



## Careers Newsletter

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### But I Don't Have a 2.1!

**2.1** There has been some discussion on LinkedIn suggesting that it is unfair for employers to require a 2.1 degree. This has been in the context of the legal profession, but the principle applies elsewhere as well.

This is galling for anyone without a 2.1, particularly those who almost made it. (For the record, me). However, it is important to appreciate why employers use this yardstick. Firstly, in a knowledge economy, employers look for intellectual capacity, and degree class is (in theory) a measure of that. Secondly, particularly in the present jobs climate, they need a way of reducing the applications to a manageable number – going through each one line by line takes up too much time. This measure has the advantage of being objective, and applied irrespective of race, sex, disability and so on. Many employers also have a “mitigating circumstances” procedure for when there is a clear reason for an unexpectedly low mark.

That is not much help to those on the wrong side of the divide. So what can you do?

1. Emphasise any work or life experience that adds clear value to the employer. That will not however overcome an automatic or mindless check.
2. Adjust your target to one which does not impose the same barrier. This involves re-examining your aims and expectations. For example, Ford has traditionally had a well regarded graduate scheme. But if your real interest is HR, can you find the experience elsewhere, and could it actually involve earlier responsibility? For a lawyer interested in tax, could you work for an accountant or a bank and build expertise that way?
3. Network in a way that brings out your qualities, but do NOT ask for a job. Ask instead for advice and information.

### Career Webinar

“I Wish I Had a Different Career” our latest free webinar on 2nd May 2012.



## **Impressions Count – For Women**



Following last month's equivalent for Men - it may be dangerous for a man to write on this topic.....

Many of the issues are the same for men and women, so it is worth repeating part of last month's article. Early impressions count, and making a bad first impression (whether by how you look or how you act) can leave you with an uphill struggle to bring out your good points.

So it is important to look both "appropriate" for the job, and of suitably high status. Appropriateness means that you present yourself in a way that matches the relevant industry. A woman might wear a navy suit and white blouse for an interview with a law firm, and give the right impression. That might not have the same effect in a highly creative industry. Of course, women generally have a wider range of style options than men, which potentially means more chances of getting it wrong. Style should suit your shape.

Having picked the appropriate style, good grooming is essential. Clothes need to be fresh, clean, unworn. They should be of good quality, pressed and ironed where needed. Make up should be appropriate for the office rather than the club.

Be aware of accessories, which again should add to the image and not detract. Do not overload with jewellery, particularly if it tends to move or clink – that can distract. A faceful of metalwork is unlikely to impress more staid interviewers.

The overall rule is to make the impression appropriate to the particular job, but better.

You should be aware of colours that suit you, and those that do not. This depends on your natural colouring, and what effect you want to achieve. The one thing you need to avoid is a colour that makes you look ill or washed out. Several books are available to help if needed.

Lastly, take only one bag, whether handbag or laptop case. This avoids having to collect them together, and leaves a hand free to shake when at each end of the interview. And a firm reciprocal handshake is best.

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