Our group created a survey instrument on Survey Monkey to test our hypothesis that makeup would impact the perception of competence levels for women. One of our group members posed for three “looks” comprised of a natural (no makeup) look, an average (medium makeup) look, and a heavy makeup look drawn from a similar study. Participants in this study included 36 females and 12 males, for a total sample size of 48 individuals. The majority of the participants were female Caucasians. There was not a single question that asked for personal information. This was done to allow anonymity for all of the participants, protecting the privacy of their responses. The images used were of a candidate who was a 19 year old college female. She was photographed with a neutral facial expression, and the final images were cropped to remove any outside influences. The candidate was photographed without makeup and with two following makeup styles ranging from minimal to intense (see “Survey Photos” section). The respondents of the study were presented an online survey. The survey was distributed through various social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Each participant was able to look at all three pictures of the candidate with the varying levels of makeup. Questions asked for the respondents to select the candidate that embodied the following qualities the most: professionalism, attractiveness, likability, trustworthiness, competence, and hireability.

Our team’s hypothesis was that the amount of makeup would impact the perceptions of the woman in our survey in terms of her competence levels and, ultimately, impact a company’s decision to hire her. We reasoned that the medium amount of makeup would present itself as the most employable. Due to the pressures of women to conform to an enhanced ideal of beauty drawn from media, we also hypothesized that the no makeup or “natural” look would not be as desirable. Finally we hypothesized that the third level would not receive much positive feedback, mainly because that level of makeup would be perceived as more intense and dramatic than usually acceptable for such a situation. We also hypothesized that the second level would outperform in perception of relative attractiveness, competence, trustworthiness, likeability, and overall professionalism.