

## Job Explorer: My Dream Job-Lesson 7

**Topic:** The Work Environment & Proper Attire for Business

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Identify components of a positive work environment
- Examine sample dress codes and discuss how dress codes relate to a positive work environment

**Materials:**

- Worksheets #7A, #7B, and #7C.

**Focus Question:** What does your picture of the ideal work environment look like?

**Teaching Strategies:**

Introduction:

- Ask students to explain their answers to the following:
  - Describe in a paragraph or two, the ideal environment in which you would like to work.
- Have students explain their answers to the following:
  - Summarize what you wrote about your ideal work environment

Body of the lesson:

Tell the class that today they will be discussing the ingredients that would make a work environment ideal for them.

- Distribute Worksheet #7A, “Workplace Environment.” Have students follow the directions for the exercise on the worksheet. Then, have them explain their answers to the following:
  - Based on this list, what are the kinds of things make up the workplace environment?
  - Which of the things on this list did you find to be most important?
  - Which of the things on this list were least important to you?
  - Are the items about the workplace environment that you would add to this list?
- Distribute Worksheet # 7B, “Characteristics.” Divide the class into 5 groups. Have each group read about a different one the characteristics listed on the worksheet. For the characteristic each group reads have them:
  - 1) Summarize the characteristic in their own words
  - 2) Explain why that characteristic is so important to a positive workplace environment
  - 3) Give an example to show how an employer can create that characteristic

After each group gives its presentation, have the class explain their answers to the following:

- What title did you give to this reading worksheet?
- What did you learn about the characteristics of a positive work environment from these presentations?
- Other than the characteristic on which your group presented, which is the most important characteristic of a positive work environment?

- Distribute Worksheet #7C, “Sample Dress Codes.” Have students follow the directions to complete the exercise on the worksheet. Then have the class explain their answers to the following:
  - What role does a company’s dress code play in creating a positive work environment?
  - Would you prefer working for a company that had a more formal or less formal dress code?
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 1 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 2 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 3 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 4 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 5 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - How many of you found the dress code on this worksheet in Category 6 acceptable or unacceptable? If unacceptable, explain your objection.
  - Did you find the punishment for dress code violations fair or unfair? Explain your answer.

Summary/Assessment:

- Have students explain your answers to the following:  
What is the most important thing you learned about the workplace environment from this lesson?

### Worksheet #7A, “Workplace Environment”

Exercise: Rate the importance of each aspect of the work place environment listed in the 17 statements below, by placing a number between 1-4 (1= Very important, 2= Some what important, 3= Of small importance, 4=Not important at all) to the left of each statement.

	Statements about aspects of the work environment
_____ 1	There should be a feeling that individuals are part of a team with a shared mission, values, efforts and goals.
_____ 2	There should be a feeling that individuals are challenged and given assignments that inspire, test, and stretch each person’s abilities.
_____ 3	A conscious effort should be made to recognize, in tangible ways, the efforts of employees in the workplace.
_____ 4	Supervisors should offer constructive feedback, emphasizing the positives rather than negatives.
_____ 5	Employees should be encouraged to innovate and take the initiative.
_____ 6	Policies and procedures for most workplace situations should be consistent and non-contradictory
_____ 7	Employees should be encouraged to solve as many of their own work-related problems as possible.
_____ 8	Workers should be accepted for who they are.
_____ 9	Employees should be made to feel in control of their work and capable of competently carrying out their daily tasks.
_____ 10	There should be greater rewards for success than the penalties for failure.
_____ 11	Workers should feel free to give honest feedback to supervisors.
_____ 12	Individuals should feel accepted and valued by colleagues.
_____ 13	Management should create an environment where workers feel safe and secure.
_____ 14	Workers should feel safe going to management to express any difficulties they are having with aspects of the job.
_____ 15	The needs of individuals should be strongly considered when supervisors make decisions affecting the work life of employees.
_____ 16	Workers should have adequate freedom to exercise their judgment and expertise in the workplace.
_____ 17	Managers should be viewed as workplace resources rather than as obstacles.

Adapted from: [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/work\\_environment\\_survey.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/work_environment_survey.pdf)

## Worksheet 7B, “Characteristics”

Exercise: On the line below, write a title for this worksheet.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are the most important work environment characteristics.

### **1. Transparent & Open Communication**

A transparent and open form of communication addresses the employee’s need to feel that what they have to say has value and makes employees feel that they belong. Work then becomes meaningful because the employees know that what they contribute affects the organization. Having open discussions get people involved and allow them to share their views and perspectives on how to achieve company goals.

### **2. Work-Life Balance**

There has to be some sort of balance between work and personal life. In general, having that sense of balance will improve job satisfaction among employees because they will feel that they’re not overlooking the other areas of their lives that are, if not more, important to them than work. When employees fulfill their various needs and goals in life, such as those of family, friends, spiritual pursuits, self-growth, etc., they can then feel more confident about themselves and perform their best at work.

### **3. Training & Development-Focused**

In a time when change occurs so frequently, it is necessary for organizations to be keep abreast with the changes and train their employees accordingly. For instance, technology is evolving so rapidly that what organizations commonly used ten years ago could be made obsolete today. Adapting to change is never more crucial in this era because those who do not change get replaced. This applies to both the individual and the organization itself. A training and development-focused organization has a clear roadmap for training their employees to sustain and enhance the productivity of the organization as a whole.

### **4. Recognition For Hard Work**

Rewards are necessary to encourage certain behaviors. This is known as **positive reinforcement**. It is used in organizational behavior management as well: by rewarding employees who put in effort for their work, this will promote similar behaviors in the future. A reward here doesn’t have to be monetary in nature; sometimes even a simple verbal recognition by the supervisor is all that is necessary to spur the employees’ motivation.

### **5. Strong Team Spirit**

We naturally seek support from our peers and seek to belong to a group. Come tough times, the team should come together to deal with whatever problems are out there. This is where **a sense of unity** is evoked in the team and employees will no longer just feel that they’re working for themselves. They are now working towards something bigger than themselves, and as a team. Instilling a strong team spirit is not easy because it **involves the acceptance and tolerance of differences in perspectives and working styles** between teammates. There is a need for them to see that they’re working towards a common goal before they can look beyond the differences.

Adapted from: <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/positive-working-environment/>



## Worksheet 7C, “Sample Dress Codes”

Exercise: After numbers 1-6 below, write the letter “A” if **you** would find this dress code requirement acceptable and a “U” if **you** would find this requirement unacceptable. For those requirements you would find unacceptable, explain your opinion in the space provided.

### **Business Casual**

1.                     *Slacks, Pants, and Suit Pants Slacks*

Pants and slacks that are similar to Dockers and other makers of cotton or synthetic material pants, wool pants, flannel pants, dressy capris, and nice looking dress synthetic pants are acceptable. Inappropriate slacks or pants include jeans, sweatpants, exercise pants, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, shorts, bib overalls, leggings, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants (e.g. biking pants).

Explanation:

2.                     *Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits Casual*

Dresses and skirts, and skirts that are split at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public. Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. Mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate for the office.

Explanation:

3.                     *Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets Casual*

Shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, golf-type shirts, and turtlenecks are acceptable attire for work. Most suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire for the office, if they violate none of the listed guidelines. Inappropriate attire for work includes tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans; halter-tops; tops with bare shoulders; sweatshirts, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress.

Explanation:

4.                     *Shoes and Footwear*

Conservative athletic or walking shoes, loafers, clogs, sneakers, boots, flats, dress heels, and leather deck-type shoes are acceptable for work. Wearing no stockings is acceptable in warm weather. Flashy athletic shoes, thongs, flip-flops, slippers, and any shoe with an open toe are not acceptable.

Explanation:

5.                     *Jewelry, Makeup, Perfume, and Cologne*

Should be in good taste, with limited visible body piercing. Remember, that some employees are allergic to the chemicals in perfumes and make-up, so wear these substances with restraint.

Explanation:

6.                     *Hats and Head Covering*

Hats are not appropriate in the office. Head Covers that are required for religious purposes are allowed.

Explanation:

### **Penalties**

If clothing fails to meet these standards, as determined by the employee’s supervisor and Human Resources staff, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again. If the problem persists, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. Progressive disciplinary action will be applied if dress code violations continue.

Adapted from: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/formnet/form/312>

