

Deciphering the Workplace Dress Code

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Most businesses today recognise that staff presentation is perceived by the public to represent the quality of a company and its products and services. However it is also recognised that people generally relate better to those who are dressed in a similar manner and who are clean and well groomed whatever the dress code.

The new workplace dress code is called 'Business Casual' and this has very specific guidelines. However there are some fundamental points for consideration when attempting to create a positive impression that transcend fashion and dress codes.

First impressions are not logical and not objective. They are emotional and subconscious. What you wear, how you wear it and your attention to detail are the basic building blocks of making a positive first impression.

There is a misconception that spending a lot of time and money on how you look is all you have to do. It is not.

Wearing the right outfit for the right occasion is essential. Being overdressed is as bad as being underdressed and being perceived as boring is as bad as being seen as eccentric. The philosophy of remaining true to your own style while 'fitting in' is a guide to how to approach the art of dressing effectively in the workplace, whilst creating a positive first impression to others.

It is wise to take into account your body shape, age and the position you hold in your workplace when deciding what to wear.



Organisational culture will be a guide to what you should be wearing in your workplace and the Employee Handbook that you are given should have the Company dress code in it. Sometimes you will find that what the dress code states and what is actually being worn are very different. Follow the dress code as closely as you can without alienating your colleagues.

How you wear what you decide to wear is another point to remember. Holding your body and moving gracefully in a tall and upright manner is not only good for your health but it also gives the impression of self-confidence. When you appear to have confidence in yourself, others will have confidence in you.

The last point to consider is your attention to detail. You can wear the most perfect outfit and appear confident and outgoing but if your nails are chipped and bitten down and your shoes are scuffed and dirty and you have a nasty body odour, you will be perceived as sloppy and your integrity will be in question. Attention to detail in your personal presentation is viewed, often unconsciously, as an indication of a lack of attention to detail in your work.

Whatever you decide to wear within a workplace, it is important to remember that you are employed to do a job and being comfortable enables you to work effectively. If your clothes are uncomfortable or you find yourself worrying constantly about whether a belt is sitting correctly, you need to re-think your attitude to what you wear.

So in conclusion, when you get dressed in the morning consider the following points; department (how you carry yourself), correct and appropriate (what you wear), grooming (attention to detail) and comfort.

