Dressing for the Interview

On November 7th, Bucknell Business Leaders (BBL) held a Business Fashion show to showcase appropriate attire for the workplace. BBL's Marketing Team hosted the event for the benefit of all BBL members. The purpose of this event was to provide an opportunity for club members to see what business clothing should look like and how it should be properly worn.

By Annie Guarino
Photos by Leah Gittelmen

Just because you have to look professional doesn't mean you can't look fashionable too!

...success-driven Bucknellians, we will all be heading to some life-altering interview sooner or later. Graduating seniors are continuing to interview for full-time jobs and sophomores and juniors are beginning the search for summer internships. The Career Development Center (CDC) can help you brush up on those brain-busting interview questions and help make your resume sound and look as professional as you need. The CDC can help you do and say all the things that will make you shine, but one thing the CDC cannot do is help you to look your best.

Not only do you want to look great, you want to feel great as well. When you feel comfortable, confident, and professional in what you're wearing, the employer will see that. The following are some rules you should follow in order to make a great first impression.
The employer wants to see that you'll fit in with the company's culture. A good way to determine that is by your appearance. As you're reading up on the company you'll be interviewing with, try to find out what their dress code is. A quick rule of thumb: When you go to an interview you should dress one step above the employees. If the company's dress policy is business casual (khakis and sweaters), then you should dress in a pant or skirt-suit. If you dress too casually, the employer may think you're not serious about the position. On the other hand, Abercrombie & Fitch says not to over-dress for the interview. Their dress code is very casual and they'll think you don't fit in if you show up in anything dressier than jeans and flip-flops. To be certain how to dress, make sure to do your research!

"Make that plain grey dress interesting by adding a colorful necklace or broach."

Annie Guarino

During the interview you want the employer to see who you are. This is not the time to try out a brand new style. Wear something you are comfortable in. While business attire may not be what you're used to wearing, you can still find a way to express your personality through accessories. Wear something that you can walk tall wearing, not something in which you feel the need to hide behind your briefcase. Keep it simple, keep it classy, keep it you!

Rule 25: Be comfortable and confident

Just because you have to dress like a professional doesn't mean you can't let some of your personality shine through in accessories. Make that plain grey dress interesting by adding a colorful necklace or broach. A bright tie can work wonders for a bland black suit. Certainly don't be afraid of a little color, but beware of tackiness. If you have a staple accessory, an interview can be a perfect time to showcase it. Ladies, break out that pearl necklace your mother passed down to you. Gentleman, your grandfather's cufflinks might be a nice addition.

Annie Guarino and Sarah Simmons
You do want to get that job, don't you? The best way to gauge the appropriateness of your outfit is to make certain that it fits properly. Make sure your skirt is long enough, your shoulders are covered, and your blouse is hiding what needs to stay hidden. This means nothing skin tight, but nothing too baggy either. Guys, make sure your pants and jacket sleeves are an appropriate length. You don't want to look like a kid in your father's clothes or like a giant in your own. If you have the time, see if you can get your pants and jacket tailored. Remember, you want your accomplishments and personality to get you the job, not your nicely toned thighs or biceps.

During the interview, make sure not to fidget and fuss with your clothing or hair. Make sure to spit out your chewing gum and show off those pearly whites while firmly shaking your interviewer's hand. Practice these things while you're picking out your favorite business ensemble and you'll be sure to impress. Good luck!

Girls, be subtle. In your make up, that is. You're not going to a party; you're going to a job interview. Keep it natural—a little blush, a touch of lip color, some mascara, and very light on the eye liner. Freshly trimmed hair is a nice touch.

Guys, no five o'clock shadow please. Arrive clean-shaven unless you rock facial hair normally. In that case, make sure you have touched up that goatee or handle-bar mustache neatly. Get your hair cut a few days before and you should be good to go.

Everyone should take care not to bathe in perfume or cologne either. There's nothing worse than shaking a candidate's hand and being asphyxiated by their fragrance. And speaking of fragrance, don't forget your deodorant.