



21st August

Beauty is in the eye of the employer

- Site reveals first impressions win over experience -

When it comes to hiring staff Britain's employers are more concerned with looks than qualifications, results of an 'under-cover', social experiment expose today.

Conducted by leading jobs website Gumtree.com, the covert study reveals that a young, attractive woman posing as a cleaner attracted 16 times more job offers than an older, larger lady despite offering the same qualifications and experience. Similarly young, attractive female applicants for nanny and PA jobs both outperformed their older, and arguably less attractive counterparts in sourcing interest.

The experiment posted job adverts on the site with identical qualifications and different photos and measured the response rate for a variety of positions including a PA, Nanny, Handyman and Cleaner.

It also uncovered that a pretty woman tends to do better than a handsome man in the career stakes. A girl handyman beat the stereotypical 'hunky handyman' with double the job offers and a young, female personal assistant received five times more replies than an attractive male.

This image-obsessed outlook is further echoed by new research out today that reveals a staggering one thirds of Brits (32%) admit to being influenced by a person's weight when hiring staff and a blatant 41% of men and 26% of women admit hiring someone they fancy.

Winner of BBC show *The Apprentice*, Michelle Dewberry comments: "As the evidence from Gumtree suggests, we live in a society that is influenced greatly by a person's appearance. But looks will only carry you so far so people need to ensure that even if they look the part they need to be able to play the part."

Further findings from the research expose a massive 83% of employers who admit first impressions really influence their decision making when interviewing, suggesting that if someone does not 'fit in' they may immediately be rejected.

Gumtree trends analyst Trisha Routledge says: "It's amazing to see from the findings just how much people are influenced by looks when hiring, especially as each job advert was posted with identical qualifications.

"It goes to show that in order to succeed in the world of work, candidates need to think more carefully about what other ways they can make their skills stand out."

Although the research shows that people have a fixed image of how workers should look, the results of the experiment threw up one exception to the norm. A builder, for example, was widely described among those polled as someone with big muscles and a nice smile, like Jason Grimshaw from *Coronation Street*. Yet when it came to the experiment an older, 'skinny' model raked in double the responses than that of the 'hot' one.

The actor who represented the *Mr Muscle* type character comments: "It goes to show that there are still some people out there who don't choose a worker purely based on looks, but I believe as a whole someone's appearance can have a massive effect on their professional career."

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For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email gumtree@lexispr.com

Notes to editor:

Omnibus research carried out by Redshift among 1006 adults from 7-9th July 2008.

Social experiment: Gumtree placed the following job adverts on the site for a period of a month and tracked the number of responses. All adverts were similarly described with identical qualifications.

- 1 Young girl PA
- 2 Young guy PA
- 3 Older woman PA
- 4 Young guy handyman
- 5 Young girl handyman
- 6 Older skinny guy handyman
- 7 Guy nanny
- 8 Girl nanny
- 9 Girl cleaner
- 10 Guy cleaner
- 11 Older women cleaner

About Gumtree.com

- Gumtree.com was created in London in March 2000 and now covers 60 cities across 6 countries - the UK, and US Ireland, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
- It is the UK's biggest website for local community classifieds including flat share, flat rentals and jobs
- Some Fast Facts
 - 20,000 new ads in a day
 - 100,000 new ads in a week
 - Half a million new ads in a month
 - One million ads live on the site at any one time
 - 150 million page impressions every month
 - Around 6 million visitors a month
 - Gumtree.com users spend 5,360,000 minutes on the website each month
- Gumtree is your local community online. Home to all the things you'd expect from your local community; a place to find and advertise rooms, flats and houses, a notice board for selling and buying stuff, somewhere to find job or a date even just to chat with friends