

Interview Attire at Tech Company

Q. Yesterday I had a telephone-screening interview with an in-house recruiter for a technology company. This morning she called to tell me that I was one of three attorneys who would be brought in for interviews with the general counsel. I am delighted, and I am doing everything I can to prepare. One of my concerns, however, is what to wear to the interview. I have an acquaintance who works at the company -- but not in the legal department. He assures me that no one ever wears a suit or tie. He suggested that I just wear a pair of khakis and a polo shirt so I would look as though I already work there. What do you think?

A. Ah, yes, life used to be so much simpler when we all knew that a tailored suit and conservative tie were the only choice for an interview. Now, in addition to researching the company and preparing your questions and answers, you need to figure out what to wear!

As a general rule, a business suit is still appropriate attire for most professional interviews. Even in a company with a casual dress code, you will want to dress to impress. Remember, they work there, but you don't -- yet. You would probably not be well served by following your acquaintance's advice without asking a few more questions. What do the in-house attorneys wear when they have an important meeting? What would you feel most comfortable wearing? If you can't imagine interviewing in anything but a suit and tie, then you should probably go with it. Alternatively, a sport coat and button-down shirt without a tie might be a nice compromise. If you still are unsure, you could ask for advice from the in-house recruiter who arranged for your interview. It is in her interest to make sure that you are comfortable and that your interview is successful.

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