

[LIFE★★] HOW YOUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE IMPACTS YOUR CAREER

(P1) **LinkedIn** Influencer **Jeff Haden** published this post originally on LinkedIn.

(P2) Years ago I worked on the **shop floor** of a manufacturing **plant**. I had worked my way through school at another plant so I definitely identified more with the hourly workers than the "**suits**." (Even though most of the guys referred to me as "college boy.")

(P3) One day the department manager stopped by. He asked about my background. He asked about my education. He asked about my career **aspirations**. "I'd like to be a **supervisor**," I answered, "and then someday I'd like your job."

(P4) He smiled and said, "Good for you. I like a guy with dreams." Then he paused. "But if that's what you really want," he said, **looking me in the eyes**, "first you need to start **looking the part**."

(P5) I knew what he was saying but decided to play dumb. "What do you mean?" I asked. "Look around," he said. "How do supervisors dress? How does their hair look? How do they act? No one will think of you as **supervisor material** until they can actually see you as a supervisor — and right now you look nothing like a supervisor."

(P6) He was right. I was wearing **ratty** jeans with a couple of holes. (Why wouldn't I? I worked around oil and grease all day.) I was wearing a cut-off t-shirt. (Why wouldn't I? It was the middle of the summer and the air **wheezing** through the **overhead vents** was far from conditioned.) And my hair was pretty long, even for the day. (No excuse for that one, as is obvious from this photo.)

(P7) "But shouldn't how well I do my job matter more than how I look?" I asked.

(P8) "In a perfect world your performance is all that would matter," he said. "But we don't live in a perfect world. Take my advice: if you want to be promoted into a certain position... make sure you look like the people in that position."

(P9) I've thought about that conversation a lot over the years.

(P10) I've hired and promoted people who looked the part... and they turned out to be **all show and no go**. I've hired and promoted people who didn't look the part at all... and they turned out to be superstars. I'm convinced that how you look and, at least to a large degree how you act, has nothing to do with your skill and talent and fit for a job.

(P11) Still, he's right: the world isn't perfect. People still **make assumptions** about us based on irrelevant things like clothing and **mannerisms**... and height and weight and age and gender and ethnicity and tons of other qualities and attributes that **have absolutely no bearing on a person's performance**.

(P12) So **are you better off** trying to **conform**?

(P13) Unfortunately, probably so. The people doing the hiring and promoting are people — and people tend to **be biased towards** the comfortable and the familiar. People tend to hire and promote people who are much like themselves. (If you remind me of me... then you must be awesome, right?)

(P14) Besides, highly diverse teams are like **unicorns** — we all know what one should look like, but unless you're **NPH** you rarely encounter one **in the wild**.

And don't forget that hiring or promoting someone who conforms, even if only in dress and **deportment**, makes a high percentage of the people making those decisions feel like they're taking a little bit less of a risk. I know I was viewed — **admittedly** with good reason — as a **wild card**, and I'm sure that impacted my **promotability**.

(P15) But still: are you better off being yourself and trusting that people will value your skills, experience, talent... and uniqueness?

(P16) Sadly I think that's a move **fraught** with professional **peril**. If your goal is to get hired or promoted then expressing your individuality could make that goal much harder to accomplish. (Of course if being yourself in all ways is what is most important to you, by all means **let your freak flag fly**. Seriously.)

(P17) I have no way of knowing for sure, but changing how I dressed — and in a larger sense, tempering some of the attitude I displayed — would likely have helped me get promoted sooner. For a long time I didn't look the part, didn't act the part... and I'm sure that made me a less attractive candidate.

(P18) But that's just what I think; what's more interesting is what you think about fitting in and conforming.

(P19) Has the way you look affected your career? Have you ever decided to conform... or not to conform... and what difference did that make?

Words: 765

Source <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-appearance-impacts-your-career-2014-10>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you found the passage difficult to read or had problems understanding specific words or idiomatic expressions, please discuss them with your tutor. The following discussion questions should be answered in your own words and with your own arguments.

1. Briefly summarize the content of the article in your own words.
 2. What does “looking the part” mean (P4)? Do you think it is important to look the part when you are looking for a job (or when you are hiring someone)?
 3. What does “all show and no go” mean (P10)? From your own experience how much correlation is there between a person’s appearance and his/her performance?
 4. Have you ever decided to conform... or not to conform... and what difference did that make?
-

WHO / WHAT / WHERE ARE THEY?

LinkedIn

(Company) a business-oriented social networking service. Founded in December 2002 and launched on May 5, 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking. In 2006, LinkedIn increased to 20 million viewers. As of June 2013, LinkedIn reports more than 259 million acquired users in more than 200 countries and territories.

Jeff Haden

(Person) a ghostwriter, speaker, LinkedIn Influencer, and contributing editor for Inc. He learned much of what he knows about business and technology working his way up to managing of a 250-employee book plant; everything else he picks up as a ghostwriter for innovators and business leaders. He’s written more than 50 non-fiction books, including six Amazon Business and Investing #1s, along with hundreds of articles and reports. And he's collected four years of tips and advice in his book, “Transform: Dramatically Improve Your Career, Business, Relationships, and Life – One Simple Step at a Time.”

NPH (Neil Patrick Harris)

(Person) Neil Patrick Harris (born June 15, 1973) is an American actor, producer, director, magician, comedian and singer. He is best known for playing Barney Stinson in the television comedy series How I Met Your Mother (2005–2014), for which he was nominated for four Emmy Awards.

VOCABULARY

Shop floor	(n) (공장의) 작업 현장
Plant	(n) 공장
Suits	(n) 정장
Aspiration	(n) 열망, 포부, 염원
Supervisor	(n) 감독관, 관리자; 지도교수
Look in the eyes	(expression) ~의 눈/얼굴을 똑바로 쳐다보다
Look the part	(expression) (특정한 일·직책·역할에) 알맞아 보이다/알맞은 옷을 입고 있다
Supervisor material	(expression) ~ material 라고 하는 표현은 ~감으로 해석; e.g. husband material, 남편감/남편으로 삼아도 훌륭한
Ratty	(adj) 추레한, 지저분한
Wheezing	(adj) 바람때문에 쉹쉹거리는
Overhead vent	(n) 머리 위에 위치한 통풍구, 환기구
All show and no go	(expression) 빛좋은 개살구; “all ~ and no ~” 는 “~인듯 하다 실제로는 아니다”
Make assumption	(expression) 추정을 내리다
Mannerism	(n) (본인은 의식하지 못하는) 버릇; 매너리즘
Have no bearing on [smth]	(expression) ...와 관계가 없다
[Be] better off	(expression) 형편이 더 나은
Conform	(v) 집단의 다른 구성원들과 행동을 같이 하다; (관습 등에) 따르다
[Be] biased towards	(expression) ...의 경향이 있다, ...에 기울어져[치우쳐] 있다
Unicorn	(expression) 존재하지 않는 것
In the wild	(expression) 황야에서
Deportment	(n) 몸가짐; 행실, 행동거지
Admittedly	(adv) 인정하건대
Wild card	(expression) 와일드카드(일반적인 자격을 갖지 못한 사람에게 주어지는 경기 기회. 또는 그런 기회를 갖게 된 선수)
Promotability	(n) promote + ability (승진 가능성)
Fraught	(adj) (좋지 않은 것들) 투성이의; 걱정스러운; 걱정하는
Peril	(n) (심각한) 위험
Freak flag	(expression) A characteristic, mannerism, or appearance of a person, either subtle or overt, which implies unique, eccentric, creative, adventurous or unconventional thinking.
Fly the flag	(expression) to support or to represent your country (often + for) e.g. In the absence of any other Italian film directors, Mr Infascelli bravely flew the flag for his country.