



Story Idea

Tattoos and Piercings – A New Chapter In Today’s Work Environment

Body Art Is Sported by Nearly 40% of Today’s 18 to 40 year-olds; How Businesses Are Dealing with this New Reality

Tattoos and piercings have evolved into a public expression of fashion, style and trendy individualism. Once negatively stereotyped, body art is now part of everyday culture – with actors, athletes, artists, musicians, students and now employees among the devotees. What was once a fringe activity has now gone mainstream.

Today, nearly 40% of adults ages 18 to 40 have a tattoo or piercing (beyond the traditional earlobe), according to a recent Pew Research Center’s Gen Next Survey <http://pewresearch.org/databank/dailynumber/?NumberID=237>. As these individuals have joined the workforce, visible body art has raised issues for companies and employees alike.

Some businesses may be reluctant to allow employees to display body art due to the reaction of their customers or co-workers. The company dress code, once confined to clothing, is now being expanded to address policies for tattoos and piercings. **How does a business respond to an increased number of employees with visible tattoos or piercings?**

Dr. Nina Kelley, management professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver’s School of Business, and other colleagues have been studying the current body art phenomenon; presenting their findings at national conferences. In doing so, they have created a set of workplace guidelines for both employers and employees.

Dr. Kelley is available to speak with Channel 7 to discuss a variety of issues:

- Can a company require employees to cover tattoos or remove piercings while on the job? Under what circumstances? Is this legal?
- What rights does the individual employee have to display his/her body art?
- Guidelines a company might consider when expanding their dress code.
- When job hunting, what does a person with visible body art need to know?
- When is body art allowed at work - even if an expanded dress code prohibits it?

Rory, please contact me if you wish to arrange a time to speak with Dr. Kelley. We think this could be a pretty cool story. Thanks for your consideration.

Richard Abels – media liaison for Metro State College – (303) 779-6292
rabels@AbelsComm.com

About Metropolitan State College of Denver: Metro State is Colorado’s leader in educating in-state undergraduates and is one of the largest four-year public colleges in the nation. The College enrolls the highest number of students of color among four-year colleges in the state. It boasts 64,400 alumni, with the bulk of them remaining in Colorado after graduation.