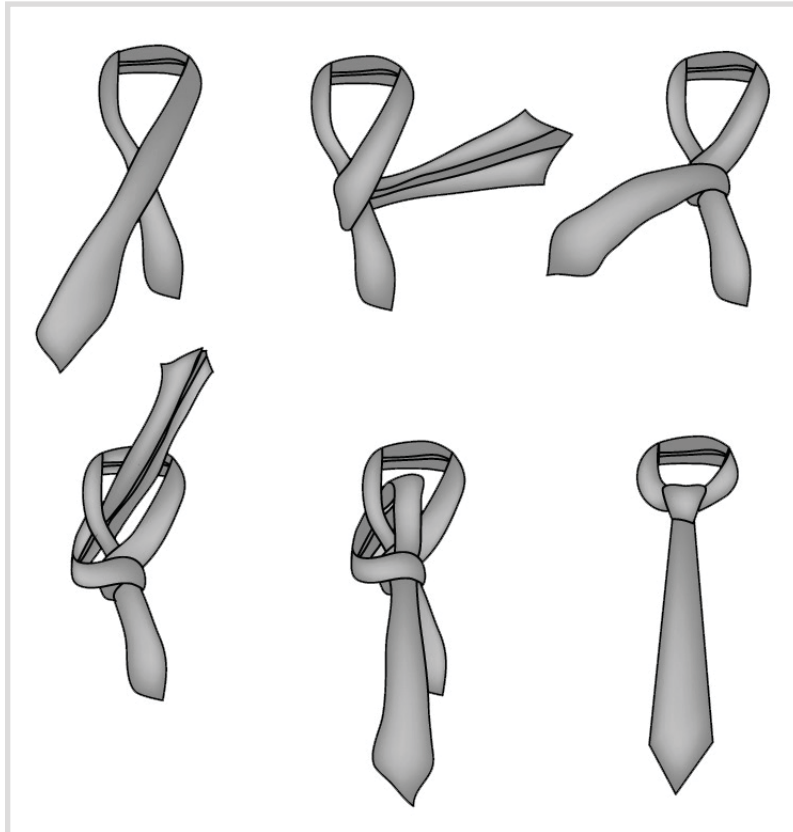
stripes of a club to which his English associate belongs without being a member himself. It is fairly common for men in England to wear a stripe that has some significance. In America, however, this is rarely an issue.

Most formal ties are made of 100% silk. Polyester ties imitate silk but it is always better to get the real thing. Silk looks and falls better on the body. Knit ties can be acceptable in formal attire but it takes skill to choose the right one and to pair it well with the suit and shirt. If you are unsure, it is best left to those working as writers, academics or artists as there is more room in those industries to wear a variety of styles. Wool neckties are generally for the weekend and the country, though if chosen carefully they can be integrated in to the business wardrobe. It is appropriate to wear a wool tie in the fall and winter.

There are very few features that distinguish a quality necktie from a cheaply made necktie. The single most important factor in determining quality is the “hand” of the tie. This refers to the feel of the fabric itself and what the tie feels like when you pick it up. If you pick it up and it feels like a good quality tie it probably is. Other factors like the stitching, construction and finishing have little bearing on the final quality of the tie, as it is the same whether it is high end or poorly-made. The highest cost of making the tie is in the fabric and it is also where the greatest difference in quality can be found. The ultimate in luxury ties is the “seven-fold tie”. The seven-fold tie has no cotton interlining or lining fabric. It is made completely of silk so that the silk itself forms the body and structure of the tie. A single piece of silk is folded seven times to achieve this result. These ties use a fair bit of fabric and are considerably more expensive than regular ties.

The standard tie width is four inches. (The width of a tie is measured between the two corner points at the bottom of the tie.) This width works on most men most of the time. Variations in width are usually a style statement as it isn't necessary for most men to match their tie width to their physical size. There are exceptions. A narrower tie indicates a younger, 50's-inspired aesthetic. It looks best on young men and men with a lean build. A wider tie is only really acceptable on men whose stature supports and requires the extra width. Wider ties look best on very tall or broad athletic men. On all other body types wide ties should be avoided.

The "Four-In-Hand" knot is the easiest to tie. Place the tie around



your neck with the wider side of the tie to your right. It must hang lower than the narrow end. With your right hand wrap the broad end of the tie over the narrow side and under completely to where you started. Pass the broad end over the narrow side once more so that it is lying on the left. Push the broad end of the tie upwards through the neck hole toward your chin. Now pass the broad end downward through the top layer of the knot and pull it smooth. The knot should now be formed. Tighten the tie gently and remember to button up the last button on your shirt.

A good high quality silk tie with a plain or classic geometric design is a worthwhile investment. But, if funds are low, this is an easy item to borrow.

Shelling Out

Timothy Reeves, a junior executive in one of Chicago's best-known consumer goods packaging companies, was unceremoniously terminated from his job late last year. His supervisor credited the slow economy for the company lay offs - which did very little to soothe Timothy's ego. However, the generous three-month severance package he received did much to alleviate his immediate suffering.

He took off for a month of sun, beaches, and culture in Buenos Aires and freely used his severance pay in the best hotels and restaurants.

Shortly after his return to his small apartment in the Lincoln Park area of Chicago, he called in a few favors and lined up a set of interesting job interviews. He used the last bit of his "goodbye bo-

nus” to buy a new “power suit” and have his hair styled. He chose a suit that complemented his Argentinian-tan. It was a handsome, two-button, wool navy pinstripe which he paired with a solid, pastel blue tailored fit dress shirt. His tie was a beautiful shade of golden-yellow (reminding him of the sun on the beaches of Buenos Aires). The entire look was impressive, and the tie – while brightly colored – was subdued just enough that potential employers would not raise eyebrows or question his sense of business style.

Timothy arrived early for his first interview, it happened to be with a company that he most-hoped would hire him. He couldn’t help but notice the receptionist and other female office personnel glancing at him as he was shown to the conference room. He paused before stepping inside to straighten his tie, smooth his hair and button his suit coat. He felt totally prepared, totally “on target” for the interview.

The company’s Vice President and the Director of Personnel stood up as Timothy entered the room. As if on cue, both men extended their hands for a welcoming handshake. Timothy grinned and automatically extended his arm to shake the hand of the Vice President first.

It was already too late when he noticed the Director of Personnel was trying to overcome the urge to giggle; the Vice President had firmly grasped his hand and had noticed his unconventional watch strap – pink, white and blue shell band he wore as a souvenir of his South American trip.

Cufflinks

Cufflinks are worn on shirts with French cuffs, a shirt which has double cuffs with no buttons. French cuffs may take a little more time and thought to wear than a buttoned cuff shirt, however, they send the message that you care about your appearance and have invested in making a good impression. Cufflinks are a great way to express your personality and individual taste in a situation where the standard suit is the norm. But, if you do opt for cufflinks keep them discrete - and nothing too flashy.



Belt

A plain black or brown leather belt is the only correct option for formal dress. The color of your belt should coordinate with the color of your shoes. A brass buckle is considered to be the most classic color. Pewter and silver belt buckles are considered more fashionable but are still safe choices. Just keep the buckle simple and functional.

The belt should be sized so that you are on the second or third loop from the end of the belt when the belt is fastened. This means that you will have about two inches of belt protruding from the end of the buckle. If the belt is too small you will look like you are squeezing into your pants after some major weight gain.

If the belt is too long hanging down from your pants you will look like a circus clown.

With a belt, it is important to invest in a nice high quality leather belt. It is worth spending a little more on a classic black and brown belt. They will be staples in your wardrobe. If you cannot afford one, this is something that can easily be borrowed from a similar sized friend.



Shoes

Finally, shoes finish the outfit and are extremely important. A beautifully put together look can be undone by ugly or unkempt footwear. It is advisable to own two pairs of shoes so that each pair can “rest” for part of the week. If you own two pairs of shoes they will last exponentially longer than if you wore a single pair the entire week. The black Oxford is considered the standard shoe to be paired with a suit. It is a clean, black leather shoe with a seam running horizontally across the toe. The wingtip shoe has stylized seams that run along the toe and sides of the shoe. The seams are adorned with a punch hole detail. Wingtips are appropri-

ate to wear with a suit but are considered slightly less formal than the Oxfords. Loafers are comfortable and cooler than laced shoes but would be considered too casual for most work places.



A classic black oxford is another piece worth investing in as you build your work wardrobe as it will be a staple of your wardrobe. Quality shoes are expensive, but are often heavily discounted during sales. Since the shoes you will be buying are not heavily influenced by trends or season, the post-christmas sales are a great time to pick them up at a significant discount.

A formal shoe should never be expected to protect the wearer from the elements. The stitching on the shoe makes them inherently vulnerable to water leaks. Salt and rainwater can damage the leather on the outside of the shoe. If your commute to work will

require you to walk a long distance outside it is advisable to wear a waterproof pair of shoes to work and change to your formal shoes when you arrive. Remember to keep your shoes polished and free of scuffs. A neat appearance and clean shoes always leave a good impression.

“ We suggest students think in terms of ‘office dress’ as the appropriate dress for interviews. Dress up, not down. If you don’t know, it’s easier to take a tie off than not have one to put on. Make an error in dressing more formally than the opposite ”

Bill Brady
Director of Career Services
Brigham Young University

Chapter 5

Caring For Your Wardrobe

How you take care of your possessions says a lot about you. An old but well tended suit says to an employer that you pay attention to detail, that you are going to take care of their business, and is going to make a much more positive impression than a suit that has been neglected. Taking care of your wardrobe also saves you money, because everything will last a lot longer and stay in good condition.

Suits

When you buy a new jacket or overcoat always remove the basting stitches. Basting stitches are put in the jacket to hold delicate elements of a suit in place. Basting stitches are large loose stitches that may be in a contrasting or matching color of thread. For example, functioning pockets are often basted closed with a loose stitch so that they are not stretched out in the store before the jacket is purchased. The same is true for open vents. These are basted shut using an “X” stitch. You may also find large white

basting stitches on the lapel or chestpiece of ready-made suits. This is meant to emulate the basting stitches that would be present on a bespoke suit at the time of purchase. Always remove these stitches before wearing your suit. As a general rule, if you can stick your finger between the stitches they are basting stitches. Clip them with a pair of sharp scissors and pull the thread out. On overcoats and some suit jackets a label indicating what the garment is made of is sewn to the bottom of the sleeve. It is a common mistake for this label to be left in place. That is a tell-tale sign that the wearer is new to the world of formal attire. Always check for and remove these labels before wearing your new purchase.

Simply hanging up your suit after each wearing makes a huge difference. When you get your suit jacket home, it should be hung on a broad hanger so that the shoulders keep their shape. The hanger should fill out the jacket shape and keep it from creasing. Pants should be hung upside down from a clip hanger so that the weight of the pant keeps them wrinkle-free. These hangers also



help to keep the center crease on the pant crisp. A regular hanger is fine too, just be sure to fold the pant along the crease before you place it on the hanger.

You should always leave cleaning and ironing your suits to a professional cleaner. They use a Hoffman press – a special machine built in the shape of a jacket. Ironing a jacket is an art and should only be trusted to a reputable cleaner. The skill of the person pressing your suit can make or break the suit. Good professional pressing can make a cheap suit look expensive and bad pressing can make an expensive suit look cheap. If you must do a small amount of pressing yourself always place a layer of cotton over your suit before pressing it so that you don't create areas of shine on the fabric.

Well-made suits need only be cleaned twice per year. Do not clean them more often unless it is absolutely necessary. Frequent dry cleaning causes a suit to deteriorate faster than it should. After wearing your suit for a day it only needs to be brushed free of lint and aired out before being put in the closet. Use a soft, natural bristle brush. Sticky lint rollers work but they can leave traces of adhesive on the suit, which can damage it over time. Another way to freshen your suit is to steam it. Steaming is as simple as taking the suit in to the washroom when you shower. Hang it on the back of the bathroom door and the moisture from the shower will lift smells and help the creases fall out. This is a great way to quickly refresh a suit in a hotel room after it has spent the day in a suitcase.

Shirts

After one or two wearings, take your shirts to a reputable cleaner.

Get light colored shirts laundered, dry clean chemicals are harsher and can yellow white shirts. Ask for a light starch every second or third wash. The starch helps the shirt hold its shape - but too much starch will make the shirt stiff and lead to premature deterioration of the shirt. Get darker colored shirts dry-cleaned, dry-cleaning preserves the color of the shirt.

Get your shirts put on individual hangers and individually wrapped in the plastic. Leaving the shirts in the plastic helps to preserve the shape particularly when travelling.

Hand washing shirts in a mild soap is even better than sending them to the cleaner, because it is less damaging to your shirts than machines used by your cleaner. But, it is a lot more work and you will need to be skilled with an iron to press the shirt afterward - so the cleaner is a better option for most of you.

As with suits, placing the shirt back on the hanger after each wear helps to preserve the shirt.

Ties

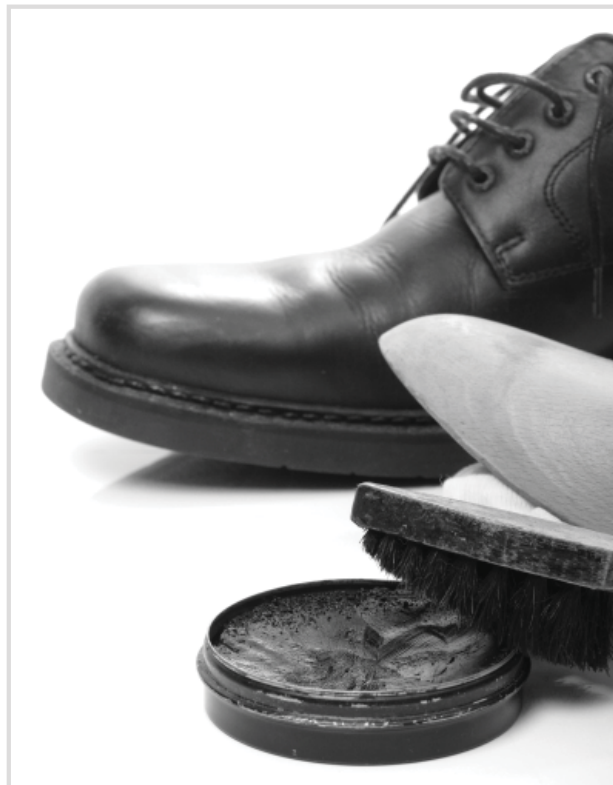
Neckties should rarely need cleaning. If you stain your tie try a spot cleaner but always test it on the fabric first. Choose an area on the back of the tie to test before applying the stain remover to the front. Consult with your cleaner for more stubborn stains.

If your tie is creased wrap it around your fist like a roll of tape and then remove it from your hand while retaining the tight roll and let it sit overnight. Never iron a tie. It has round edges that should never be ironed flat. Only a skilled cleaner is qualified to clean and press a high value tie.

Always store your ties without folding them. Either place the ties flat in a drawer, loosely roll the ties, or hang the ties on a dedicated tie rack.

Shoes

After wearing a pair of shoes, brush them off with a stiff brush to remove any debris. Shoes should be aired out for one day before wearing them again. Feet generate quite a bit of moisture so the airing allows the shoe to dry before being worn again. Doing so will double the life expectancy of your shoes. Put wooden shoe trees inside your shoes before storing them. Shoe trees help to absorb moisture and preserve the shape of the shoes. Keep shoe leather healthy by using a good quality polish that will not only keep a shine on the shoes but will also nourish the leather.



“ Dress like you want the position, not like you already have it today our society is more casual in general but that doesn't necessarily translate well to career interviews. ”

Dawn Clark
Career Counselor
Pacific Lutheran University

“ Go see a professional and get assistance in making decisions about the way you dress, high end department stores can offer insight into what looks good. ”

Jim Mitchell
Career Coach
Ball State University

Chapter 6

Fitting In

T. Wayne Hall had grown up on his family's cattle ranch in Southeast Texas. "Big Daddy" Hall offered T. Wayne the keys to the ranch after he graduated from college, but his son had different ideas. T. Wayne's career path carried him toward the other BIG industry in Texas – "Black Gold." T. Wayne went to work for Texas Oil, Inc. and eventually became CEO of the entire company – a feat Big Daddy secretly admired even though he outwardly professed disgust at his son's choice.

Texas Oil permitted its employees to dress like rich but relaxed Texas Oil Men. High-priced cowboy shirts and boots were not out of the ordinary and T. Wayne had a closet full of each in various styles and colors. Classic denim blue jeans were permissible at certain levels of the company, but in others a western-cut blazer and khaki pants or informal suit pants were the rule. Along with the western-style attire, an assortment of expensive silver and turquoise accessories enhanced the employees' clothing on a daily basis. Watches, tie tacks, cuff links, and belt buckles were items

that even the pickiest Texas thieves desired for their re-sale value.

After a decade at Texas Oil, Inc., T. Wayne began to feel an itch to return to the outdoor life again. Big Daddy had died two years earlier, and without family ties, T. W. (as he now preferred to be called) had no reason to remain in the dry, dusty heat of Texas.

T.W. headed for Seattle where he had connections in a small forest products company. He was hired on a trial basis as head of field operations and would be required to spend vast amounts of time outside where the company's lumber was cut and prepared for production.

He looked forward to the change in responsibilities and to meeting the company personnel. When the appointed first day of work arrived, he reported to his supervisor in the company meeting room. Several higher-level executives were present and a number of other CEOs in charge of various parts of the company were there for the "meet and greet."

As introductions were made, T.W. remembered to firmly grasp each man's hand and smiled warmly as he repeated their names.

"Howdy, Mr. Wilson. I'm T.W. – T.W. Hall," he drawled in his best Texas accent. Mr. Wilson's eyes were diverted to T.W.'s giant silver belt buckle which was fashioned in the shape of a Longhorn steer's head – complete with horns. It was a valuable piece he had kept from his father's silver jewelry collection, and he wore it on an expensive leather belt edged in tiny but elegant turquoise and pearl beads. In Texas, the belt would be the envy of any true cowboy.

In Seattle, Mr. Wilson stared at the belt buckle as if he were about

to snort like a steer himself! Clearly his new colleagues were not used to cowboy fashion; in fact, when matched up with T.W.'s long, drawn-out Texas twang, the Seattle company's executives were a bit repulsed. After greeting T.W., most of them turned away to small groups or left the room entirely. T.W. stood in the middle of the room wondering what he had done wrong.....

Always keep in mind that you need to dress for the job you want. Observe what the people above you and below you wear, and dress in a way that mirrors the most successful. It's ancient advice that still holds true today. T.W. did not bother to consider the perception his regional style would project in a different work environment. A little research would have shown T.W. what the expectations of his colleagues might be.

In this situation, T.W.'s image was defined by more than his clothing. His Texas "twang" when combined with the use of some casual, regional parlance caused some of the executives to view him as a misfit. Famed author and journalist William Raspberry has said, "Good English, well-spoken and well-written, will open more doors than a college degree. Bad English will slam doors you didn't even know existed."

Make your words fit the job as closely as your wardrobe.

When dressing for the workplace there are a few things to avoid. Never wear shorts to work. It is never appropriate, not even on the most casual days in the most casual workplaces. You should also avoid wearing sandals or open-toed shoes opting instead for shoes with a completely closed upper.

While novelty ties and cufflinks do attempt to bring humor and

personality into the workplace this can be done in much more subtle ways. It's smart to avoid novelty ties and cufflinks. At worst they can be considered offensive but even at best they are considered tacky. A man can show a lot of personality in his wardrobe through his choice of subtle details. In a world where everyone wears a suit these small details make a big impression. It is therefore unnecessary to wear anything that on its own makes a loud statement.

In shoes anything ostentatious should be avoided. Exotic leathers like ostrich and lizard are overkill. Suede shoes are considered too informal for the workplace. Bright colors are considered tacky. Always stick to classic colors.

Anything that is meant for the weekend should not be incorporated into the work wardrobe. Wearing a sports watch or t-shirt with a suit is unacceptable. It sends the message that you do not take the people you work with seriously enough to dress professionally for the job at hand. Making a good impression means matching and exceeding the effort that others put in to their wardrobe.

Never unbutton your shirt in a meeting or when you are outside your office walls. It is a faux pas to allow your undershirt to show. It is better to get a shirt that fits you well than to unbutton one when it is uncomfortable. Always be sure to wear an undershirt to absorb perspiration and render translucent fabrics opaque. No one wants to wonder if they are seeing your chest hair through your shirt. Additionally, the undershirt protects your shirts and suits from becoming soiled so that they do not have to be cleaned frequently.

Take care not to wear too much cologne in the workplace, better

yet don't wear any at all. Cologne was invented in the absence of scented soaps and shaving creams. With all of these scented products and with underarm deodorant, cologne has become a luxury rather than a necessity. Many workplaces have banned cologne entirely due to allergies. If you like the scent and would still like to use cologne, use it sparingly. Spray a mist out in front of you and walk through it. This is enough. Alternatively you can dab a small amount on one pulse point: the wrist or the neck. Remember cologne has never got anyone a job, but wearing too much cologne or having an interviewer that is allergic can easily stop you getting a job.

Be careful when buying patterned socks. They make it much more difficult to match your shirt, tie and suit effectively. It is much easier to co-ordinate all the elements of your look when you are wearing solid colored socks. With a dark colored suit, you can't go wrong with plain black cotton socks. With a lighter color, a solid brown is a good versatile choice. Socks should always be long enough to cover your legs when you are seated with your legs crossed. Showing your bare leg above your socks is a faux pas.

If you are just starting your career or if you work closely with a superior be careful not to buy items that are considered flashy status symbols - especially if your superior does not wear those items. You should look neat, and well put together. Avoid anything ostentatious. Especially among older, more conservative colleagues anything with a visible label will be considered gauche. If you want to wear better articles of clothing, invest in quality items rather than popular labels. If you reach a stage in your career where status symbols become acceptable you can then start to buy items that have the earmarks of status brands. But remember, no matter where you are on the corporate ladder, subtlety is key. Well

made and well fitting clothes may not attract everyone's attention, but subtlety attract the right type of attention from the people that matter.

Our brains are wired up to make quick decisions in any environment, this is a function of the society we live in as well as an evolutionary survival mechanism – we must decide quickly about people and situations and the vast majority of the initial clues about a person or situation tend to be visual cues. In the case of a business setting, we can change our appearance through grooming, hygiene and attire to demonstrate that we fit a particular role and environment.

It is my sincere hope that this book will assist those seeking to build their careers through effective management of the job market - those people who are serious will take their appearance seriously as well. The difference between first and second place in any competition is often very slim – in a running race it is tenths or hundredths of seconds. I view the competition for jobs as being equally competitive. Never before have there been more people applying for the same jobs, many with phenomenal backgrounds. Any interaction you have is extremely valuable and cannot be squandered by a lack of preparation, one element of which is your physical appearance.

The next time you are getting dressed for a job interview, close your eyes and visualize the kind of person that you think the employer is looking to hire. Now, take a step back, look in the mirror and ask yourself whether you look like that type of person.
