

**Look the Look: Dressing for Interviews***By Mary Waldron*

You've managed to land the interview for a first-year associate position at O'Melveny & Myers; now you need to look the part. Easy, right? I always thought so, but there are many people out there who need some job interview fashion advice! Now, I'm not asking you to roll up looking like a Gucci fashionista, but let me explain some of the guidelines.

**What Do You Want From Me?**

Think about the type of firm that you are interviewing for. The people. What are the partners like? Are they old school with the long-sleeved white shirts and navy blue suits? Or are they more contemporary and hip? This information will help you guide the vibe that you want to go for. If the firm is young, it's most likely that the partners will be, too. This case would allow you a little more freedom in your clothing choices. More color and design would probably be appreciated more by a 30-something partner rather than a 70-something partner who has been in the business for 30-plus years. Of course, there are always exceptions, but stay true to your instinct on this one. Remember, they are potentially hiring you. They need and want you to walk, talk, and look like their firm's image.

**Please Don't Raid Your Father's Closet**

Your clothes should represent you—to some degree. Yes, the early '90s Bugs Bunny tie is your favorite, but your potential boss will probably overlook your dedication to uniqueness and call you a dweeb after you've stepped outside the door. Look, if you truly love wearing plaid sweater vests and tight corduroy pants, and you are not indie, please take a walk into Macy's and find someone who can help before your big interview. "But I'm still paying off law school. I can't afford a whole new wardrobe now!" you say. I am a bargain-shopping female; allow me to help. Many people are under this strange preconceived notion that classy, sharp-looking outfits cost an arm and a leg. Not true, I say.

**"You Better Shop Around"**

The key is to find the nice clothes, but at affordable prices. Nordstrom is notorious for having higher-end clothing and accessories, but let me introduce you to Nordstrom Rack, their clearance store. They have locations all across the US, and they sell all the top brand names. It's not like every item in the store has been rejected by all mankind; it's just that the items got replaced by updated styles or a new season came along. Many other clothing companies also have outlet stores with sale items, you just need to do your research, and it will be o-k.

In addition, don't forget about other stores that are dedicated to these discounted fashions, like Ross, Marshalls, and T.J. Maxx. Every time I walk into a Ross, I think, "My goodness, anyone can walk in here and buy a dressy, brand-name outfit for less than \$50.00." Amazing. And if you look hard enough, you can even make it in closer to \$30.00. DKNY, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein...they're all there; just take the time to look.

## **They Are Not Looking to Form a Stomp Squad**

This one is more for the ladies, but I've seen a couple men manage to screw this one up. Don't ask. Shoes, people, are made for walking, not stomping. Say it with me! Always choose a shoe that is comfy, yet dressy enough for an interview—not clunky. Not the shoes you wore partying at Light in Vegas last weekend. Think church, or better yet, a funeral. Would you prance into Grandma June's funeral in your six-inch, white patent leather platforms? Ok, now I'm just getting ridiculous, but you get my point.

The interviewer should not notice them—that is the point. You can still rock the high heels; just test them on a hard surface floor first. You never know what the office is going to be like. And God knows you do not want your shoes to make an impression before you even enter the interviewer's office. Also, take a glance at how you look walking in them. Do you really look like you know what you're doing? Or do you look like you're trying to keep up a balancing act?

## **"You Better Work It"**

Not to go all RuPaul, but seriously, you need to be as cool as your clothes are...or else you may be found out! Take the time to really think about what you want to wear to the interview. Imagine yourself wearing the clothes, and walking through the door in the clothes. I know this sounds nuts, but this sort of prep can help with your confidence. If you love what you are wearing, and you "own" the look, the interviewer will sense this self-assurance. And trust me, that's not a bad thing.

## **On the Net**

O'Melveny & Myers

[www.omm.com/webcode/navigate.asp?nodehandle=519](http://www.omm.com/webcode/navigate.asp?nodehandle=519)

Gucci

[www.gucci.com](http://www.gucci.com)

Nordstrom Rack

[about.nordstrom.com/ourstores/rackstores](http://about.nordstrom.com/ourstores/rackstores)