

Devonshire Tips

What to wear for an interview

First impressions go a long way.

When you are preparing for a job interview, you should put some thought into what you plan to wear on the day. Although this may at first feel like a superficial consideration, what you wear can actually communicate a great deal about you to any potential employer – from how well you will fit in with their team to how committed you would be to the job.

Style

The style of the clothes you choose to wear can speak volumes about how well you have judged the requirements of the role; if you turn up in jeans for a corporate, client-facing role in a bank, chances are you will be shown the door before you get to utter a word. Equally, choosing a plain suit for an interview with a high-fashion retailer may project the wrong message.

A bit of research before you select your interview garb will serve you very well indeed. If your interview is arranged through an agency, ask your consultant what employees of the company would usually wear and dress in a slightly smarter version (i.e. if jeans and trainers are the norm, maybe go for smart jeans and shoes, paired with a smart top and jacket combination). If your interview was arranged by the company, give HR or even Reception a quick call and sound them out as to their preferred dress code. If in any doubt, wear a suit – at least you will look smart!

Colour

A great deal has been written in various articles and books as to how you should choose colours according to their meaning or the impression they give to others. However, there are pitfalls to following this advice to the letter. Although some people may believe that traditionally neutral colours (earth tones, etc.) give an air of corporate professionalism, if these colours don't suit you and make you look pale and washed-out, you shouldn't wear them!

The best advice is to go with a colour or colour(s) that suits your own colouring and that you feel comfortable wearing. Black or navy suit most people though, and are a 'safe' choice if you're not sure. As long as you don't turn up looking like a Dulux colour chart, you should be absolutely fine!

Fit

Choosing an outfit that fits you well is possibly the most important aspect of your decision. Avoid clothes that are too tight – your trousers or skirt should be fitted but allow you to sit down without bursting at the seams, and shirts or blouses shouldn't gape open at the buttonholes. At the other end of the scale, never wear clothes which are too loose, baggy or ill-fitting – this just looks sloppy and implies you haven't made an effort.

Whatever you choose to wear should reflect the fact you are a professional who is ready and keen to start work on a new job. Use your common sense and the advice above to guide you. In this market, it is essential that you do everything you can to give the best impression at interview and are seen as an ideal candidate for the position in question.

When it's time to get dressed for the interview, remember: it's not so much that you're trying to get the job with what you wear, it's more a matter of not taking yourself out of contention with your appearance. It can take less than 10 seconds for an interviewer to form an opinion of you. Get it right at this stage and you won't have to spend the rest of the interview trying to win them over, you can focus on the more important things – like your skills and ability to do the job!