

Opportunity Knocks

A Publication of Vocation Opportunities, Inc.

Welcome to the first edition of Opportunity Knocks, a monthly newsletter published by Vocation Opportunities, Inc. Our goal with this newsletter is to provide information that will help you achieve your career goals. Content will include articles, tips, and interviews with industry insiders. We hope you find it useful and entertaining!

Dress for Success

Whether you are heading out to a job interview, your first day at a new job or your company has started a “casual Friday” policy, it is important to understand the type of clothing that you should wear. In this article we will discuss the three levels of business attire: traditional, general, and business casual. Selecting appropriate attire shows your supervisor and your co-workers that you are professional, responsible, and worthy of respect.

Traditional Business Attire

Traditional—or formal—business attire means a suit and dress shirt for both men and women. Suits should be conservative in color—black or blue is most appropriate.

Men should wear a properly tied necktie and dress shoes. Women should wear hosiery—stockings or

pantyhose and closed-toe, closed-heeled shoes.

It is important to note the difference between “formal” business attire and formalwear. Formalwear refers to evening dress for a black-tie party, such as a gown for women and a tuxedo for men. No one expects you to wear a tuxedo to the office.

General Business Attire

General business attire is similar to traditional attire, but is not strictly limited to suits. A sport coat or a jacket may be worn with tailored slacks, but a tie is still called for. Women may wear a dress, or a skirt or slacks coordinated with an appropriate top.

Business Casual Attire

In some businesses, casual attire is appropriate, and even encouraged. Business casual usually means chinos and khakis, a collared shirt, and sweaters. Men may leave off the tie, and casual shoes are appropriate.

Specific Circumstances

Some offices have a more relaxed environment. Clean jeans with no holes and fresh sneakers may be acceptable. If you wear a uniform be sure it fits properly, and that you keep it clean and neat. Use safety equipment when necessary.

The Bottom Line

You will be judged by your appearance. Keep yourself clean and well-groomed. Never show too much skin. Make sure your clothing fits properly. Tone down hair color, makeup, and piercings. When you are unsure, ask a co-worker or someone in the personnel department what is appropriate.

Interviewing Skills for the Job-Seeker

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Based on your resume and cover letter, and possibly a phone conversation, the employer has decided you are a qualified candidate. The interview is your opportunity to seal the deal.

The Interview Process

1. Schedule the interview for a time when you are available.
2. Prepare by researching the company and thinking of questions to ask.
3. Practice by rehearsing with a partner or in front of a mirror.
4. After the interview write a thank-you note.
5. Follow-up by phone or e-mail to learn if you got the job.

Making the Most of a Job Interview

A job interview is like a test—if you pass, you will receive a job offer. Use these tips to get that offer!

- Wear clean, neat clothes that fit. Tone down makeup, hair styles, and piercings.
- Make sure your hands, teeth, and fingernails are clean.
- Arrive ten minutes early.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist, and explain who you are there to meet.
- Be polite and respectful to everyone you meet.
- Shake hands with your interviewer when you arrive and before you leave.
- Listen carefully, using positive body language.
- Use proper English when you speak; no slang.
- Avoid chewing gum, fidgeting, or other behavior that indicates you are bored or uninterested.
- Turn off your cell phone. If you forget and it rings, apologize and ignore it or turn it off without checking to see who called.
- Ask the interviewer for his or her business card before you leave so you know how to make contact to say thank you or to follow up.

Time Management Tips

Searching for a job is full-time work. It is important to stay focused and organized and to manage your time effectively. Use these time management tips to help stay on track:

1. Create a daily schedule including a to-do list with specific job search tasks to accomplish. For example, write down the people you need to contact, the letters you need to send out, and the resources you need to check for leads.
2. Create a weekly schedule for tasks such as researching companies, informational interviews, and other networking opportunities.
3. Keep job search materials organized so you do not waste time looking for them or repeating tasks you have already completed.
4. Let a vocational counselor help you plan and organize your job search.