



Color is great but too much color is a fashion emergency. Notice the differences in this political appointee's image as she tones down the color in the two photos below.



Winning Wardrobes

General Guidelines

Choose a professional style and color. Darker colors project a more professional image. Black, navy or federal blue and charcoal gray are excellent choices. Pinstripe gray, some greens and other shades of gray also are good choices. Image consultants differ in opinion on wearing red or yellow at business functions; often the shade is the key to acceptability. For women, suits without a blouse underneath are acceptable. Just be careful about cleavage and any room temperature changes during the day. Minimize on jewelry and accessories. Hair styles should be uncomplicated. Clear nail polish and French manicures are the most professional manicure options.

Quick Tip: For job interviews, minimize and neutralize. Also pay attention to details. Interviewers will notice even the smallest detail of a ragged friendship bracelet, scuffed shoes or wrinkled shirt under a coat. Though minor in your eyes, in the eyes of an interviewer, failure to take care of the small things suggest a future failure to meet the demands of real on-the-job problems.

Quality Purchases of Men

Professional Wear Shirts

For striped shirts, the more narrow the stripe, the more conservative the image. Image professionals maintain that long sleeves communicate power.

Ties

The best ties are 100% silk. Good ties are lined with muslin which can be felt under the lining. A silk tie with diagonal stripes is a conservative classic.

Suits

Navy blue, dark blue or royal blue impact the perception of trust. Brown suits tend to elicit distrust but only for men. (color research cited by Sherry Maysonave)

Belts

Black belts are the most formal, followed by brown. The more metal on a belt, the more casual it is. Woven leather belts are casual.

Choice of men's shirt color can have image impacts. Pink indicates sensitivity and intimacy. Purple suggests softness





and masculinity. Blue indicates stability and masculinity. Orange projects an image that is outgoing and high energy (it is not recommended with black but goes well with navy blue or (light orange) charcoal grey). Source: magazine interview of Lisa Herbert, executive VP at Pantone, color research firm



Accessory Tips for Women

No jewelry is acceptable but some jewelry is encouraged. Minimize on accessories. Stick to one set of earring. One necklace is best but two are acceptable. Stud earrings have a more polished image. Single drop earrings are acceptable for the office. Chandelier earrings are appropriate for casual wear or evening attire. Pearls are considered high power accessories. Chokers are not appropriate for the office. Accessories for women such as neckchiefs and scarves are fine so long as they are stylish and compliment the outfit. Scarves should match the tone of the suit or blouse.



Student Worker Fashion Tips

Dress standards tend to be more relaxed for interns and coops; however, remember internships are dry-runs for future permanent jobs. Fitting in now helps you to be a good candidate later for permanent positions. Part of fitting in is dressing appropriately. Suits for teens and young adults tend to be more fashionable and trendy than for women. A good suit for you at a dressy youth function is not necessarily a good suit for you at work.



When speaking, use body language for emphasis not dramatics. Physical contact among coworkers is rare. Touching others should be limited to the arm or hand. Contact such as hugs can make others uncomfortable.

The best fabric for suits is wool; it is superior in durability and quality. Most dress clothing marketed for teens and young adults is polyester or rayon. Both of which are cheaper fabrics and are not long term power buys for quality.



Other Image Issues

For handshakes, use one hand only. And shake firmly (this is important for both genders). Two hands comes across as too intimate. Look people in the eye when you shake hands. Maintain friendly eye contact enough to remember the other person's eye color. Sit up straight and watch body language of leg and hand positions.