Image isn’t Everything, But It is Something

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As a new intern with Career Services, I was asked to attend the WestPACS Job Fair this past fall and help with student registration. I noticed that some students were impeccably dressed, while others were wearing questionable attire. It made me wonder: what exactly is professional dress? While everyone can still add their own personality and flair to their work wardrobe, there are some general guidelines that anyone going to a job fair or interview should follow.

1. Know the difference between Business Casual vs. Business Professional.
2. When in doubt, dress conservatively.
3. Navy and black are always in season.
4. Going out clothes are not professional attire.
5. Don’t wear wrinkled, dirty, or mismatching clothing.

**Essentials for men**: suit, blazer and/or sport coat (if you don’t have a suit), black or brown leather shoes, white dress shirts, silk ties, dark socks.

**Essentials for women**: skirt suits (knee length) and/or pant suits, black and brown leather belts, black, closed-toe dress shoes (low heel), white or striped blouses/twin sets, neutral or black hosiery.

Remember, your clothing helps your potential employer form an opinion of you. Make it a good one!

What is an ‘Elevator Speech’?

Whether you know what it is or not, an Elevator Speech is an important tool when meeting perspective employers; especially at the upcoming Job and Internship Fair.

**How long should it be?**
Studies have shown that 16 seconds is the average amount of time needed to make a good first impression that just might pique an employer’s interest in you.

**What should I say?**
You should include your name, major, field of interest or desired position and something that makes you different….in other words “What Makes You Special”. You might also add a compelling “hook” that will make the listener remember you or ask questions. Your goal is to stand out from the crowd.

**Practice, Practice, Practice** – Don’t forget to practice so that it sounds natural and shows your confidence and enthusiasm. You may need several versions depending on the situation.

**Targeted Employer** – If you develop a speech for a specific employer, research the company and incorporate that information so the employer knows that you’re really interested in their company.

Now that you know what an “Elevator Speech” is, get ready, get set and go to the job fair armed with the confidence that you’ll need to land that all important interview!!!