

# No gender, photo, or first name – One company makes major shakeup to job application forms

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Just like in other countries, writing a resume is an important part of job hunting in Japan, but in Japan you usually can't complete your resume just by writing. Traditionally, Japanese resumes are also supposed to include a photo, and not one that shows off your creative flair or quirky personality.

Hair neatly combed, jacket and dress shirt (plus a tie if you're a guy), and looking straight at the camera with a plain white background — basically, it's like a formal-dress passport photo, and you're supposed to stick one in the top right corner of your resume before you submit it with your application package. This isn't something that's only required for modeling, acting, or other jobs where your appearance is fundamentally connected to your

ability to perform the role, either. If you want to be an accountant, a truck driver, or a medical researcher, you still need to show employers what you look like before you can even be considered for an interview.

If you're thinking there's no logical reason for that requirement, Unilever Japan agrees with you. The Japanese arm of the British-Dutch multinational, whose products include soaps and shampoos, has announced that as of this month it's no longer requiring applicants to submit photos with their resumes.

The change, which applies to both new college graduates and mid-career job-seekers, is part of Unilever Japan's Lux shampoo brand's Social Damage Care Project, which holds that "All women have the right to shine." In removing photos from resumes, Unilever says it wants to keep the focus on the individual's job-related motivation and capabilities, not their gender or appearance. "If they are freed from the damaging constraints of being told how they must be in terms of appearance, age, profession, and home life, women will be able to shine more brightly," declares the project's mission statement.

To further attempt to remove gender from the equation, Unilever Japan is also no longer requiring applicants to specify a gender on their resumes, and is even going so far as to not ask for applicants to list their first name, as it could be used to surmise/assume what the person's gender is.

Ironically, the video promoting these new policies shows two applicants both named Hikaru, a common unisex Japanese name.

## LUX Social Damage Care Project: 採用篇



Sure enough, a look at Lux's current downloadable resume form shows only a box for 苗字 (family name), and it no longer has the customary one for 名前 (given name). Despite the Social Damage Care Project's professed ideal about freeing people from age-based prejudice, it does still ask for a date of birth, and also for the applicant to fill in their current age, but this could be a requirement to show that the applicant is a legal adult and eligible to enter into contracted, full-time employment.

One could make the argument that even for jobs where stylishness or attractiveness aren't critical factors for success, personal appearance is a way by which to gauge the applicant's maturity, as well as their commitment to/respect for the job and organization. Unilever Japan isn't going to blind interviews, though, and so the non-verbal communication of "I care about this job enough to have showered and put on clean, business-appropriate clothes for it" is still something hiring managers can check for during the actual interview process. Being able to take a nice picture, though, is an ability the company has decided it doesn't really care one way or the other

about.

*Source: Lux via Niconico News via Jin*

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