Choosing the Right Attire for Your Business Event

By Roger CPA Review

Do you ever wonder what it really means to “Dress for Success?” Within the business world, there are professional expectations on how you should present yourself, which includes dressing successfully for certain occasions. This is especially important when starting your career and as you begin to represent your company or work directly with clients. After all, it’s true that you should always wear great clothes because you’ll never know who you’re going to meet!

In this article, we’ll break down the 4 main styles of business attire, when to wear them and the differences between each. Having a solid understanding of proper business attire, will help you easily navigate through your closet the next time you’re searching for something to wear to a firm-sponsored social or a Meet the Firms event.

**Business Formal**

If you’re in business formal attire, you’re definitely dressing to impress! This is the most formal you can be, and normally means wearing a complete suit, including dress shoes. For men, a pantsuit with a silk tie, cufflinks, silk or linen pocket square, and button-down, dress shirt with a collar is normally regarded as business formal.

For women, a pantsuit with a button-down collar dress shirt or a suit with a skirt, hose and closed-toe pumps is regarded as business formal.

You should wear business formal attire...

- For an interview
- Meet the Firms event
- Other business events
- When you don’t know the proper dress code (it’s always better to come overdressed than underdressed!)
Business Professional

Business professional attire is a step down from business formal and normally is conservative clothing that still portrays professionalism. Men can wear a blazer or suit jacket, button-down shirt with a collar, suit pants, a tie, and dress shoes.

Women can wear a skirt or pant suit with heels and a button-down shirt with a collar or appropriate blouse.

You should wear business professional attire...

- If you are specifically told it’s okay to do so
**Business Casual**

Business casual attire is a dress code that’s meant for exactly what it sounds like: a casual and no-suit-necessary environment. However, this can be tricky. This doesn’t mean you can wear just anything. Normally what’s accepted for men is polo shirts, shirts with collars or sweaters, khakis, dress pants, and dress shoes. A tie is not necessary.

For women, conservative dresses, skirts, shirts with collars, sweaters, dress pants, and dress shoes or boots are acceptable.

You should wear business professional attire...

- If you are specifically told it’s okay to do so
Casual
casual dress is usually everyone’s favorite since it allows you to be more comfortable. This doesn’t mean you should just wear your favorite ripped jeans and cropped top t-shirt, though. Double check with your employer, event manager, or event point of contact, to ensure that you’re following their interpretation of “casual” correctly. This is the safest route to take. If they say it’s okay to wear sneakers and t-shirts, go for it. If they prefer you to wear well-tailored jeans and presentable blouses, do that. But no matter how they define casual, it’s your job to make sure you look neat and presentable to clients.

You should wear casual attire...

- If you are specifically told it’s okay to do so

Remember, it’s always best to err on the side of formal when choosing your outfit for a business event, especially if no information about dress code is provided.