Women’s Professional Dress Seminar
“Today, in a situation where three people with equal qualifications are interviewed for a job, the one with the best communication skills gets it.” Roger Ailes, from *You Are the Message*

- Keep the KISS principle in mind. . .
  - Keep It Simple and Sophisticated. Dark colors convey authority; bright colors convey friendliness. Light colors such as taupe and khaki are generally more casual than black, gray, or navy.
Avoid these mistakes…

1. Avoid excessive use of bright color and wild patterns.

2. Avoid excessive jewelry and jewelry that signals your arrival with tiny clicking sounds.

3. Your shoes do not need to "match" your blouse.

4. Spiky, strappy, sandals in metallic colors or with rhinestones aren't appropriate for most businesses. Nor are open-toed shoes.

5. Casual does not mean you can wear jeans. Jeans are a definite no-no in the corporate workplace unless stated otherwise in your company's dress code. Never dress in “business casual” to an interview.
Suits

The Keys are fabric, fit and comfort.

For autumn, winter and spring, wool is still the best choice. For summer cotton and linen are good choices, specially if blended with a small amount of stretchy fabric. Tropical weight wool is another good option.

Navy blue, black, charcoal, taupe, white, burgundy, and forest green are all acceptable colors. Although darker colors are typically worn in winter and lighter colors are worn in the spring and summer this rule is no longer hard and fast.

Have the suit professionally fitted. Choose suits with jackets and skirts that are appropriate for your body type. Long jackets that cover the hips are flattering for most women.
Suit Skirts and Suit Pants

**Skirt** = formal, urban, conservative.
- The two most important things are fit and length. Make sure your skirt is not too tight or too short (to the knee).
- Maximum versatility = no belt required.

**Suit Pants** = confident, contemporary, practical.
- Should not be overly baggy or clingy.
- Flat front vs. pleats. Both are professional; the front flat is more slimming and sophisticated.
- No belt loops. For your first suit, a clean waistline is more flexible.
- Cuffed leg vs. clean. Both are acceptable; a clean leg is more versatile.
Blouses/Tops

**Blouse** = conservative, confident, ladylike.
- First purchase: solid white, cream, black or a color to match your suit.
- Blouses made of transparent material are inappropriate. However, high-quality cotton, silk, or a microfiber material are good choices. Collars on lady's blouses are varied.

**Shirt** = efficient, classic; respects authority.
- First purchase: solid, white cotton; no button-down collar.

**Fitted T-Shirt** = easygoing but organized.
- Not a good idea for interview wear.
In a business environment it is strongly advised to keep shoes functional, attractive, clean and shined. Keep a black Sharpie marker with you to touch up scuffed shoes.

Low-heeled pumps are suitable for the vast majority of business situations. Heels can be as high as an inch and a half or two inches, but much higher than that looks unprofessional.

Keep the higher heels for your skirts. Two inch heels with pantsuit is too dressy for day.

Open-toed shoes and mules (a backless shoe) are inappropriate in conservative environments.
Socks & Hose

**Socks**

- Loafer + Trouser = Trouser sock (Medium-weight socks – more sporty than a dress sock and lighter weight than a sport sock).
- Midheel + Trouser = Dress sock (Lightweight silky hosiery worn when dressier trousers are paired with a feminine shoe).

**Hosiery**

- Always required in an interview. Only acceptable colors and nude and black (solid, sheer, or semisheer).
Belts. Should be leather and from one half inch to three fourths of an inch thick. Coordinate the colors with your outfits and avoid metallic belts covered with studs and jewels, and belts made with plastic or fur.

Jewelry. Should be worn in very moderate amounts and should not attract too much attention. Keep it simple and understated. Should not provide a “soundtrack”, e.g., no noisy bangle bracelets!

Perfume Should be a subtle accent to your personality, not a personality unto itself.
Portfolios & Purses

**Portfolio.** A sleek & efficient alternative to a handbag, it can keep résumés presentable, hold a notepad, and can conceal pre-interview cheat sheets to study en route to the meeting. Choose a neat, tidy design (no neon colors, action heroes, or unicorns) in leather or matte plastic.

**Purses.** Your first purchase should be black leather: it’s authoritative and versatile. Make sure straps on a shoulder bag are not too long. Bag should not hang below your waist. Keep hardware to a minimum. Neatly zipping the bag conveys organization and control.
Watches

- **Stainless steel/gold watch** = decorative. Outgoing, assertive.
- **Leather watch** = conservative, practical, straightforward.

Some watch rules…

- Digital watches are too sporty.
- Round or rectangular faces are equally appropriate.
- At work, a watch is a watch, not jewelry. Avoid colored faces, bright-colored bands, contrasting stitching, and an oversized face.