

Should tattoos be
accepted in the
workplace?



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People say perception is everything. Potential employers judge people based on physical appearance, as do peers, potential mates, and clients. Tattoos are a big issue concerning how people judge appearance. While they can be offensive to coworkers and customers, tattoos should not be judged in the workplace because they are a way of expressing yourself, or your culture. "The tattooing craze spread to upper classes all over Europe in the nineteenth century." (Global Oneness). Some feel tattoos were made for acupuncture relieving pain from joints.

Other ideas range from social status and ritual markings to tribal marks or simple preference. "Tattooing has been practiced worldwide. The Ainu, the indigenous people of Japan, traditionally wore facial tattoos. Today one can find Berbers of Tamazgha of North Africa, Maori of New Zealand, and Atayal of Taiwan with facial tattoos. Tattooing was widespread among Polynesian peoples and among certain tribal groups in the Taiwan, Philippines, Borneo, Mentawai Islands, Africa, North America, South America, Mesoamerica, Europe, Japan, Cambodia, New Zealand and Micronesia.

Despite some taboos surrounding tattooing, the art continues to be popular in many parts of the world. ("Tattoos," 2009) Taking their sartorial lead from the British Court, where King Edward VII followed King George V's lead in getting tattooed; King Frederik IX of Denmark, the King of Romania, Kaiser Wilhelm II, King Alexandar of Yugoslavia and even Czar Nicholas of Russia, all sported tattoos, many of them elaborate and ornate renditions of the Royal Coat of Arms or the Royal Family Crest. King Alfonso of modern Spain also has a tattoo. (Global Oneness). In present-day society, tattoos are becoming more common.

In the USA many prisoners and criminal gangs use distinctive tattoos to indicate facts about their criminal behavior, prison sentences, and organizational affiliation. (Global Oneness). Body Art is a form of communication that is as old as the human race itself. Cultures around the world have used tattoos for religious, social, and spiritual reasons playing a significant role in setting a culture's morals and behavior patterns. However, many people used to associate the Bible, which states " Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

" (Leviticus 19: 27-29, Bible). Some religious beliefs are slightly different. For example, the fundamentalist Christians believe that one should not have tattoos because they are a " pagan practice. " Catholics however, believe marking yourself with tattoos is a personal choice open for personal interpretation. In the Jewish faith, marking one's body with tattoos has been thought to be such a desecration of the body that often times a tattooed individual could be denied burial in a Jewish cemetery. People tend to judge others by what the Bible has instructed us to believe.

Tattoos are a way of expressing yourself individually. They are seen on entertainers, athletes and public figures. Author Jack London writes, " Show me a man with a tattoo and I'll show you a man with an interesting past. " Peggy Burke, dean of education and graduate studies, said tattoos can have a devastating effect on job opportunities in the education field. She also states, " Schools are extremely conservative institutions, and most parents consider teachers to be role models for their children," she wrote in an e-mail.

" Anything the school administrator views as a distraction in the classroom is very likely a negative factor. " As we move past our school years, we tend to

look at role models in different views. Most forget their teachers and look for others as a role model. More than half the military members, athletes, and entertainers have tattoos. So the question is, why do people view them differently concerning tattoos? If teachers are considered role models, why should they be judged on their appearances when they tend to have the same look as military members, athletes, and entertainers.

Coworkers and customers see tattoos in different ways when dealing with business. Tattoos are much more acceptable in the gym than in the office. When dealing with stocks and bonds or selling real estate, tattoos might draw people away. Potential clients may be intimidated and lack confidence in your abilities as a professional. Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology published in June 2006, about half of people in their 20s have either a tattoo or a body piercing other than traditional earrings.

That figure, which is higher than the national average, is growing, said Anne Laumann, the study's co-author and a dermatologist at Northwestern University. Some employers are updating their dress codes while others are adding new rules to cover up tattoos. The problem that can arise is that the old stereotypes are being challenged and leading to lawsuits. Employers are saying that in 10 years it may change, but suit-and-tie businesses may not. These types of employers are drawn more to the conservative type of dress codes.

Qualifications should speak for themselves. In this day and age people are becoming more used to the ideas rather than relying on the past. When someone looks at you, they are not just looking at appearances anymore. They look at you as a person. It's about what's inside that matters the most.

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Almost everyone has something to bring to the table. That's why companies should look past appearances and look at the work done. Working with people with tattoos is no different from working with someone without tattoos.

It doesn't make them less qualified. Looks are the first criteria we have to assess a person. We tend to feel comfortable around people who look like us. We believe that possessing tattoos makes someone a mean or dangerous person. The most important reason tattoos should not affect the workplace is because people should not be judged on their appearance but on their quality of work. Companies around the world are now starting to develop a more relaxed dress code for people with tattoos.

This will help in getting more qualified people in the company without judging people on appearances but on their qualifications. All around businesses will get smarter and open up more jobs for people in need. Although tattoos can be offensive not only to coworkers but customers as well, tattoos should not affect the workplace for two main reasons. First, tattoos are a way of expressing yourself individually and should not be thought of as degrading one's self. But most importantly, people should not be judged on their appearance but on their quality of work.