

# Sock It To Me! What Is The Deal With Men Not Wearing Socks Today?



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: [StephenSays@bellow.press](mailto:StephenSays@bellow.press)

Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter @stephenviscusi, Like Stephen on Facebook; and follow him on LinkedIn.

*Dear Stephen:*

*What's the deal with men not wearing socks on interviews today? I mean ... socks?*

*I am a regional vice president for a major manufacturer and have been interviewing candidates lately for a sales rep position in our company. The position is an A&D rep in a major market. However, I do not want to pin this question to*

*that one position because I have encountered the same thing interviewing for positions all over the company. Strategic account manager or global account manager, the issue is the same. Is it just me or does it seem the dress code for interviews has changed without my knowledge? I understand we are not lawyers or bankers, but for sales reps to come in with no socks feels like it may cross a line.*

*For the most part these men are well-dressed and groomed, definitely "interview appropriate." Our company has a more casual culture to our dress code, so for men anything from a sports jacket to a suit is acceptable in my eyes. Even no jacket. Again, I really just can't get past these socks! Is it a summer thing? I find it distracting and just do not get it.*

*It seems I am dating myself here but the fashion of my younger male colleagues is more and more often starting to slip by me. I have seen some of our brightest and most talented sales reps go out on presentation without their socks and come back just as triumphant. It seems I have an undo prejudice here but I just cannot get past it. What do you think of this whole phenomenon?*

## **Hairy legs Are Distracting Me**

Dear Hairy Legs:

I know exactly what you are talking about.

I liken the fad of forgoing socks to what wearing 5 o'clock shadow over a clean shave was two years ago. It's the newest bad boy fashion trend, right off the boat from Fire Island or Nantucket.

Like it or not, the fad is here for now so you might as well put up with it. It certainly isn't just our industry either, if you are ever home in

the morning or stay up late you will notice most male TV hosts rarely wear socks with dress attire anymore. Ryan Seacrest, Andy Cohen, everyone is wearing a suit without the socks.

Personally, I find it distracting as well, but like me, I bet you're also asking a guy who thinks that every man over 40 should shave. I have a major furniture manufacture client where the CEO tells every male professional to "lose the tie." I belong to a private club here in NYC where members are strictly not allowed to wear ties inside. The culture is just moving further and further away from the formality we both came up in.

Now let me answer your specific question about no socks on an interview. When a man is formally dressed with the single exception of socks, I would consider it absolutely appropriate attire that should not be judged. You may be technically 100 percent appropriate. If the interviewer like you, unconsciously draws issue with

your lack of socks, it could throw things off or diminish someone's chances at a job. Anything that will distract, if even for a moment from the interview, should be avoided.

Of course, if you are interviewing with a fashion-forward male executive who is not wearing socks himself, this is a non-issue. I tell people to always do your homework on the person and company you are interviewing with. Ask about the culture from people you know there or snoop the company on LinkedIn for pictures. Should you wear a tie? A suit? Should you shave? Socks or no socks? The main point is to always look clean and impressive on an interview, but the specifics of this can change based on the company.

Hairy legs, you may not like it, but the no-socks look is here so you might as well get used to it. Find the best candidate for you, regardless of what's on their feet.

**Stephen**