



THE OFFICE
PROFESSIONAL
September 27, 2012

IS YOUR IMAGE STUCK IN A DIFFERENT DECADE?

Submitted by Beth Braccio Hering on Thu, 09/27/2012 - 9:00am

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Older workers often are aware that they need to keep their skills up-to-date in order to be competitive with younger colleagues. While mastering technology and being well-versed in modern office procedures are critical to staying relevant to one's employer, mature workers shouldn't overlook another career-enhancing factor: image.

It may seem unfair to judge a book by its cover, but the fact remains that people do make assumptions based on appearance. Looking out-of-date may project the message that you're stuck in your ways, out of fresh ideas, or unconcerned about putting forth your best self.

Executive coach Lisa Quast, founder of [Career Woman, Inc.](#), and author of *Your Career, Your Way!*, remembers working with a mature client who wanted to move upwards in her career. "She was following my advice and completing all the action items I assigned – and then I saw the profile picture she had uploaded to LinkedIn. Imagine my surprise when the person I was looking at looked very similar to Cher, from the old 1970s *Sonny and Cher* show. After discussing her appearance, the client admitted she had basically kept the same hairstyle, make-up, and clothing style for about the last 20 years."

Quast suggests looking around and upwards in the company and industry in which you work in order to evaluate how successful workers look in regard to their overall appearance and the perception it creates. Then, work on bringing your own image more in line. Make-up lessons from a department store counter, an appointment with a personal shopper, or a consultation with a hairstylist may help. Current magazines also offer advice and inspiration. As the saying goes, "when you look good, you feel good," so an image update might be just what you need to recharge.

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Career Woman, Inc.