



13 August 2007 14:08

# Beautiful people earn 12% more than Ugly Bettys

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Published: 12 August 2007

Those who consoled themselves with the thought that there is more to life than being really goodlooking are in for a shock. For the beautiful people are not just pleasing on the eye: it seems they are also wealthier, more successful and much easier to get on with.

Researchers investigating whether there is a beauty premium to be had in the workplace have found that those they deemed the most attractive make 12 per cent more money than those regarded as less goodlooking. Average Joes and Joans have little to smile about either, with the moderately attractive taking home seven per cent less in earnings than the prettiest people.

The main reason for the apparent victory of the lookers is that they are seen as more helpful and co-operative.

In the study, reported in the *Journal of Economic Psychology*, University of California researchers studied three groups of subjects according to general perceptions of physical attractiveness. Their behaviour was observed and their different incomes taken into consideration.

"Attractive people make more money than middle attractive people, who in turn make more money than unattractive people," declared the researchers.

The scientists said their work was applicable across different societies and work settings.

The researchers concluded that attractive people make more money because they found it easier to generate co-operation among their co-workers. The team ruled out another possibility – that the more successful were just more selfish.

In fact, they found that that attractive people are, on average, less selfish than moderately attractive people. The team said one theory why people are more co-operative with attractive people is that they believe them to be more helpful.

They say attractive people are consistently judged and treated more positively, and the results show that 39 per cent of attractive men and women were judged to be helpful, compared to 16 per cent of middle attractive people, and only six per cent of unattractive people.

The researchers said: "Beautiful people tend to be in more successful teams because other team members are more co-operative in the presence of beautiful people."

The good news for those like Ugly Betty (played by America Ferrera, below) is that when the beautiful people are not pulling their weight, their good looks count against them. In those situations, the unattractive invariably come out as the winners.

Work strategist Catherine Kaputa has already suggested that looks have a bearing on an individual's career. "It is pretty disconcerting to find out that the workplace is a beauty contest," said Kaputa, author of *U R a Brand*.

"Good looks have what social scientists call the halo effect. Because someone is attractive, we assign many other positive

attributes to him or her that have nothing to do with looks."

### **Help, I look like a workplace failure**

Work guru Catherine Kaputa has formulated a five-point plan for salvaging your looks and achieving success:

- 1 Package yourself: clothes will not help you perform but will help how your performance is perceived
- 2 Emphasise features: be confident about your looks and build a strong image
- 3 Have a trademark: think Bono's shades or Sir Robin Day's bow ties. Stand out from the crowd
- 4 Focus on "soft power": use your values, style and point of view to attract others to you. Stand tall, and never slouch
- 5 Hone your speech: the ability to sell yourself and your ideas is critical

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