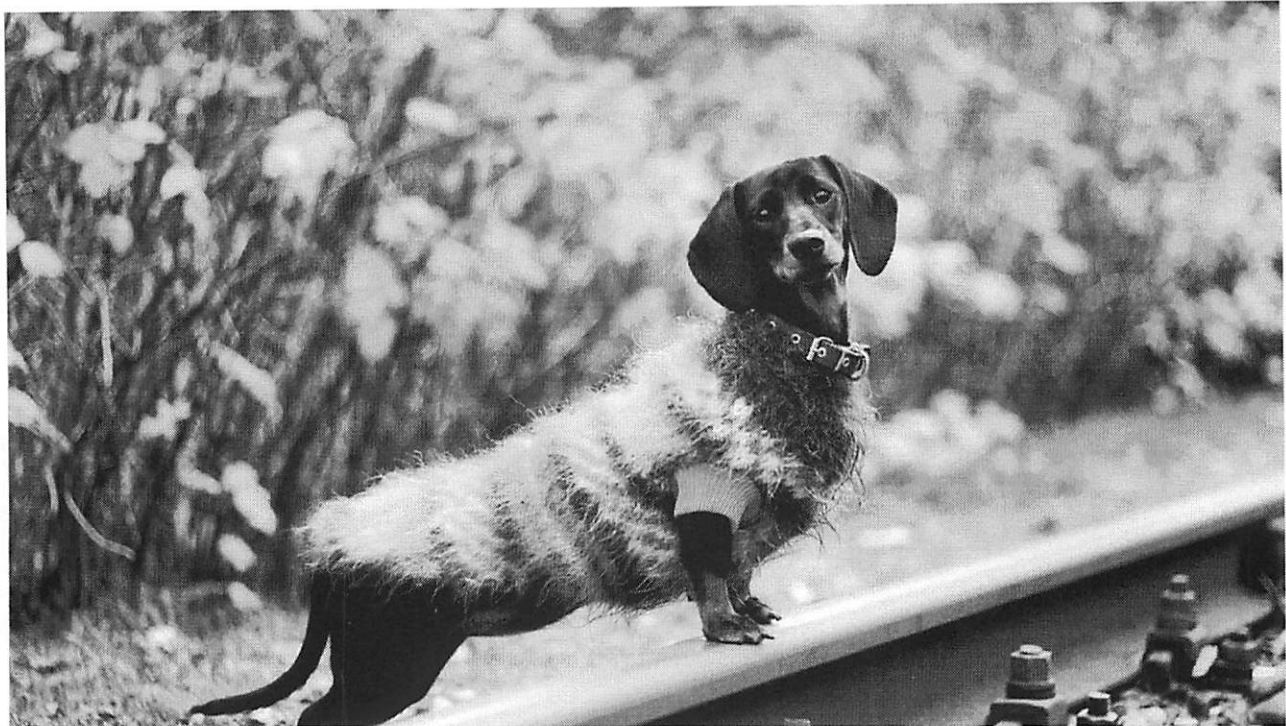


Job Interview Attire: Fashion Horror Stories

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BY JOSH TOLAN / Feb 10, 2013

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You've researched the company and practiced your interview answers. What else is there to worry about? Unfortunately, many candidates flub their interview attire and make themselves undesirable hires in the process. Here are some of the worst fashion horror stories and what you can learn before you suit up for your next job interview:

You're Not an Employee Yet

Companies come in all different shapes and sizes — and all different levels of formality. One of the biggest mistakes job seekers make is to show up for the interview dressed like an employee instead of a candidate.

"Since we're a casual work environment with no dress code, we occasionally get the candidate that matches our attire and it comes off as overly presumptuous, overconfident or just plain sloppy," said August Nielsen, HR Manager of [Veterans United Home Loans](#).

Instead, you should dress for a job at least one rung on the career ladder above the one for which you're applying. This will be highly impressive to your interviewer and show just how seriously you're taking this opportunity. Plus, it will convey the message to your potential employer that you're interested in moving up and bettering yourself.

"I also interviewed a guy that wore old tennis shoes with a suit. What was that all about?" Nielsen wondered. "They weren't even new tennis shoes."

Remember, the interview is not the right moment to try out a quirky new style. You're not Mark Zuckerberg, and hoodies or old tennis shoes won't make an impressive interview statement.

You Forgot Your Pants

A recent survey showed six out of ten companies use video interviews in the hiring process. So, chances are, you'll have one — and you can't afford to think the video interview is somehow less formal than a face-to-face meeting — it's not.

Just because the interviewer is looking directly at your top half doesn't mean you can ignore what you wear below the waist.

"We had a candidate who was very impressive from the waist up," said Sandi Webster, Principal for Consultants 2 Go. "However, he had to run to his printer for a sheet we had sent and he was wearing pajama bottoms."

It's important to dress exactly as you would for any in-person meeting. While video interviewing provides the luxury of interviewing from home, you should still present yourself as if you're going to the office. Not only does it help you avoid the pajama debacle, but also it helps give you a psychological edge. If you're dressed for the part, you'll be more likely to act the part, as well.

You're Repping Other Companies

Because your clothes tell a story about your candidacy, if you don't pay attention to the small details, employers will think you'll miss the big picture on the job as well.

"If you're interviewing at LL Bean, don't wear J. Crew. If you're interviewing at CNA Insurance, please don't carry a portfolio emblazoned with the Prudential logo," said Lida Citroen, branding specialist and founder of LIDA360. "These small missteps make the interviewer question your attention to detail and commitment to going the extra mile for the job."

Instead, keep things neutral. It's good practice to stay away from loud prints or company logos altogether, which might be a distraction anyway. So, swap your branded briefcase for a plain case to avoid any issues.

You Didn't Check the Thermometer

Job interviews make many candidates extremely nervous. If you live in a hot climate or your interview is during a hot summer day, this can be a recipe for a sweaty disaster.

Resume writer and career counselor Gaye Weintraub remembers a job candidate who showed up for the job interview with professional attire that was too tight, and he had giant sweat stains under his arms.

"While he dressed appropriately for his interview, it was difficult to get past the sweat stains and his unbelievably red face. I felt sorry for him, which is not the type of reaction any job seeker wants from an interviewer," Weintraub said.

It's important not to forget you are only human, and the combination of nerves and raising temperatures can be lethal. Instead, Weintraub advises candidates to bring an extra shirt along if the temperatures rise and the candidate is prone to sweating. This way, job seekers can change in a nearby bathroom before the interview and appear fresh and ready for the actual meeting.

"I tell my clients that it takes an interviewer only a few seconds to form an opinion of them. It is imperative that when they walk into the room, they are well-groomed, well-dressed, smell nice and have a smile," Weintraub said.

You Treated the Interview Like a Tailgate

You want to dress for your interview, not for your next social engagement. Catherine Bell, former fashion designer and President of PRIME Impressions tells the story of how a man showed up for a mass interview for Sears wearing shorts and a sleeveless tank top. To top it all off, he was also holding an open can of beer in his hand.

"He obviously had another agenda outside of landing a job that day," Bell said.

Carving out time in your hectic life for an interview can be tough, especially if you already have a job keeping you busy. It's important, however, to focus all your

attention on the interview at hand, instead of what else you have going on for the rest of the day. Turn off your mobile devices so nothing will beep, vibrate or chirp during your interview. And if you're planning on tailgating after your interview, leave the drinks in the cooler.

If you can avoid some of these fashion pitfalls, you'll be able to impress hiring managers with your appearance, so what you wear doesn't detract from what you say.

What are some of the worst job-interview fashion mistakes you've seen? Share in the comments.

Mashable Job Board Listings

The [Mashable Job Board](#) connects job seekers across the U.S. with unique career opportunities in the digital space. While we publish a wide range of job listings, we have selected a few job opportunities from the past two weeks to help get you started. Happy hunting!

- [Digital Project Manager](#) at Revolution Digital in Morristown, NJ
- [Software Engineer - Mobile Developer](#) at Yelp in San Francisco, CA
- [Social Media Manager](#) at StyleCaster in New York City

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