Personal Presentation Toolkit

From the Office of Career Development

A RESOURCE GUIDE TO HELP YOU DRESS FOR THE OCCASION

STETSON LAW
3 Basic Rules of Etiquette

**Rule #1: Respect others, including their resources, assets, and attributes.** This includes respecting investments of time, money, relationships, and opinions that differ from yours, whatever the reason.

**Rule #2: Put others at ease whenever you can.** It does not benefit you if anyone is uncomfortable in your presence.

**Rule #3: Behave as if the world is watching.** If you misbehave, apologize.

**ETIQUETTE**

Though most of us think of etiquette as the highly technical rules of formal dining or the correct order of introductions, the right fork to use is not as important as understanding the real point of manners. Etiquette is simply treating others as you would want to be treated, at all times.

Your profession depends on cordiality above all things. Though many proceedings are adversarial, you meet the same individuals time and again in court, at negotiating tables, over the phone, and in the communities of interest frequented by leaders and members of the Bar. You will refer clients to others, and others will refer clients and opportunities to you based on your behavior, or they will decline to do so, based on your behavior. The choice is yours. Manners make social interaction easier and more appealing.

**APPEARANCE**

Appearance should be a part of your career goals. Dressing professionally is an important part of your personal presentation, and you should consistently give thought to the message you are sending with your appearance. If you show up to an event with a wrinkled shirt, it may send the message that you didn’t give the event the respect or attention it deserved. The same is true if you show too much skin. First, it can send the wrong message about your intentions, and second, it takes the attention away from your most important asset: your personality.

**Additional Resource**

- Etiquette Guide
- Car Kit
As you move forward in your career presentation, you will often find yourself needing to dress in Business Professional Attire or Business Casual Attire. You never know when an opportunity will arise to attend an event. To ensure preparedness, keep a change of clothes handy. The following levels of attire are most common in the legal profession.

“Business Professional” for Men
- Men should wear a traditional two-piece suit with dress trousers in dark colors.
- Do not wear khakis.
- A white button-down shirt is always a good choice for the shirt.
- For the tie, choose a conservative print or solid color, no “theme” ties.
- Shoes should be polished and worn with dark socks.
- Do not wear cologne or aftershave because many people are allergic.
- Be neatly groomed and clean-shaven, as well.

“Business Casual” for Men
- Generally, men should stick to a pressed button-down shirt and clean pressed trousers.
- In some circumstances a polo-type shirt may be appropriate; it depends on the event and time of year.
- It is always better to be a bit overdressed than under, so when in doubt, go for the button-down. If you see others are more casual, you can always roll up your sleeves to be more comfortable.

“Business Professional” for Women
- For women, a traditional two-piece suit or a dress (with jacket) in a dark color is recommended.
- While women have the option to wear either a pantsuit or a skirted suit, in the legal profession a skirted suit is considered slightly more traditional and is therefore the recommended attire for interviews. When wearing a skirted suit, make sure to wear flesh-toned hose, and make sure your skirt is of an appropriate length. It should not be shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Shoes should be closed-toe and not flashy, and heels should probably not be above 3 inches in height.
- Your blouse should be buttoned up or can be a shell with a conservative neckline.
- Be conservative with your make-up and jewelry: less is more.
- Do not wear perfume because many people are allergic.
- Be neatly groomed, as well.
- Note - This is the appropriate level of attire for interviews in the legal profession.

For interviews, you should always wear Business Professional attire.

“Business Casual” for Women
- For women, avoid sleeveless unless you have a cardigan or light sweater to cover up your shoulders.
- Skirts should be at an appropriate length and pants should not be too form fitting.
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- Everything should always be neatly pressed and clean.
- Avoid flip-flops, and stick with a dressy sandal but only if sandals are explicitly appropriate for the event.

Once you begin a job, many employers will have written policies on what you are expected to wear (called a “dress code”). Following the guidelines your employer provides will help you understand what is expected of you.

If you have any questions about a particular outfit or wardrobe item, please stop by the Career Development Office. We are happy to help.