

# *What to wear at an Interview?*

So you have that interview...which is very different to getting that text or call or email that gives you butterflies in your stomach and makes you a bit tingly like when you did gym in primary school in your pants and had to climb the rope; that's called a "date.."

Whether you like it or not, your personal appearance will be judged as an expression of who you are and your approach to your work. This does not mean that interviews are a beauty parade, they're not. However, your clothes, hair, shoes etc will be viewed as indicators of your status, self-confidence, self-care and self-worth.

Interestingly enough, if you get the image right, it is likely to be noticed but not necessarily remarked upon. The recruiter will just feel that you "look right". However, if you get it wrong, then it can be difficult or even impossible to overcome the employer's negative preconceptions about you.

The right image is going to be one that helps the employer easily visualise you as one of their team and reassures them you could represent the company appropriately as a member of their staff. If you are unsure, you can always ask the Manager or HR what the company dress code is or see how people are dressed on their website or corporate literature.

**Our humble office can be found at  
45/47 High Street, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3DP T: 01932 869869**



# *How to dress for an interview*

- If your interview outfit is more than a year old, then **invest in a new high quality outfit** which is impeccably cut, fits you perfectly and in which you look great. For management or executive roles then you need to look the part and the suit needs to be of the very best quality to reflect your status. Looking good will also help you feel good
- Aim for a **“contemporary” rather than a “classic”** look if you are trying to convey a more dynamic, creative, high energy impression. If you look modern and up to date then they will assume that you are too. This is also important for more mature candidates who worry that they may be seen as “past it”. What you may think looks “on trend” may not be, so it’s always useful to seek advice on this.
- If you are applying to a very traditional organisation, then they are likely to have a stricter dress code e.g. pin-stripe suit. In this case, try to **echo the “in-house” style** to reinforce the impression of you as a safe pair of hands and “one of them”
- Organisations with a casual dress code are perhaps the most tricky regarding an interview outfit. Wearing a tie could be a major faux pas. A smart co-ordinating outfit rather than a suit may be more appropriate. Jeans rarely are suitable even if worn by the majority of the staff on an everyday basis. **Ask before the interview** to make sure
- All interview outfits should be **clean, free of dog hairs, except pug (ok we couldn’t resist adding that) deodorant marks, fraying hems or straining zips and buttons**. The interviewer is going to be sitting staring at you for an hour and they will notice every sartorial flaw
- **Accessories are equally important**. Briefcases and handbags should



Our humble office can be found at

45/47 High Street, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3DP T: 01932 869869



be smart and the contents well-organised. Pens should be decent quality. Business cards should be pristine ideally in their own holder

- Make-up and jewelry for women should be **subtle and unfussy**. Heels are fine but should be comfortable for walking. Skirts and tops should not be too revealing
- Have your **hairstyle updated with a neat but modern style**, which is easily manageable. This can instantly enhance your appearance. Women who colour their hair should ensure it is freshly done for the interview
- **Good grooming**. Men need to be clean-shaven or have their beards etc closely trimmed rather than straggly. Clean fingernails, fresh breath, shiny shoes, deodorant are all essential rather than afterthoughts. Use aftershave or perfume sparingly as it can be quite intense in a small interview room.
- It is very difficult to be objective about how you look and the impression you make. People who are close to you are likely to reassure you because they don't want to hurt your feelings and therefore it is difficult to know whether you need to do some work on this or not. However, it is fairly easy to get some good objective advice. Hairdressers are usually only too happy to suggest a new haircut, but consider changing hairdressers if necessary. You can also often get good advice from the personal shoppers at large department stores, a service which is usually free. Alternatively **consider an image consultant** if you think you need a radical overhaul.

Our humble office can be found at

45/47 High Street, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3DP T: 01932 869869



## ***Is it worth it?***

Your personal image will strongly influence an employer's perceptions of your capabilities, your approach to work and how well you will fit in with their organisation. Get the image right and you will find that the employer is already pre-disposed towards you and open to being convinced that you are indeed the right person for the job. Get it wrong and you will have an uphill battle.

### ***Summary***

1. Invest in a new interview outfit
2. Look like someone who already works there
3. Pay great attention to grooming – hair etc
4. Ensure briefcases and handbags are smart
5. Get objective feedback from others

This article appeared in the Guardian and was written by Corinne Mills who is simply brilliant. She is Managing Director of the UK's leading career management company Personal Career Management and author of the UK's no. 1 bestselling CV book "You're Hired – How to write a brilliant CV". In the words of Bo Selecta Mel B- "Buy it!"

**Our humble office can be found at  
45/47 High Street, Cobham, Surrey KT11 3DP T: 01932 869869**

