

As a job-seeker, naturally you want to portray the very best version of yourself when attending interviews, and once landing the job in the workplace.

However, does this extend to the clothes that you wear? Does how you dress at work matter or is that a redundant notion in the modern day job-market? Below is a common debate on this issue.

## *Yes it matters what you wear*

Alexander works at an Insurance Call Centre which employs 250 staff. Like all the staff at the Call Centre, his work is telephone based and non-customer facing. Despite this, he says that smart-dressing promotes a tidy work ethic.

"Dressing smartly for work gives off a certain persona, one that implies professionalism and excellence. Being in an environment where everybody is dressed in business wear reminds you that you are part of a team, at work for a specific purpose and are united in that common goal which is to maximise profitability for the company through providing excellent customer service. As you are all collaborating, I think it absolutely makes sense to unite on being smart in appearance".

Alexander strongly feels that when he was interviewed for his current position, his attire made an instant and positive impact. "I wore a plain suit with a white shirt and tie, my girlfriend commented at the time that I looked like a candidate on *The Apprentice!* It made me feel confident and put me in the right frame of mind to give a good performance at the interview. I noticed that the other candidates weren't dressed as smartly, and it made me feel like I had an edge. When I stepped into the interview room I noticed the managers flicking their eyes over my outfit, and before I'd even opened my mouth to say anything the impression that I'd made was a good one".

"I can't say definitively that dressing smartly won me the job, but I certainly think it helped and that anybody going for an interview should give themselves the very best chance by dressing as smartly as possible – it's what most employers expect as a minimum these days".

## *No it doesn't matter what you wear*

Robyn is a web designer for a large firm in Finland. She meets with clients on a regular basis to discuss projects but believes the way employees dress should not be important.

"In my role, I meet with clients but I don't expect them to take any notice of what I'm wearing. What they should be, and invariably are interested in is my capability as a designer. I do my best work when I am at ease and relaxed. Wearing whatever feels comfortable is the best way to ensure that".

Robyn also believes that removing pressure from people to dress a certain way allows for a more relaxed working environment. "In my workplace, and I'm sure in many others too, the focus should be dealing with tasks. There is plenty else to think and worry about than the clothes you are wearing. As an employee you should be concerned with performing to the best of your ability, and in my role I need the ability to think freely and be creative. Although we work together as a team, we need to concentrate on making our individual contribution to the company. Impressing other people with what you wear is totally irrelevant in the workplace, that should be saved for your social life".

Robyn thinks back to the interview she attended to land the role. "I wore skinny blue jeans, Converse trainers and a black jumper. Having researched the company there was no mention of business attire and when I arrived everybody else was dressed in a casual way, there were all sorts of different styles going on. It didn't make me think any less of the company, in fact it made me think they were a very cool organisation! Obviously I got the job, but am absolutely certain that what I was wearing didn't even come in to it". She acknowledges that other companies may take a different stance to this topic but doesn't think it's necessary. "I understand the logic behind a desire for employers to have all their employees dressed smartly (particularly in professional services), but ultimately it really doesn't matter. People shouldn't judge your abilities as a professional based on what you wear, to my mind it's similar to judging someone for their lifestyle choices, so long as they turn up and do a great job, who cares?".

*Names have been changed in this article*