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Dressing for success, baby-boomer style

50+ job-seekers need to keep their appearance as up-to-date as their skills

Toronto, ON (August 14, 2007) - Older job-seekers looking to re-enter the workforce know they often have to work harder to convince potential employers that their skills are up-to-date, and the first step is taking a good look in the mirror.

"If your appearance is outdated, it sends a message to potential employers that maybe your skills are outdated, too." says Sarah Welstead, 37, co-founder and Managing Partner of RetiredWorker.ca, the largest employment website in Canada designed specifically for post-retirement job-seekers. "When 50-plus job-seekers confound 'senior citizen' stereotypes, it's easier for employers to focus on their knowledge and experience rather than their age."

But Welstead says older job-seekers don't have to look like fashion plates or spend a lot of money. They just need to follow some simple guidelines:

1. **Remember that dress codes have changed a lot in the past 20 years:** In most offices 'casual Fridays' have taken over the whole week. Wearing a 3-piece suit in a 'smart casual' environment will just make you look old-fashioned.
2. **Dress appropriately for the position you want:** If what you'd really like is to work part-time in a garden center, wearing neatly-pressed khakis and a cotton shirt tells the interviewer that you understand the job.
3. **If you bought it more than 5 years ago, don't wear it to the interview:** That 'interview suit' you bought in 1989 is now out of style. A pair of khakis and a shirt costs less than \$100 at the Gap, and demonstrates that you understand the modern workplace.
4. **Visit the hairdresser or barber:** If you can't remember the last time you changed your hairstyle, it's time to visit the salon. If your appearance says "I'm too old to care about what I look like any more...", potential employers wonder if that's the same attitude you'll have to your job.
5. **Visit the dentist:** Your teeth play a crucial role in your overall appearance. Stained, chipped, cracked or missing front teeth can add 10+ years to your age – a \$25 home teeth-whitening kit is a worthwhile investment.
6. **Make your cellphone or PDA (unobtrusively obvious):** Letting a potential employer see your cellphone or Blackberry is a subtle way to let them know that you are comfortable with 'high tech'. (But don't take calls during interviews!)

“A polished, well-groomed and appropriate appearance is important for everyone, but doubly so for older job-seekers,” comments Welstead. “An up-to-date appearance is a great way to show potential employers that your skills are up-to-date as well.”

About Retired Worker:

Retired Worker is the largest employment website in Canada designed for retired people who want to work on a part-time, temporary or contract basis. Launched in Toronto in October 2003, Retired Worker now has 24,000+ registered job-seekers across Canada. For more information, visit www.retiredworker.ca.

Media requiring more information or an interview, please contact:

Sarah Welstead
Managing Partner, Retired Worker
416.809.7829
sarah@retiredworker.ca