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INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been developed to assist you in using all of your assets as you move forward on your career path. As you enter your job search, you will learn how to write a resume that will reflect your educational and employment background on paper. You will focus on presentation style, and ensure it reflects the best of your experience. The art of interviewing will become equally important, as you learn how to interact verbally with the interviewer and communicate your qualifications, insuring that you are the perfect candidate for the position. However, there is one last piece to the success of your professional life, and that is the way you present yourself--- yes, your appearance! Our goal is to help you develop a professional image that will make a lasting first impression. You will discover the importance of first impressions, professional dress, business casual dress, shopping on a limited budget, and finally how to pull it all together.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The life of a student is filled with hard work and dreams of reaching that final career path destination. Years of planning hold promise to a bright future filled with financial and personal rewards. However, there is one last area that you can't afford to overlook in your planning process and that's the importance of your appearance. The way you present yourself, your choice of dress, and your overall look is what forms first impressions. Your appearance can tell another person in less than 10 seconds more about you than 10 minutes of conversation. That's powerful! Imagine that what you wear has the ability to influence another person and their perception of you in such a short period of time.

Your appearance is a form of non-communication, a silent language that reveals information about your age, sex, social status, ethnic background, roles, intelligence, popularity, potential success and competence. The way you choose to dress plays an important role on the first impression you create as you interact with others. Take a few moments and think about how we are all influenced on a daily basis by appearances. For example, if you are in the

process of purchasing a home, you will find that you are probably most influenced by the home that is attractive, neat and clean with a sense of style that holds your interest. If you find that the house has potential yet needs work you need to look at the investment that it requires to bring the house up to your standards and then evaluate if it's worth the time and money. When you pick up a book at the bookstore it was because something drew you to that book and grabbed your attention. The front cover may have had an arrangement of pictures, a design or colors that were appealing. A potential employer uses the same process when interviewing a candidate for a position. A major survey revealed that 95% of employers interviewed stated that a jobseeker's personal presentation affected the employer's opinion of that applicant's suitability for the position. An employer evaluates your commitment to the organization, how you see yourself by what you wear, and your overall presentation at an interview. Therefore your appearance becomes your visual credibility. It will contribute either positively or negatively toward how others perceive you. Your ultimate goal is to portray an image that will take you where you want to be in life, providing you with the fulfillment you have worked so hard to achieve.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL DRESS CATEGORY

There are three distinct categories of dress: professional dress, business casual and business relaxed in the business world. Each category has its own unique characteristics and appropriateness for specific work environments

PROFESSIONAL DRESS: Professional attire consists of conservative suits for men and women. Suit colors must remain neutral and stay within the basic color range of: navy, gray, black or beige. Shirts for men should be conservative and neutral with an up- to- date tie. Blouses and tops for women should also remain neutral. A professional suit is appropriate for interviews and positions of authority. Careers such as banking, real estate, and finance are just a few examples of industries that require a polished and professional look.

BUSINESS CASUAL: Business casual remains professional, but is not as conservative as professional dress. Clothing choices can be looser, more comfortable, less tailored and formal, while colors can be brighter. A business casual look is created with sweaters, vests, or blouses, worn with jackets. Business casual is recommended for careers such as education, health care, insurance, accounting and high-tech.

BUSINESS RELAXED: Business relaxed is a step below business casual.

Clothing choices are comfortable, casual, and easy to wear. A business relaxed look is created with fabrics such as corduroy, cotton and knits. The more texture, the more relaxed the outfit will appear. Appropriate attire includes Dockers, corduroy slacks, heavy sweaters with a lot of texture, polo shirts, plain t-shirts, jumpers, and medium- to- heavy- soled shoes. Business relaxed is recommended for employment in the area of utilities, childcare, hospitality, and manufacturing.

THE INTERVIEW

There was a time when interview attire for women consisted of a dark suit typically navy blue, a pristine white shirt, and simple navy blue pumps.

Jewelry was subtle and added that extra touch that made a special statement. Men followed a similar pattern of a dark suit, white shirt, conservative tie, and polished dark shoes. This professional attire promised stability, commitment, and dedication to the employer seeking the perfect candidate for the position.

In today's changing business world, professional dress has shifted into business casual and not all positions or all businesses reflect a conservative, traditional, boardroom look. What to wear for an interview has become an issue that you can't afford to ignore! We will provide you with up- to- date and accurate information so that your dress decisions reflect your very best and your appearance makes a lasting impression.

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

Your entire career is waiting before you and you have been dedicated in sending resumes, writing cover letters and practicing your interviewing skills. You finally get the call for a job interview and all you can think

about is, "What will they ask and what will I answer." Make sure you fit "what will I wear" into your plan of preparation. The first step in determining what to wear is based on the industry, position, and organization in which you are seeking employment. You must first establish the level of professional dress for your prospective position as reflected within the organization. Unless you are applying for a position that is very casual, you will want to present yourself wearing professional business attire for your interview.

The following information will provide you with a standard and easy way to determine appropriate attire for your interview. Always remember your appearance is your visual credibility, so take time and present yourself with polish and professionalism.

Congratulations you got the job!! Time to open your closet doors and take a serious look at your wardrobe. Do your clothes fit the image of your new organization? You will find in the work world of today there are three distinct types of business dress.

- ⇒ Professional
- ⇒ Business Casual
- ⇒ Relaxed Casual

The following provides you with a simple outline of each to avoid confusion as you plan what to wear.

Professional Attire: Professional attire focuses on a very traditional, tailored, formal look. Typically suits are worn with traditional dark to neutral colors. Blouses and shirts are white or blue and ties are conservative yet updated. Jewelry is understated, just enough to add a feminine touch. Shoes are dark in color with a thin sole. This look is extremely traditional and is worn in a conservative environment such as finance or insurance and for upper management/executive positions. Professional attire cannot overlap with business casual, it is a separate category, not to be mixed with a relaxed look. For example, don't wear an open toe shoe with a business suit, or a straw purse with a business suit.

Professional Attire For Interviewing

INDUSTRY

POSITION

Education Real Estate Finance Banking Insurance Public Relations Business Services Consulting Firms High -Tech Business Services Public Administration	Management Sales Management Management Sales Marketing Technical Contractor Management Management
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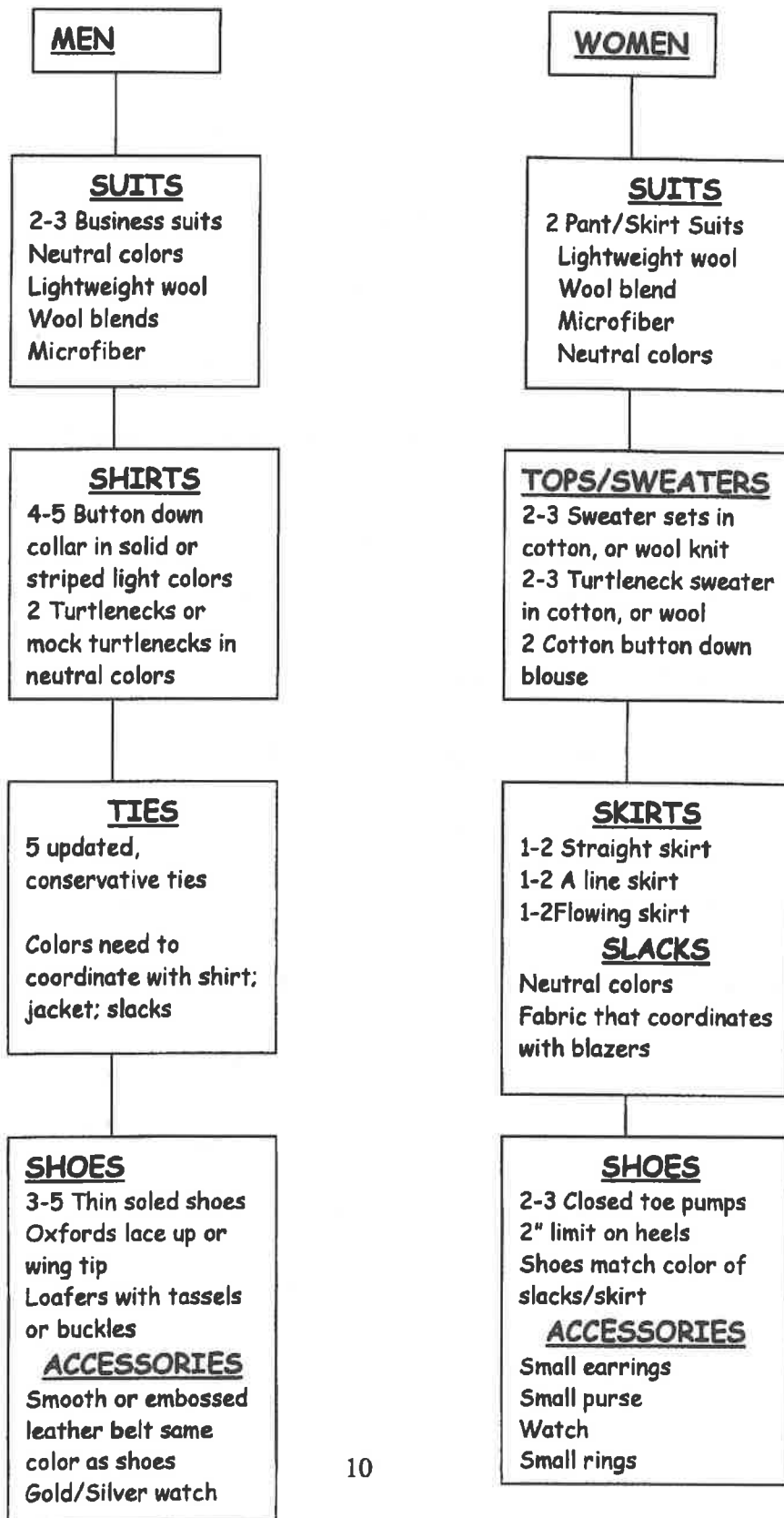
MEN

WOMEN

Dark Suit
White/Light Shirt
Updated Tie
Dark Socks
Thin- Soled Dark Shoes
Gold/Silver watch
Belt that matches shoes

Dark Suit
Neutral Top/Blouse
Dark Pumps
Light Hosiery
Small Handbag to
match Shoes
Small Understated
jewelry

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL WARDROBE



BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE

Business casual attire provides much more creativity in dress and style.

However, be careful to remain in good taste. The business casual look emphasizes the polish of the professional look with the comfort of the casual look. At this point you are probably wondering how you can achieve that mid- point. Casual clothing is loose, relaxed, colorful and more creative. Fit is less tailored and constructed and fabrics have more texture.

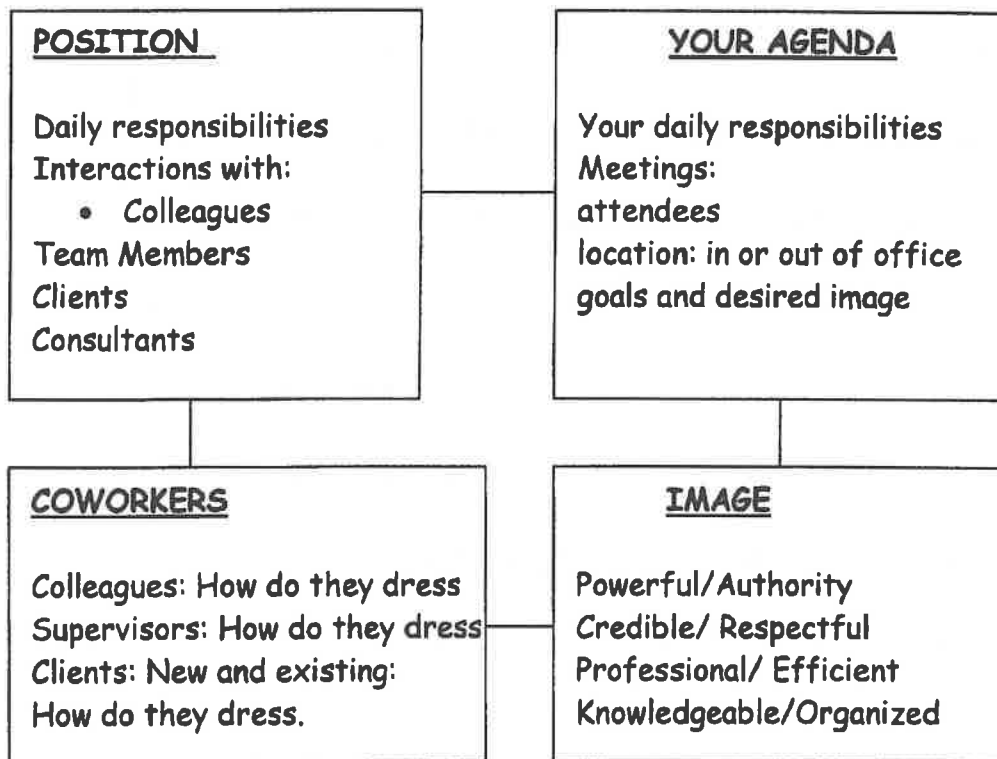
- ⇒ Shoes and accessories can be less conservative yet still professional.
- ⇒ Shoes with a low-heeled pump, trouser shoe, or a thick rubber- soled shoe are definitely more casual.
- ⇒ Accessories can be a slightly larger, more colorful and creative.
- ⇒ Fabric can have more pattern or print; you will find both make an outfit more casual and less polished.

Knowledge of how to make an outfit more casual is not enough. Knowing the distinction between different levels of professional attire, business casual, and relaxed casual will promise that you're dressing within the appropriate guidelines of your organization. Remember, the goal is to dress for the position that you eventually want, not the one that you currently have.

BUSINESS CASUAL

Business casual attire takes on many different looks and is very undefined.

Therefore it's up to you to research what attire is appropriate for your new position. When in doubt, ask your new supervisor if there is a company dress code. If there is not a dress code, evaluate what is appropriate for you to wear, based on the following criteria:



BUSINESS CASUAL ON A DAILY BASIS

If you find that your new position within the organization will accept business casual. You're ready to create a plan that will assist in developing a wardrobe, making a statement of commitment and dedication. Remember that business casual is **NOT** what you would find yourself wearing on the weekends. It is simply one step below professional attire and fits into a less formal, conservative environment. Your goal is to reflect your very best, with a keen awareness that casual does not mean sloppy. The way you care for your clothes, your grooming, attention to detail and your overall neatness will provide you with a polished look that sends a positive message.

A basic business casual wardrobe will consist primarily of coordinated pieces that are interchangeable. This type of wardrobe is extremely versatile, offering a variety of options for different looks. There are specific key elements you must focus on as you create different outfits.

The first element is color. There are 5 basic colors that serve as the foundation to your wardrobe. Choose 2-3 of the following colors that you look good in and that you like.

Black
Grey
White

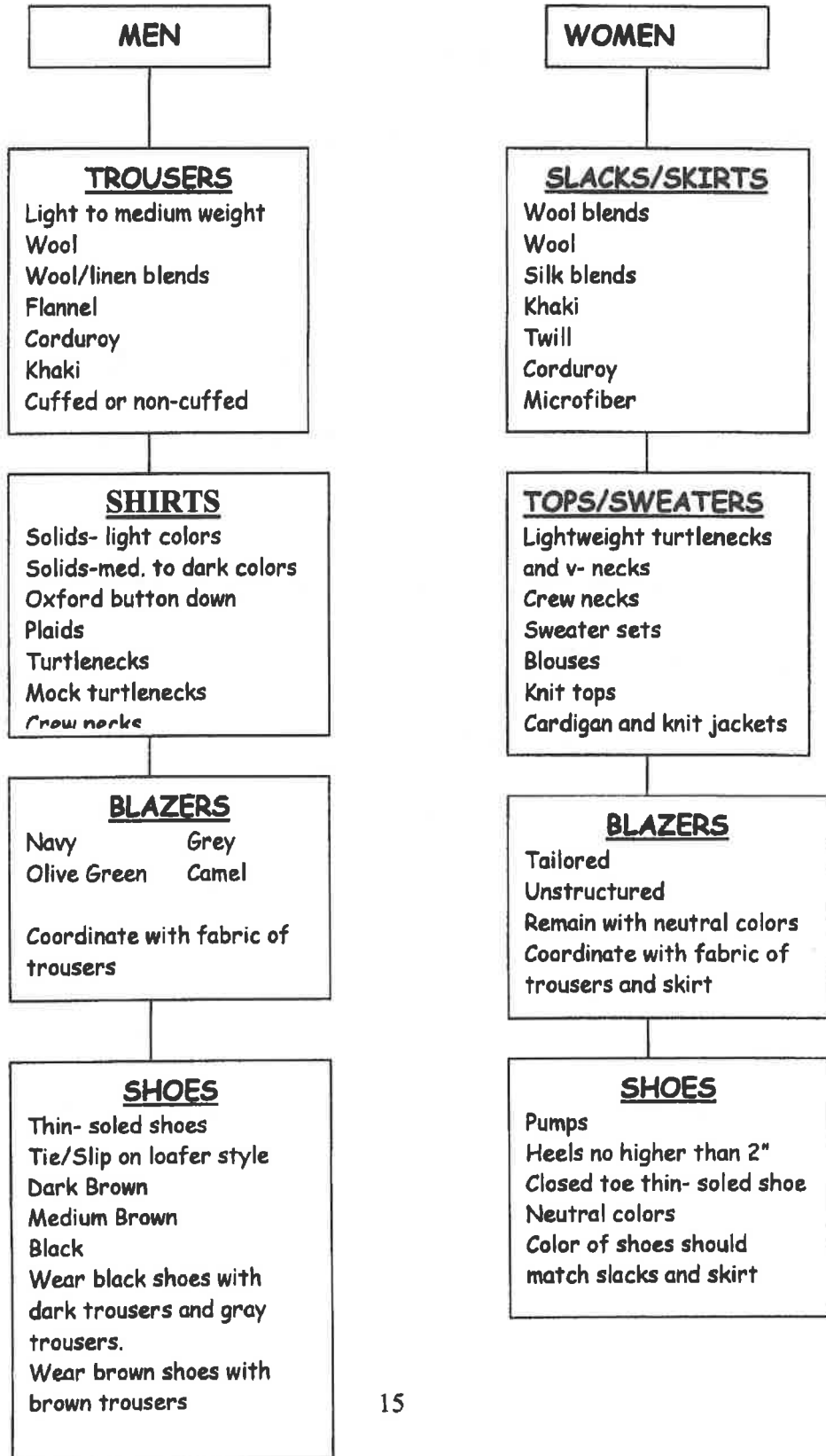
Beige
Navy

The colors that you chose are known as neutral colors. Neutral colors easily coordinate with one another and any other color you may decide to wear. Keep in mind that for an outfit to look professional you need to maintain a look of balance. Therefore, too many colors can appear bold and take away from the professional image you are trying to achieve.

The next element is style. Style is the overall construction of the garment and includes fitted and tailored, or unstructured and loose fitting clothes. Loose fitting garments tend to be more casual and relaxed. When choosing your style, make sure that you are wearing clothes that highlight your good physical assets and camouflage those areas that you want to downplay.

The third element is fabric. The appropriate fabric of a garment is very important in respect to how formal or informal you want your look to be. You don't need to be an expert in different types of fabric to understand what looks overly dressy or too casual. For example, you would never wear a dress that has sequins or beads on it to work, regardless of the occasion; a garment like that is far too formal for the workplace. On the other hand, you shouldn't go to the opposite extreme and wear a garment with fabric such as denim that is typically worn for casual settings. Fabric needs to be simple and relatively conservative in texture and pattern.

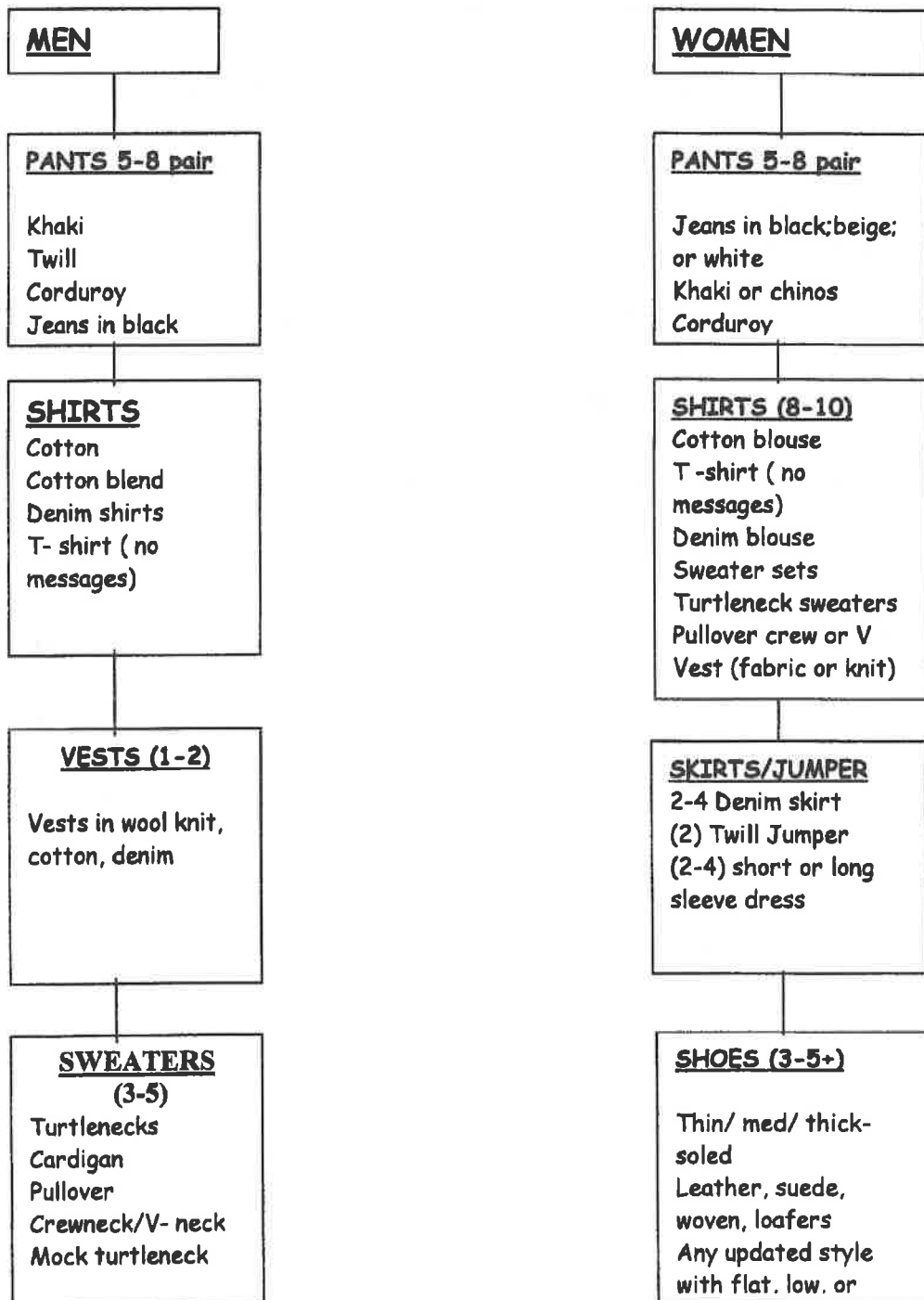
BUSINESS CASUAL WARDROBE



BUSINESS RELAXED

Dressing relaxed for work does not mean dressing so relaxed that you can't distinguish between your work or weekend wardrobe. The biggest mistake you can make is to forget your environment and dress inappropriately. Using good judgment in your clothing choices assures the employer that you will use good judgment on your job. It is important to plan a wardrobe that is one to two steps above what you would find yourself wearing when not at work. The best way to determine what to wear is based on the kind of work you'll be doing and who you will interact with on a daily basis. Many companies allow employees to wear denim jeans and t shirts, especially if their job is primarily outdoors or manual labor. In that case it's necessary to use good judgment and wear denim jeans that are neat and clean. Eliminate wearing the stone washed look and screened t shirts, which suggests weekend wear. When possible, avoid jeans altogether and focus on casual attire that is comfortable, coordinated and is up-to-date.

BUSINESS RELAXED WARDROBE



BUSINESS RELAXED WARDROBE (continued)

SHOES (3)

Medium to thick
leather
Penny loafers
Suede/ leather lace
up

ACCESSORIES

Belts (2-3)
Woven/Canvas

Watch with gold,
silver or leather band

HANDBAG AND TOTE
(2-4)

Unstructured leather,
suede, canvas bag

Match color of bag
with color of shoes

ACCESSORIES

Belts- Updated
leather, suede.
Coordinate with color
of shoes and handbag
Earrings- Gold, silver,
short dangle
Watch- Gold, silver,

WORKING WITH A BUDGET

Developing a wardrobe is an investment that will make a significant impact on your career opportunities. Planning is the key to getting what you need without overspending and creating unnecessary debt. Therefore, start with a list of your essentials (review the charts appropriate for your job) and begin the process of building a foundation. Your initial expense needs to be focused on **GETTING** the job! Keep in mind that you can shop at Marshalls and look like you just walked out of Nordstrom. The following examples will give you some tips on how you can create a professional look, feel wonderful and not spend a lot of money.

FOR WOMEN ONLY

Marshalls

FOR THE INTERVIEW

CASUAL WORKPLACE

Suit \$49.99- \$79.00
Blouse/Top \$9.99- \$12.99
Shoes \$12.99-\$39.99

Coordinate Skirt/Top \$19.99-\$29.99
Scarf to accessorize \$6.99
Shoes \$12.99-\$19.99

<u>Handbag</u>	<u>\$12.99</u>	<u>Handbag</u>	<u>\$12.99-\$19.99</u>
TOTAL	\$86.00-\$133.00	TOTAL	\$53.00-\$77.00

FOR MEN ONLY
Marshalls

<u>FOR THE INTERVIEW</u>		<u>CASUAL WORKPLACE</u>	
Suit	\$69.99-\$99.99	Trousers	\$14.99-\$19.99
Shirt	\$9.99-\$12.99	Shirt	\$9.99-\$12.99
Belt	\$8.99	Sweater	\$9.99-\$19.99
<u>Shoes</u>	<u>\$14.99-\$19.99</u>	Belt	\$8.99
TOTAL	\$104.00-\$142.00	<u>Shoes</u>	<u>\$14.99-\$19.99</u>
		TOTAL	\$60.00-\$82.00

As you can see, planning your interview attire will take time and careful thought. Regardless of where you decide to make your purchases, don't compromise fit and remember the importance of details. Paying attention to your overall appearance from head to toe will impact your total look and the way you feel about yourself.

The next section is devoted to polishing your professional look and creating a strong presence as you enter the room to meet someone for the first time.

IT'S THE DETAILS THAT COUNT

Whether going to an interview, meeting a client for the first time, or simply getting ready for your work day, it is important to pay attention to details and give the message of neatness, cleanliness, and perfect grooming. Your outfit should coordinate in color, fit properly, and be accessorized appropriately. The following checklist will assist you in this process.

- Clothing fits properly for the size of your body
- Clothing is not too loose
- Clothing is not too tight
- Clothing is cleaned and pressed
- Hem length of skirts is appropriate and not beyond 2" above the knee
- Hem length of trousers is not too long and hits the middle of the heel in the back of your shoe
- Long sleeve shirts reach the top of the wrist bone
- Suit jacket sleeves reach the bottom of the wrist bone.
- Blazer suit sleeves reach the bottom of the wrist bone.
- Shoes are clean, shined and in good condition
- Hosiery is free from any runs, or snags
- Hosiery color coordinates with outfit

- ❑ Handbags are small to medium in size
- ❑ Jewelry is simple and subtle, coordinated with outfit
- ❑ Accessories must coordinate with outfit and be scaled to body proportion
- ❑ Hygiene: Wash hair and body on a daily basis
- ❑ Hair looks natural and enhances your skin tone
- ❑ Nails are well manicured and appropriate length
- ❑ Subtle nail polish for women
- ❑ Cologne or perfume must be subtle and not overpowering
- ❑ DO NOT wear trends that are inappropriate
- ❑ Coat must cover the skirt hem
- ❑ Beards and mustaches need to be trimmed and clean
- ❑ No face piercing (nose rings, tongue rings, eyelid rings)
- ❑ Body tattoos must be covered at all times

The above list focuses on the essentials to making a good and lasting first impression. It's important to realize that the workplace requires specific standards. Your commitment to endorse and maintain those standards will place you in a very favorable position as you progress in your career. If you begin to dress for the position you want to have, you will be taking just one of the many important steps needed to reach your ultimate career goal. Take your time and practice the art of professional dress at all levels and you will be ready for any situation at any time!

