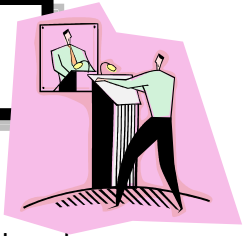


# Image



**Introduction:** Almost 90% of what people remember about a person is through non-verbal communication. Total appearance--hair, posture, clothes, skin, grooming--play an important part. Because we never get a second chance to make a first impression, it is important that the first impression be positive. Why is it so important? Because it is your packaging. It is the first impression that people will have when they interact with you face to face and it is the same image that will be in mind when they talk to you on the phone or interact with you in other ways.

In your personal life, your image can be a true reflection of you--with few boundaries. However, when you enter the "working" world your image must also reflect that of your company. It is not suggested that everyone should dress alike or must suppress their individual style or taste in clothing. When it comes to appropriate dress, the idea is to "fit in" with others. One way to fit in is to observe workers and see how they are dressed and adjust your dress accordingly.

## What is Appropriate?

When you wear "fun" or "trendy" clothes to work, you may be perceived as someone who does not take his/her job seriously. Proper grooming for all industries includes personal hygiene and cleanliness--bathing/showering, hair, fingernails, teeth, facial hair. It also means neat, clean clothes and shined shoes, conservative make-up and jewelry. Appropriate dress, however, varies with the industry. Below are some examples of appropriate dress for various careers and or industries.

- A. **Professional.** Professional dress is probably the most conservative dress. In general, for men, business professional is a suit or blazer, white/pastel shirt, conservative tie, trousers and dark matching socks with dark shoes. For women, business professional is a suit, a blazer with a skirt and blouse, or a dress, nylons with a medium heel shoe, appropriately accessorized.

Some companies now allow "casual" business dress but "casual" varies from business to business. In fact it is so confusing that some businesses have hired consultants to help people figure out what is appropriate. In most cases "casual" allows sweaters, dress sandals, no ties, decent athletic footwear, and more casual (such as chino) pants for both men and women. It does not include T-shirts, shorts, jeans, ripped clothing/shoes, thongs/flip-flops, very short dresses/skirts, see-through clothing and pants that reveal the bellybutton.

- B. **Technology.** Workers in the technology industries, while professionally dressed in many instances, tend to adopt a more "casual" approach to business attire.
- C. **Wholesale and Retail Trade.** Appropriate dress is not quite as conservative as business professional dress. It often encompasses what is considered "casual" business dress.

- D. **Health Care.** Workers in this industry very often have uniforms of a white or pastel color or print, including pants, jackets and shoes.
- E. **Food Service.** Appropriate dress for food service workers varies with the atmosphere of the restaurant. Servers in fast food establishments often wear a uniform--coordinated pants, shirt and a cap or visor. Servers in up-scale restaurants may wear formal tux with white shirts and bow ties. Chefs often wear a white uniform, including the famous "chef's hat."
- F. **Agriculture, Construction and Manufacturing.** Workers in these industries often have the most casual wear--typically jeans and shirt. They often wear other safety equipment, including ear plugs, safety glasses or masks, work boots, gloves, or other protective clothing. Some workers in this industry may wear uniforms.
- G. **Miscellaneous.** Most occupations or industries will have a manner of dress that is peculiar to that industry or company. Some of these will include wearing a uniform. For instance, most law enforcement employees wear prescribed uniforms, as do commercial pilots and military personnel. Other occupations may require additional safety clothing, such as fire protection suits, hazardous materials suits, etc.