

The Perfect RIA, Episode 80: Go To Work Naked

“Hey, you kind of dress like a clown. I don’t want to work with you.”

Action items

1. **Consult a professional.** Take advice from a personal shopper, someone who has the expertise and can help you figure out your look. Let them show you what is best for you. Even if you don’t have too much in your budget, think about buying one sharp suit.
2. **Find your best-dressed client.** Check out their clothes, ask where they shop, it’s okay to have questions. If they dress nicely, they are doing it on purpose so they will definitely not be offended by you complementing their look and asking about the clothes.
3. **Involve your team.** Give them gift cards, quarterly bonus or anything else that can help them. Buy a whole day with a personal shopper, make sure they are getting the best advice.
4. **Help us out.** We would really love to be featured more frequently in the Kitces readings so leave a comment on one of the articles, take a screenshot, tag us in social media and we will send you some cool swag!

Today’s episode focuses on how to dress for success. As the clothes we are wearing are a very important part of our job. Most of the people you work with will probably never let you feel like they are judging your appearance, but the truth is they are. Nobody will tell you that you look like a clown because it’s not a polite thing. The way you dress catches people’s attention but that is not the only thing they will look at. Are you taking care of yourself? Did

you brush your teeth in the morning? Did you brush your hair? Does your suit look nice or it looks like you just took it out of the bottom of your wardrobe? People will think about all of these once they see you.

As Matthew says, younger advisors like to say that since they are young, they don't need to wear buttoned-up shirts and a tie. And here's where they are wrong because since they are so young, they have less experience, they need to work more to show that they are professionals and how they look can definitely help them. It might not be obvious but if you wear nice clothes, you are creating a nice atmosphere and that will stay with you all the time. Whether you are a professional or not, the appearance will tell your clients that you are. As Micah says, it's kind of a situation where you "fake it till you make it". There are also advisors who achieved their goal, they stopped caring about the outfit and claim that their situation is different. They already are successful, they have the clients, everything they need. You should take care of how you look every day because it is always a game day. Whenever Matthew flies somewhere for an event, he will always look professional as someone on the plane might go to the same place, so Matthew wants to make a good impression from the very beginning. However, if he flies to Vegas with his family, he will have completely different clothes on him because the situation is different.

Apart from your appearance, there are also some other factors people might judge you on. For example, the way you pick up the phone. As Micah tells us, saying "What do you want?" is quicker and much more efficient but obviously, you will never say that because it's not polite. And have you ever thought about what kind of music is playing in the background when you put someone on hold? Check it as well, you want to have upbeat tunes there rather than something that will just bore them.

Now, the appearance is important no matter what your profession is, but the idea of a nice outfit depends on your job. If you are an advisor who works with farmers, you will definitely

wear a suit to go see them because they will laugh at you. Not every time the suit will be the best idea, but every time you want to be a couple of levels ahead of your client.

Micah gives us an example from his experience that you can always bring things down a bit about how you look, but you cannot elevate your game. If you are wearing a suit and everybody around you decided to go casual, take off your jacket, roll up the sleeves and there you go.

The other thing is your clients will not only look at you but also at your team. It is a good idea to take care of their appearance as well but in a polite way, without telling them what to wear and how to look. You can follow Micah's idea and give your team gift cards and a whole day with a personal shopper. That way they are getting the best advice without feeling forced by anyone.

Micah and Matthew also point out that you don't need to have your whole wardrobe filled with suits. If you just have one good one, that's enough. Doctors, military, police, they all have the same outfit every day but the one that shows that they are professionals. Nobody will judge you if you look the same every day as long as you look good.