



POW'

HER



IN



TECH



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# FOREWORD



In a world driven by digital innovation, encouraging women and girls to acquire digital skills is a crucial challenge. It is both a means of increasing women's employability in the sector and developing the technology of the future on an equal basis, thus avoiding gender bias and stereotypes.

As a Foundation committed to advancing gender equality in society at all levels, supporting organizations striving to rebalance the digital sector and combat stereotypes is vital. We are pleased to have been able to support INCO in the development of its actions and the design of this guide.

Now is the time to act!

**Miren Bengoa**

*Executive Director, Fondation CHANEL*

The aim is to make all those involved in the process aware of their responsibilities, from training organizations to employing companies. It is also to combat the deeply rooted stereotypes that men have greater abilities in this area or that they are "naturally" drawn to these professions. Let's remember that it was women like Ada Lovelace in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Grace Hopper and Karen Spärck Jones in the 20<sup>th</sup> century who laid the foundations of modern computer science.

In setting out on this path, each organization, company and institution is unique and needs to be able to grasp the subject and adapt it to its own situation. It is a long-term process that can be overwhelming, even discouraging at times. Initiating reflection is an essential first step, prior to the adoption of measures that are often simple and effective.

This didactic and pragmatic guide is an invaluable tool to change practices and behavior.

# ABOUT US

## INCO

We believe that the challenges facing our world – climate change, scarce natural resources, and growing inequality – require new approaches. We envision a new economy, one that is both socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

To tackle the world's most pressing challenges, INCO runs a range of complementary actions and programs across 5 continents. Our **vocational training programs** prepare marginalized job-seekers for the jobs of tomorrow. Our **acceleration programs** turn into reality the ideas of entrepreneurs who innovate for the planet. Our **investment activity** funds the growth of these impactful enterprises. In parallel, we spread our message and vision through **large-scale advocacy initiatives**, and we support organizations wanting to contribute to this new economy through sustainability consulting activities.



## POW'HER IN TECH

**Pow'her in Tech** is an INCO Academy initiative supported by the Chanel Foundation that aims to empower women to join and thrive in tech sectors internationally.

The program is built around three pillars:

- An **action-oriented employer's guide** to identify and implement gender equality initiatives and best practices;
- Online and offline **awareness campaigns** highlighting gender equality issues, solutions and opportunities;
- **Tech training** provided by INCO for women interested in pursuing a career in the tech sector. The program also creates meaningful connections between our trainees, mentors and employers.

# POW'HER IN TECH

# BECOMING GENDER INCLUSIVE

## Why tech?

Globally, the information technology sector is on track to reach \$5.2 trillion USD by the end of 2020. As the world forges ahead in the 4th industrial revolution, the tech sector is driving the creation of a new economy where jobs are created through, or as a result of, digitalization.

However, across the globe women only represent a fraction of those employed in the tech industry. Bulgaria has the most women in the tech sector at 30%, followed by Australia at 28%. In the US only 1 out of every 4 tech workers is a woman. In France, women represent only 18% of the tech sector. In the UK this number is 16%.

In general, women remain the largest pool of untapped labor. Economically speaking, if the world's regions matched the best performing countries in terms of gender parity, an additional \$12 trillion USD of annual GDP would be realized by 2025.

If we want to notably increase the number of women in the global labor market, the tech sector could and should lead the charge given the availability of jobs and the potential growth of the world's GDP.

## This guide's ambition is not to focus on the roots and causes of gender disparity.

Rather, it is meant to be used as a tool for tech employers who want to build a gender inclusive workforce. The guide's approach is pragmatic and solution-oriented, and seeks to provide a framework to promote inclusive practices.

There are numerous resources available that detail the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Various studies have measured and examined the underrepresentation of women and minorities in tech, unpacking many of the systemic issues that lead to inequities. The facts and figures are clear — the solutions, not always.

This guide focuses specifically on the inclusion of individuals who identify as women in the information technology and digital sector. While we hope you find some of the recommendations applicable to a wider range of sectors and other underrepresented populations, we acknowledge that this guide is broad in terms of describing "women," and we encourage readers to seek out additional resources and recommendations on diversity and inclusion relevant to specific populations.

## Diversity goes beyond gender

Women of color and LGBTQIA women are significantly underrepresented in the tech sector. In 2018, women of color accounted for less than 10% of the bachelor's degrees earned in computer science. Hispanic women and black women made up less than 1% and 0.5% of leadership positions, respectively. Only 2% of women working in tech in Silicon Valley were black, Hispanic or Native American, and 11% of venture capitalists were white women, 6% were Asian, 1% were black and 0% Hispanic.

In 2016, Facebook, the seventh largest tech company in the world, released its LGBTQIA workforce data showing that only 7% of workers identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex or asexual.

Clearly, women and people on the gender spectrum are underrepresented. However, the experiences of women in the tech sector (and pursuing a career in tech) are vastly different depending on their identified race, sexual preference, gender-identity, and social and ethnic background.

## Gender parity in tech goes beyond the pipeline.

Meaningful progress towards diversity and inclusion calls for a coordinated effort from a wide range of stakeholders – from policy makers, to educators, entertainment and the media alike. Their collective efforts improve diversity and inclusion by empowering, upskilling and encouraging more women to pursue a career in the tech industry.

However, these efforts alone will not achieve gender parity. As tech employers, we must prioritize equal representation in our industry. The question for us as employers is how might we play our role in promoting diversity and inclusion throughout the whole employee experience, from the recruitment process to the day-to-day and beyond? This is the question that we aim to unpack in this report.

## How can an employer be proactive about inclusion?

Through research and interviews with women in tech, employers, NGOs and other women-focused training organizations in the US, France, Tunisia, Belgium and Italy, we have identified 4 key principles that, when addressed holistically, can advance your company's diversity and inclusion. **A diverse and inclusive company is one that:**

1. Shapes its culture with intention
2. Employs inclusive recruitment tactics
3. Welcomes different lifestyles
4. Empowers all employees

Of course there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and recommendations may vary across companies and locations. In this guide we put forth relatively universal principles, and hope you find them useful and applicable to your organization!

# BECOMING GENDER INCLUSIVE

Becoming an organization that is truly gender inclusive requires thoughtful reflection that leads to intentional changes. Examining the gender balance in your organization and making an honest assessment of how your protocol and practices might have led to a workforce that is disproportionately made up of men is in an important first step in identifying what needs to be improved.

According to recent research and data, there are five metrics that are crucial when it comes to gender inclusivity: recruitment, pay and benefits, retention, advancement, and representation. Each of these metrics provides an organization with the opportunity to examine gender imbalance from a quantitative perspective. These metrics can and should be applied not only to achieve gender parity, but as you reflect on the diversity of women (and men) in your organization. Here is more information on these key metrics:

## 1) Recruitment

Audit the recruitment process and address any biases found to be present during this time. Prioritize gender parity at every stage of the process. One indicator to monitor during the entire recruitment phase is the ratio of men to women creating job specifications, participating in interviews and selection panels, and deciding the shortlist of chosen candidates.

## 2) Pay and Benefits

Examine if men and women in the same roles earn the same salary. Beyond remuneration, assess if benefits are standardized for all employees, including paid family leave. You should also look for possible unintentional biases against women in the formulas behind performance bonuses. Performance evaluation, salary and bonus decisions should always be supported by standardised performance documentation, and recommendations should never be solely left up to a supervisor's verbal comments ([S](#)).

## 3) Retention

To understand your retention rate among women, compare the percentages of women and men at each level of seniority, and the attrition rate among women and men at each level. Break this down further to help identify where the ladder is broken. Be aware that a differential of even one or two percentage points between men and women each year can have a huge effect over a 10- or 15-year period.

## 4) Advancement

Examine the retention rate between men and women at your organization and compare it to the rate at which each group has advanced. Women should be advancing at the same pace, and based on the same merits, as men. If you find that women are leaving after less time and men are being promoted at faster rates, there could be bias or unfair policies. Discriminatory practices include inequitable family leave policies, and the promotion of women based on performance versus the promotion of men based on potential.

## 5) Representation

Make sure that women progress in all departments within a company, and that inclusive hiring policies do not just apply to internal or administrative departments. Gender parity is achieved not only by balancing the ratio of men to women, but also by ensuring that women are fairly represented in, and leading, operational units.

### Create a roadmap!

After unpacking these key metrics to measure gender inclusivity (or lack thereof), share your findings with managers and employees.

Develop a plan together, one that addresses the areas of concern and outlines concrete goals to be achieved – perhaps through some of the strategies outlined in this guide. You can track the aforementioned metrics over time to understand where progress is being made and where you might need to change course.

Being gender inclusive is important, but diversity is more than just gender. Apply these metrics to underrepresented groups too, including women of color, LGBTQIA women, women from different socio economic groups and professional backgrounds.

# BECOMING GENDER INCLUSIVE

## DIAGNOSTICS & TOOLS

### Start at the Start

The UN Women Training Centre developed a Gender Equality Capacity Assessment Questionnaire, a staff survey that assesses an organization's understanding, knowledge and skills related to gender equality and women's empowerment. This tool helps an organization unpack their gender architecture and gender policy in an effort to dismantle discriminatory practices and implement strategies to achieve gender parity and inclusivity.

The questionnaire is straightforward, ready to use and divided into 4 sections:

#### Section 1: General Information

**Objective:** Gather basic information about staff that can help create profiles of respondents to better understand the results of the capacity and needs assessment.

**Topics:** Organization / Agency, Unit / Department, Title, Level, Age, Sex, Nationality

#### Section 2: Educational background and previous experiences in training for gender equality

**Objective:** Identify the educational background and level of experience of each respondent has in gender equality experiences. This way, you can avoid unnecessary repetition that can be frustrating and demotivating.

**Topics:** Educational background (including courses, trainings, workshops, etc.)

#### Section 3: Knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment

**Objective:** The objective of this section is to assess the level of knowledge of gender equality and how to include gender equality in programme and operations activities. Evaluate staff capacity and knowledge on diversity, inclusion and women's empowerment and identify staff perception of their own capacity.

**Topics:** Knowledge of skills and processes for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment

#### Section 4: Learning styles and needs

**Objective:** Gather information on the training needs and preferences from the respondent's perspective to identify information on the interests, motivations and learning preferences of the target group to make training more effective.

**Topics:** Staff training needs and preferred learning modalities

### Measure gender parity with the Zimmermann Index.

This tool was created by French Parliament member Marie-Jo Zimmermann, the firm Ethics & Boards and the Institute of Responsible Capitalism in 2017. This index is used to measure (objectively and independently) parity on the boards of directors and executive levels of the SBF 120 firms.

Companies are evaluated on 100 points according to three main criteria:

1. Is the Board of Directors representative of a range of people of all ages, races, genders, educational backgrounds and professional qualifications? (28 points)?
2. Are the management committees truly diverse and how many women are there in the company's top positions (57 points)?
3. Are women proportionately represented, overall, in the company (15 points)?

### Start now!

Use these tools to assess your organization's current state of diversity and inclusion. With a better understanding of your individual employees and your company's current gender balance, you are equipped with the critical information necessary to decide what programs, policies and protocols are needed to achieve parity.





## — SHAPING WORK CULTURE WITH INTENTION —

Work culture plays an undeniably important role in the success of an organization. It is the human component of a company that affects an employee's day-to-day life, and makes a company a place where people want to work.

Shaping work culture is about incorporating diversity and inclusion into a company's DNA. A diverse and inclusive organization creates a workplace that truly values everyone.





# DEFINING & COMMUNICATING VALUES

## SHAPE WORK CULTURE WITH VALUE

A company's mission is the problem it chooses to solve through a service or product. Its values are what it stands for. Defining your company's values is a means of setting standards of actions and behaviors that should be indoctrinated across the organization. Establishing clear values around diversity and inclusion that are reflected in the organization's practices and policies is a critical step in achieving gender parity.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### BE SPECIFIC

When defining your company values, remember that they are meant to guide behavior and help people understand what your company stands for and believes is important. Therefore, value statements on gender equity and inclusion should be specific and clear.

The UN Global Compact in collaboration with UN Women have researched business practices and gathered input from all over the world to develop the Women's Empowerment Principles. Over 2,000 business leaders across the globe have adopted these principles as part of their organizational values.

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of workers of all gender identities
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

**Make sure to differentiate between business (client-facing) and workplace (employee-facing) values.**

**Examples of business values:** *Quality, Reliability, Commitment, Accountability, Integrity, Honesty, Partnership, Dedication, Innovation, Communication*

**Examples of workplace values:** *Diversity, Inclusion, Learning, Self-Improvement, Teamwork, Risk-taking, Balance, Collaboration, Creativity, Respect, Fairness, Openness*

### BRING EMPLOYEES ONBOARD

Company culture is shaped by leadership, management and employees. Make sure you involve your employees' in developing and affirming the organization's values. Buy-in across the company is important to ensure values translate into everyday practices.

### TRANSLATE YOUR VALUES INTO THE WORKPLACE

Company values have no effect if they're not implemented in the workplace. Acknowledging inequalities in how women are represented in a company is the first step, be clear and ambitious about the range of actions that will be taken to pursue equity. Some change can take time, but consider immediate actions too by resourcing Employee Resource Groups, offering training or upskilling opportunities, or invite employee feedback on flexible working arrangements.

### SHARE YOUR VALUES

Sharing your values internally (in your company handbook, framed on a wall, etc.) or externally (on your website or social media accounts) will strengthen the quality of your organization and keep your values front and center. Sharing values will also make your organization accountable for upholding them.



**Shirley Rodriguez** from Smartsheet knows the importance of leadership in manifesting company values: "Leaders need to have conversations about microaggressions, sexism and racism in the workplace before they are pressured into doing so by employees. When the pressure comes from the bottom and there is no clear vision or direction from DEI, it can be disheartening. Don't assume what people want or need in terms of diversity & inclusion, there is no one size fits all approach. It's not the responsibility of a particular person to be a voice for any issue in the workplace. It is the role of leadership to do the work."

# SHANNON BURT: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & AUTHENTICITY

**SHANNON IS AN INSTRUCTOR AT NPOWER, A US-BASED IT TRAINING PROVIDER THAT CREATES PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BY LAUNCHING DIGITAL CAREERS FOR MILITARY VETERANS AND YOUNG ADULTS FROM UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES. SHANNON IS A GRADUATE OF THE NPOWER PROGRAM AND WAS RECENTLY NAMED ONE OF BALTIMORE CITY'S 20 MOST INFLUENTIAL TECHNOLOGISTS. SHE IS ABLE TO LEVERAGE HER EXPERIENCE AS A FORMER STUDENT AND A CURRENT RISING STAR IN TECH TO EMPOWER HER STUDENTS.**

## What led you to a career in the tech sector?

My first job out of college was in communications and marketing and while there are a few very lucrative directions you can take in that career, I realized my interests didn't fully align with the work that I was doing. In that first job I was exposed to IT and it was something that I gravitated towards. I noticed that others in the company were coming to me with technical questions, so I just had a natural inclination to build off those experiences to see how I could grow my skillset and gain additional value.

I was drawn to tech because it is a growing field, one that is ever changing. Being such a dynamic career field, I saw opportunity for myself and the opportunity for growth. IT is a field where your knowledge and your skills will speak for yourself before anything else.

Yes, I am a woman and I am black. Those two ways of identifying, they sometimes create barriers in life that I have to work around. Those barriers are going to be everywhere to a certain degree. So if I instill myself with the proper skill set, those barriers pretty much vanish in regard to IT. It is all about getting the job done, doing it well and accomplishing the goal.

## What does diversity and inclusion in the tech sector mean?

To me, diversity and inclusion means creating an environment where people can interact with one another, in a professional setting, in a way that is authentic to themselves and does not result in negative feedback. It is about understanding that everybody is different, and we can all come together around common goals and bring our differences - and allow those differences to play out - to find solutions.

## What are the attributes and successes of a diverse and inclusive tech company?

Ingenuity! I feel that diversity and inclusion is something that most socially responsible organizations are putting at a high level of importance. But being genuine about how you go about accomplishing it, expressing that message and creating that environment, that is the true determination of a company's commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. A lot of organizations can take the actions and do the things, but if everyone is showing up to do the work because they have to, and not because that's organic to the culture of the organization, the inauthenticity is easily felt.

Whether you are part of the LGBTQIA community, a cultural or socio-cultural minority, whether you are a disabled person, or part of a marginalized group, it is often expected that you are the educator of diversity and inclusion. That goes with the ingenuity factor, because if you really truly want to develop a diverse and inclusive environment, every single person should be just as enthusiastic, whether they identify as part of a diverse group or not.

If you have a specific socio-cultural ERG at your company, then the hope and the goal should be that a diverse group of people become members of that ERG, not just the people that already identify within that sociocultural group. If only those who identify with the socio-cultural group are the only people part of the ERG, then it just becomes a place where a specific group of people go to talk, while they still remain silenced throughout the company.



## How does NPower embody diversity and inclusion?

NPower is the first organization that I've worked for where I feel they really know what they are doing with diversity and inclusion. Throughout the organizational chart, leadership takes many different shapes and forms, without one culture or group dominating leadership more than others - truly diverse. At NPower, we live it in how we are organized, and we live it in how we conduct the work.

I have coworkers that come from a multitude of backgrounds, which affords me the opportunity to expand my horizons, learn, and grow as an individual. The culture at NPower is one that does not assume that all associates come from the same collection of life experiences, instead the organization has cultivated a culture in which associates can bring their authentic selves to work by encouraging and celebrating when associates share their stories and bring their heritage to the forefront. This creates an environment in which it is easy for associates to share beneficial aspects of their own life, their culture, and be open about it.

That openness tends to lead to something we, as instructors, can put into the training or communicate with trainees to make our programs more valuable and robust. So, I think NPower actually has a firm and practical understanding of how to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace environment. And because the trainees are our main focus, that type of environment allows us to learn a lot from them and continue to cultivate that openness and inclusivity for them as well.

## In what ways can the tech sector more effectively recruit and retain women from minority or marginalized groups?

The same way Talent Acquisition creates a number of ideal candidate profiles, organizations need to expand the profiles of the ideal candidate to reflect black women. This way, organizations will know the type of candidate they are seeking, and how to attract them to the organization. I truly believe the reason that recruiting and retaining minority and marginalized groups has been difficult in the past, is because historically, and today, the voice of the black woman and other minority/marginalized women is not one that is valued highly, or sought after when it comes to recruiting efforts.

## What unique strengths and perspectives do minority women and women from marginalized groups bring to the tech field?

I think everybody has a journey. There are thousands and thousands of hours that you've lived before now that have brought you to this moment. As a black woman, especially living in America, living in the Washington, DC area, you do have a specific kind of experience. Thankfully, I am in an organization where I work with young people that look to me as an example, so I am able to speak from my experience and allow that transparency to operate as a valuable tool for engagement, motivation, and mentorship within the classroom.

People don't know what the lived experience of a black woman is, or the experience of a Latinx person, or a person with a different gender identity, or the lived experience of someone with a disability. So it is really about giving a platform to people whose voices haven't been heard thoroughly enough. If you give every person you hire the opportunity to speak their truth and bring their story into the workplace, and you listen and value it, then a lot more success would be seen.



# UNCONSCIOUS GENDER BIAS TRAINING



## WHAT IS NOT MEASURED CANNOT BE MANAGED

Unconscious gender bias is defined as unintentional and automatic mental associations based on gender, stemming from outdated traditions, norms, and values as well as culture and/or experience. Associations we often don't know we have feed into decision-making, leaving us with a quick, poorly formed assessment of an individual according to dated gender stereotypes. As organizations take steps to eradicate blatant and conscious gender biases, they must also address the more subtle, yet equally damaging, unconscious bias.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### FIND A FORMAT THAT WORKS

You can bring in experts, host workshops, attend events or use online courses (e.g., Emtrain, Paradigm REACH, Udemy) to implement unconscious bias training. Choose the training that's right for your organization's size and budget.

### MAINTAIN FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

It is important to maintain focus on how to collectively improve organizational practices and policies. The training should not place blame on the individual. In other words, the organization must hold itself responsible for the role it has played in causing any inequalities.

### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Turning the results of unconscious bias training into concrete actions across the organization will ensure that everyone has a role to play in creating a more inclusive workplace. But change must start at the top. Leaders must recognize unconscious biases and then endorse and implement the policy changes for the rest of the staff to emulate.



**Shirley Rodriguez** is a Manager of Customer Success at Smartsheet and member of the Customer Excellence global DEI, Social Justice, Rainbow Collab (LGBTQ+) committees. She highlighted the importance of avoiding unconscious biases when conducting virtual interviews, a practice that has become standard for many organizations: "When on video calls introduce yourself with your pronouns and ask for self identifiers. Don't assume someone's identity, instead allow them to tell you how they'd like to be referred to. Bring in your HR partners to ensure you have a fair and just interview process."



### Tip!

Here are 3 free online unconscious bias training resources to check out:

**Microsoft**, eLesson: *Unconscious Bias*

**Grovo**, *Address Your Unconscious Bias*

**Project Implicit**, Implicit Association Tests

### Read:

**Harvard Business Review** - "Don't Give Up on Unconscious Bias Training — Make It Better" (2017)

**The Royal Society** - Briefing on Unconscious Biases (2015)

# CASE STUDY: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING AT HERA GROUP

Hera Group is an Italian multi-utility company that believes in the importance and necessity of inclusion. Among their numerous Diversity & Inclusion initiatives, in 2019 Hera Group invited all of their employees to play Diversity@Work, an unconscious bias training applied game. We consulted Susanna Zucchelli, Diversity Director of Hera Group, to find out more about why and how they introduced the training.

## WHAT IS DIVERSITY@WORK?

Developed by Work Wide Women, Diversity@Work is an applied game that addresses the issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. It is designed to make players think about their reactions to real-life situations. The objectives of the game are: to illustrate how our actions (which are often dictated by automatism or stereotypes) can change productivity; to reveal implicit discriminatory dynamics; and to encourage the adoption of inclusive behavior.

The macro indicators used for the game metrics are based on the European Commission's "Implementation Checklist for Diversity Management." The impact of the player's responses (i.e., behaviors) is measured in four categories — Management, Leadership, Working Environment, and Team Skills — in order to illustrate how certain choices and actions will affect the workplace.

## WHAT IMPACT DID DIVERSITY@WORK HAVE ON HERA GROUP?

Work Wide Women designed and customized the game for Hera Group's employees. The purpose of the game was not to evaluate an employee's behavior, but to help them think about different ways of handling situations and orient them towards a more inclusive mindset. The result was a company-wide reflection on the effects of inclusive behavior on workplace well-being. According to Zucchelli, the game was positively received and evaluated by employees.



Founded in 2002, **Hera Group** is an aggregation of 11 municipal companies operating in Emilia-Romagna. Hera Group is now one of Italy's largest multi-utility companies, working primarily in the environment, water, and energy sectors.

**Work Wide Women** is an Italian company that supports women and companies by providing diversity management and inclusion solutions. In 2019, they launched Diversity@Work, the first applied game on diversity and inclusion.



It is important to highlight that the success of this initiative lies within all the other actions and initiatives that the company has introduced at an organizational level — the creation of the "Diversity Manager" role, their collaboration with different associations working on empowering minorities, and their innovative policies on maternity leave, flexibility and well-being in the workplace. The use of unconscious bias training fits perfectly with the ongoing development and reinforcement of a culture of inclusion, acceptance and respect.



# JOINING A LARGER MOVEMENT



## KEEP A PULSE ON WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR INDUSTRY.



Improving diversity in your organization is not just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do. Diverse teams are proven to be more creative, innovative and profitable. To stay ahead, the tech sector needs to expand its talent pool, attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce. Being intentional about how you support women to achieve success in your industry is the only way to positively disrupt the outdated gender ratios we see in the sector today.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### COMMIT TO YOUR VALUES

Find causes that are important to your team and in alignment with your diversity and inclusion efforts. Increasing gender equity in your organization can be helped by investments in your philanthropic or CSR initiatives. Companies that align their philanthropy and CSR efforts to their diversity and inclusion initiatives are more likely to see success on both fronts.

### IDENTIFY INITIATIVES

Partner with nonprofits and training providers that empower minorities in tech and educational institutions that serve underrepresented groups such as NPower, SONAS, INCO Academy As part of your effort to diversify, it's important to support programs that mirror your goals. Support programs that focus on achieving at least 40% representation of girls and women through recruitment and graduation. Find an option that aligns with your values and make a commitment that is in line with your budget.

### DEVELOP INTERNAL INITIATIVES

While you can tap into external networks that support your goals, you can also contribute by starting your own initiatives. Remember it's not just about attracting talent from diverse backgrounds, but retaining your key hires. Initiatives like an employee resource group (ERG), mentorship program, community-building events and speaker series will create a sense of belonging, cultivate a community of supportive peers and showcase the expertise of your workforce.

### ENCOURAGE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Getting your entire team onboard will strengthen your efforts and lend credibility to your commitments. Be bold in your objectives and demonstrate a genuine commitment. You might inspire other tech companies to follow in your footsteps. Be proud of your contribution – you're building a more equitable and inclusive workforce.

# BLAIR PRESLEY: START WITH WHAT YOU VALUE

**BLAIR HAS NEARLY A DECADE OF DIRECT PRODUCT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE IN VARYING INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING MEDICAL DEVICES, ANIMAL HEALTH, AND LUXURY KITCHEN FAUCETS. AFTER SIX YEARS IN THE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT FIELD, AND IN ADDITION TO HER DAY JOB, BLAIR STARTED TEACHING NEW AND ASPIRING PRODUCT MANAGERS AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY. TODAY, IN ADDITION TO TEACHING, BLAIR OWNS HER OWN COMPANY HELPING NEW AND ASPIRING PRODUCT MANAGERS BREAK INTO THE FIELD.**



## How did you become a leader in the tech industry?

I've been fortunate to learn from amazing counterparts and work in a variety of different industries which has allowed me to adapt to varying styles of Product Management. From managing mature products to teaching Fortune 50 companies on the best practices of Product Management; a decade in Product has allowed me to grow tremendously.

There is an adage that connect one's true understanding of a discipline with their ability to effectively teach it. I suppose the start of my career as Product Management Instructor with General Assembly made me feel like a leader in the industry as it tested my mettle and allowed me to continue learning simultaneously.

## What does diversity and inclusion in the tech sector mean?

I don't have a perfectly prepared, bow-tied answer to that. But what I can describe though, being a product manager for ten years, in five different organizations, I was the only black product manager anywhere, except for once, and I hired that person. I have recently been made aware of a "black women in product management" slack channel that I am now a part of, which helped me find additional cultural affinity groups to better serve my diverse clientele.

I wish that it was normal to see a force of talented people that are representative of what our communities look like, and what the users of the products [we manage] look like. It is a misnomer that there are not an abundance of black women who work in tech. My slack group proves otherwise, my clients prove otherwise.

## What are the attributes and successes of a diverse and inclusive tech company?

I'm really impressed with the moves that a company like General Assembly are making. It is one of the only organizations that I've worked with over the last three years that cared about personal pronouns. It is a part of their fabric, it's not a letter that they put out in June and then move on with life.

I think it is difficult when you have a long-established company where it wasn't necessary, or deemed necessary, to change. You are really changing a culture. When you are starting from the beginning, developing a culture from scratch can be less challenging when compared to managing culture change in an existing organisation.

## What unique strengths and perspectives do black women and women of color bring to the tech field?

As a woman of colour, I have the ability to help create products that are inclusive of my community based on experience, not assumption. I have the ability to consider different use cases and affect the reach and profitability of a product due to the slightly different perspectives or exposure that my counterparts may not have. It doesn't make me better than someone else but there is value in including a divergent experience.

For instance, I recall a time during a previous Product Management role, we were developing new collateral and our product photography needed a refresh. I noticed that we did not include any Black or even racially ambiguous models. Our product photography was only refreshed every three to five years so it was important that we had a diverse selection so that the images would be relevant for the brand for a while. I received push back. One of my teammates remarked that we "don't need Black models because Black people don't buy our products". The data clearly indicated otherwise. Black people purchased the product for many years and it is incredibly important to show representation and inclusion, even in small ways. The mindset and the audacity to push back without supporting data was striking and made a lasting impact.

## In what ways can the tech sector more effectively recruit black women and other women of color to the tech sector?

I believe being intentional about recruiting outside your comfort zone. For instance, I am a graduate of a HBCU (Historically Black College or University), and there is a huge audience of women who attend HBCUs. Visit and develop relationships with HBCUs and their student body and intentionally discover talent there.

## In what ways can the tech sector more effectively retain black women and other women of color to the tech sector?

Be genuine and intentional about creating a culture that invites every team member to feel a part of the proverbial family. Much in the same way as Product Managers create products, tech companies should communicate with their teams to better understand their goals, motivations and frustrations in order to create an environment where all team members are able to thrive. Create an environment that is psychologically safe so that the conversation can be an honest one. Acknowledge the work and the talents of women; pay equally and reject the mindset that somehow "her talent is less than that of a male". Shun microaggressions. Reward positive behaviour. Maintain an effort to positively improve. Many of us aren't looking for perfection; many of us are pleased with real action that's headed in the right direction.

## What feedback would you give to your first boss in the tech industry?

Even a decade later, Jeff is still one of the best managers I've ever had. He took a chance on me because he saw potential. He was a hands on trainer without coddling me. Thank you for valuing my background, talent and creating space for honest dialogue both personally and professionally.



## — ENSURING GENDER-NEUTRAL HIRING PRACTICES —

Investing in inclusive hiring practices is more than just a matter of equity; it's good business. Recruiting from a narrow talent pool excludes innovation, ideas and potential star employees. The competition to recruit and retain top talent is about to become fierce. It's time to get strategic.





# CREATING INCLUSIVE JOB LISTINGS

## WIDEN THE APPLICANT POOL BY REMOVING GENDERED LANGUAGE.

Creating a diverse workforce starts with the applicant pool and talent pipeline. The choice of language used in a job description could dissuade the best candidates from even applying. Studies have shown that job descriptions with more “masculine wording” were less likely to appeal to female applicants. The reason is not that female candidates lack confidence but rather that they do not want to work for a company that signals an overly masculine culture. Here is an in-depth look at ways to avoid gender-specific language in recruitment.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### DE-CODE YOUR LANGUAGE

Writing inclusive job descriptions is not just about using neutral pronouns; some words create more subtle associations to gender. A 2017 analysis of 77,000 UK job adverts by Totaljobs revealed “lead” to be the most common male-gendered word used in job specs, while “support” was the most frequently used female-gendered word. Review all job listings for gendered language and empower recruiters to be your company’s ambassadors for diversity and inclusion.

### ADDRESS A SPECTRUM OF CANDIDATES

A job title is the very first line an applicant will read on a job posting, so one way to address all applicants from the get-go is to use a gender-neutral job title. Another way to appeal to a diverse group of candidates is to use a variety of adjectives to describe the qualities you are looking for. Using company buzzwords or industry jargon will dissuade applicants who are not familiar with the industry, use clear language throughout this process. The goal is to catch the interest of a range of candidates, and to have them keep an open mind while reading about the position.

### DEFINE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

An effective job listing defines which skills are critical for a particular role, sets them apart from “nice-to-have” skills, and gives equal weight to both technical abilities and personal traits. The decision to apply to a job isn’t dictated by one’s confidence to do a job, but rather by the perception of the hiring process and the culture of an organization. Include only the necessary qualifications in order to broaden the scope of your search and appeal to a talent pool with atypical education or work histories.

### BE CONSISTENT

When considering whether to apply for a role, candidates will research career pages on company websites too. It’s essential to present your organization in a way that reflects its values. Be explicit in your commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity with an Equal Opportunity Statement. Be proud of the breadth of diversity in your workplace, and show off with testimonials and photos of your employees.

#### Tip!

You can run job ads through tools like **Gender Decoder** and **Textio Hire** to search for gendered language and find gender-neutral alternatives. Here are a few examples of gender-coded words that often make their way into job descriptions.

Masculine Coded:	Feminine Coded:
- Leading	- Support
- Competitors	- Commitment
- Individual	- Responsible
- Analytical	- Compassion
- Individual	- Share



## DIVERSIFYING RECRUITMENT SOURCES



### HIRE DIVERSE CANDIDATES.



The first step in building a diverse workforce is to hire more diverse candidates. It's not diversity for diversity's sake; it's important for your bottom line. Research by Boston Consulting Group reported that diverse companies have an average of 19% higher revenue, Josh Bersin notes that diverse companies are 1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their markets and *Harvard Business Review* research notes that they are 70% more likely to capture new markets than homogeneous counterparts. Here are some tips on how to hire more diverse candidates.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### WHAT IS DIVERSITY HIRING?

Diversity hiring is hiring based on merit with special care taken to ensure procedures are free from biases related to a candidate's age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics that are unrelated to their job performance. Audit the diversity of your current hiring process and identify any potential bottlenecks and discrepancies.

### MAPPING TALENT POOLS

Hiring through traditional pipelines will result in hiring traditional candidates. There are many "non-traditional" talent pools to tap into, it just takes some research to find them. Once you understand the demographics you want to attract to your talent pool, proactively source members of these groups. For example, identify the programs for women in tech in your area and connect with them in a meaningful way. Many of the usual criteria for candidate screening such as prior company, grad school or personal connections often decrease the diversity of the candidate pipeline, so get creative in mapping your talent pool.

### THE DANGER OF REFERRAL HIRINGS

The system of employee-referred candidates saves a company a lot of resources, but without due consideration, referral hiring can hamper your efforts to achieve gender equity in a workforce. In general, people's professional networks are made up of people who are demographically similar. McKinsey's research on diversity found that when men are asked about their professional networks, 63% of them state their networks are made up of "more or all men," and 38% of women state the same. Empower your employees to make referrals from diverse backgrounds and in line with your gender equity goals. Explicitly ask your existing employees for diverse referrals and offer innovative incentives to employees who recommend candidates from underrepresented groups in your company.

### AI – AN ALLY OR ENEMY OF DIVERSITY ?

Don't forget to include artificial intelligence when conducting a diversity review of your hiring pipeline. AI can help you fight unconscious prejudice in the workplace, but it can also have unintentional effects on your recruitment. AI can be used to source and analyze resumes by identifying candidates who fit the job criteria and reducing unconscious bias, including gender. However, AI is not immune to unconscious bias due to the "Gender Data Gap" and algorithms that can include stereotypes.

To avoid bias, include AI in diversity and inclusion audits. Does your AI preference applicants with degrees over training skills programmes? Is the AI accessible to applicants who are visually impaired? Is there information which might make a candidate stand out which cannot be anticipated in a question? Define the criteria for data selection based on personality, potential and motivation; and program configuration by bringing together professionals from different sectors (HR reps, psychologists, developers, etc.)

# ELISABETH HOLM: INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

**ELISABETH HOLM IS THE FOUNDER OF THE SISTERHOOD OF NATIVE AMERICAN CODERS (SONAC), A NON-PROFIT THAT CREATES ACCESS AND EXPOSURE TO THE FIELD OF COMPUTER SCIENCE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN GIRLS. ELISABETH IDENTIFIES AS A WOMAN OF COLOR AND AN INDIGENOUS NATIVE AMERICAN.**

## Why did you create SONAC?

When I was about to enter 6th grade, I was a part of an all-girls STEM camp that exposed me to the world of STEM possibilities, changed my course of life, and gave me confidence as a woman in STEM. I wanted to change girls' lives in the same way mine was.

I founded SONAC to create access and exposure to the field of computer science and address the disparities in opportunities to learn for underrepresented Native American girls. My hope is to inspire the next generation of young female innovators to pursue careers in STEM by engaging them at an early age, 9 to 12 years old) when their interest levels typically falter. Long term, this should create and foster a lifelong passion for STEM.

We do not limit anyone by cost or experience and we try to include everyone so the barrier to entry is very low. We try to embrace diversity because that's what sparks creativity.

## What can SONAC teach us about recruiting more Native American and Indigenous women in tech?

SONAC is based on a set of family values and this is how we ensure a cultural fit for Native American's in the workplace. Our first value is "Valuing our Elders" and I believe there is worth in wisdom, and with age comes wisdom.

Native Americans can be cautious with trusting professionals, but the way I was able to engage so many young Native American girls was to spread the word through communities and families. The Native American values in family and community apply to all aspects of our lives and we can be more trusting if we hear information from our fellow community members.

It's important for jobs to be advertised to a candidates trusted social circle rather than just to the candidates, so family members and teachers will then pass it down to people they think it will suit. Cultural competence is most important though, especially on what is offensive and what is not. Things like commonly used terms including "Indian" can carry a lot of heavy weight, and some people don't understand the painful history behind it.



I also think having patience is really important; candidates might not be familiar with the job process and most of them might be first-generation so employers will need to be patient. If Native American's are approached by a "professional" they might be defensive because of past experiences. And finally, it's important to encourage women and people of color [in your organization] to be the spokespeople and give testimonials to explain how they are supported.

## What does inclusion mean in the tech sector?

Inclusion is often misinterpreted as checking a box for a number of people hired who are a specific race, but it is much more than that. Their community, whether it is Native American or black or Hispanic, must feel that they have equal representation and a respected voice in the workplace. Often, ideas from women or minorities are taken less seriously than those of white men regardless of experience level or work quality, but employees must treat their colleagues with respect and sincerity. Assume that all ideas are valid and consider them with the same great thought and thoroughness that you would consider your own ideas. If a minority group can sincerely say they feel they have a voice that is respected, valid, and heard in the workplace, only then can a company say they are successfully inclusive

## What is the most common misconception or incorrect label applied to Native American and Indigenous women in tech?

People are often insensitive when referring to Native American related things. They use the term Indian which some groups may find offensive. Training about the cultural significance behind these insensitive phrases is sparse and people are often just under informed. Minority women are also often thought to have a lower quality education and can be discriminated against simply because of the assumptions people make based on our identity.

Women in tech, in general, are very supportive of one another because they have to be in a world of white men. I do feel a strong sense of community with my female coworkers because we have a shared sense of isolation and experiences of discrimination.



**SONAC®**



## MAKING INTERVIEWS INCLUSIVE



### CREATE AN INCLUSIVE INTERVIEW PROCESS.



Creating a diverse and inclusive workforce is based not only on whom you hire, but also on how you hire. Making interviews more inclusive is not just a matter of reframing questions, but rethinking the process. Job interviews should help identify the best candidate for a position while also supporting an equitable, inclusive environment.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### ESTABLISH KEY COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

Audit your evaluation methods to ensure you are assessing the key competencies and capabilities of the role you are recruiting for. Make sure every evaluation metric is specific to each role and that the assessment is as inclusive as possible.

### ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Using a competency-based approach to evaluate applicants will help interviewers focus on the skills required for a role rather than finding commonalities that could cause bias. Identify questions that demonstrate a candidate's attitude and motivations, and honestly assess their alignment with the company values.

### WHO IS IN THE MIX

When auditing your recruitment process, review how each interview panel is assembled. Do your interview panels have the appropriate knowledge and skills to conduct an inclusive interview process? Carrying out interviews with candidates with a diverse range of experiences takes skill. Ensure the people interviewing each candidate represent the diversity within the company; this means including people from different backgrounds, and different roles and levels within the company. This will give you a broader set of opinions on each candidate, so that you can be sure you're hiring the right person for the job.

### BE TRANSPARENT

Recruiting people is a long process, so be prepared and be transparent with candidates; this will make the interview process as efficient as possible for everyone involved. Provide details about interview stages: how many interviews there will be, with whom, how long the process might take, what you are going to test, and what your evaluation criteria are. Remember that an interview is just as much an opportunity for you to get to know the candidate as it is for them to get to know you.

### BE MORE CREATIVE IN YOUR EVALUATION PROCESS

There are many alternative or complementary solutions to evaluate candidates and assess skills. Through cognitive gaming or take-home tests, you can give every candidate a higher chance of demonstrating potential and ability. **PwC** recruiters send interview questions through a short video during the screening process. Meanwhile, for roles in creative industries, **Netflix** ran an Instagram-based contest to solicit candidates for one of its roles.

#### Tip!

If you're looking for creative ways to evaluate candidates, check out Goshaba Cognitive Gaming, a user-friendly tool for analyzing personality traits (such as multitasking abilities, empathy, and fluid intelligence) and company culture compatibility.



**Shirley Rodriguez** from Smartsheet on the importance of diversity of experience when planning the interview process. "Think about the interview process, especially for tech companies. Multiple rounds of interviews from a screening call to a one-to-one and then presentations or pitches - it can be really intimidating. And even more so if the interviewee is meeting panels of people who do not look like them. This system can alienate the right people if the first glimpse into a company is a homogeneous culture."



# ALINE LERNER: A RECRUITER'S PERSPECTIVE

**ALINE LERNER IS THE FOUNDER AND CEO OF INTERVIEWING.IO, A FREE PLATFORM FOR SOFTWARE ENGINEERS TO PRACTICE INTERVIEWING ANONYMOUSLY AND FIND JOBS INDEPENDENTLY OF WHO THEY ARE OR HOW THEY LOOK ON PAPER.**

## What is your background?

I went to MIT for undergrad, then took a few years off to work as a professional cook in New York and San Francisco. Working in kitchens changed how I thought about hiring, which ended up shaping a lot of what I did after that. You don't go through a standard interview, and people don't really look at your resume. They have you come in and work for a day, and at the end of the night, if you did a good job, they feed you and make you an offer. That was much more fair than the hiring practices I was used to.

Then I went back to doing what I know, which is software engineering. I started as an individual contributor and became a tech lead. I got more involved in the hiring process because I found that recruitment can become a burden on a team if no one takes ownership of it. I ended up liking that work more than writing code, so I decided I'd switch over to recruiting. I ran recruitment at TrialPay and Udacity, then started my own recruiting firm and worked for startups in the Bay Area.

## What is interviewing.io?

Any software engineer can participate in free, anonymous mock interviews on our platform. You can practice interviewing and you can mess up without any negative repercussions. If you do well in a practice pool, you can book an interview with any number of top companies. That interview is still anonymous, and if you do well on that interview you go on site.

Our candidates pass at a 75% rate, and 40% of those candidates do not look good on paper and were previously rejected by top companies when they went through resume screening. Only when they came through us were they hired, which of course causes internal conversations within those companies about why they rejected that candidate before.



## Do you think that women face any unique barriers in tech?

There's been an influx of women in recent years who have taken an interest in coding and getting jobs as software engineers. I think a lot of them have had a rude awakening. This field is unfriendly, not just to women but to any outsider. I don't think it's because of malice. It's the fact that the interview process itself is not perfect.

One issue is how companies screen resumes. They often will not talk to candidates unless they went to one of a few schools or have previously worked at one of a few companies. This is a problem because, in absolute terms, the number of women who graduate from top-tier computer science programs is growing, but it's not growing fast enough to keep up with demand. It is mathematically impossible to hit gender parity in software engineering if you hire the same way you've always hired, because there's just not enough women in those programs right now.

The other issue is with technical interviewing, which is not necessarily indicative of whether you're going to be good at a job. You're not doing the kind of work during an interview that you would be doing on the job itself. People who are used to the process understand that it's a numbers game, that they just have to practice a certain type of problem over and over and eventually they'll get a job at a good company.

If you're not aware of that, you might go into a technical interview, mess it up and decide software engineering is not for you, because you had faith in the process and the process rejected you.

This contributes to gender disparity in the industry, and we've seen the data on our platform. A few years ago, women were performing on average significantly worse than men in technical interviews, so we tried to figure out why. As it turned out, women were quitting the platform after one bad interview seven times more often than men, but once we corrected for people who quit after one bad performance, the gender disparity went away entirely.

### What pitfalls would you warn companies about?

One mistake I've seen companies get into is going after low-hanging fruit when it comes to diversity and inclusion practices. If you want to effect change, you can't just push your numbers around. You actually have to change your processes and your culture. I would advise companies to take it slow and to stop trying to get a few quick wins by stacking the deck with women, and instead to think about whether their interview process is repeatable, whether their interview process is fair, and whether, once they actually get a candidate from a non-traditional background through the door, there are incentives for those people to stay. It's not about vanity metrics. It's about making a fundamental change in how you hire.



### How can companies be more inclusive in the hiring process?

Step one is to de-emphasize the resume and emphasize ability and skill, because traditional credentials don't tell you very much about a candidate. The best thing one can do at the top of the funnel is to broaden your criteria and not filter on where people have gone to school or where they've worked in the past. Find ways to vet people based on skill.

Step two is once you get a smart person in the door to actually give them a chance to shine. Interviews could be way more inclusive by improving the kinds of questions asked, and improving how they are asked. A lot of organizations still rely heavily on questions that have some "gotcha" to it. Either you get it or you don't. People might not get it one day, and they might get it another day. That has absolutely no bearing on how people will actually do at work.

We encourage companies to ask questions that try to get at how candidates think, rather than questions to which specific answers are expected. Be abstract when you need to be, but not needlessly abstract; pose more real-world problems. It will make it much easier for people who don't have a formal education in tech to break into the industry and do the great kind of work their counterparts who do pass those interviews can do.



# DESIGNING A ROBUST ONBOARDING



## HELP NEW EMPLOYEES INTEGRATE



The way a company welcomes new employees says a lot about how it values its workers. Effective onboarding focuses not only on bringing new hires up to speed on projects, but also on designing a positive experience that integrates new hires into your company culture. It's a means of making a good first impression and creating a sense of belonging.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### COMMUNICATE CLEARLY ABOUT THE NEW TEAM MEMBER

Think about integrating new hires into the social fabric of a company, and consider how you introduce new hires to their team, peers, and senior management. Onboarding new hires virtually presents unique challenges. Consider setting aside time in team meetings for introductions and encourage everyone to take a moment to introduce themselves. Give the new employee an opportunity to talk about themselves – their professional background, interests, hobbies, etc. Include in your onboarding process an "introduction template" to be filled out by each new employee. Designate a "buddy" or HR liaison for new hires and introduce the new team member on all online platforms.

### MAKE THE FIRST DAY A JOURNEY FOR THE NEWCOMER TO FEEL PART OF THE TEAM

First impressions count, so make sure yours is a good one. The first day of your onboarding process is critical to creating an inclusive workplace for employees from diverse demographics and backgrounds. A new hire's first day in your company is an opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to an inclusive culture, and show your pride in a culture in which all employees are comfortable being their authentic selves and contributing fully. Make the focus of this day settling in, not getting straight to work. Assign a mentor and prepare a guide for new hires including a copy of the company strategy, the organizational chart and lay out the buzzwords and lingo that might be unique to your company.

### COMMUNICATE YOUR ONBOARDING PLAN TO THE NEW HIRE

Think about what experience you would like new hires to have. Let them know what your plan is so they know what to expect in the next coming weeks or months.

#### Tip!

Developed by Furet Company, Welcom'App allows companies to personalize their onboarding process in order to make it a more fun, motivational and organized experience.





# YOUR NON-SALARIED EMPLOYEES



## PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL TYPES OF EMPLOYEES.



Workforce management trends are continually evolving; the employee landscape has changed dramatically. According to a recent study by [Intuit](#), 40% of the US workforce will be contingent or on-demand by the end of 2020. While the gig economy has its perks – individuals can have a better work-life balance, companies can save money on benefits and training – employers must consider the implications for workforce management. It's important to not overlook contractors and non-salaried employees when auditing and assessing your D&I strategies.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### DON'T IGNORE INTERNS

It is important to focus on diversity when hiring great employees, but don't ignore intern diversity in your inclusion efforts and miss the boat on future talent. View your internship program as a training ground for top talent. The intern hire you make today has a 60% probability of being the entry-level star hire of tomorrow ([S](#)). Audit the demographics of your interns and non-salaried staff to actively check any biases in the recruitment process.

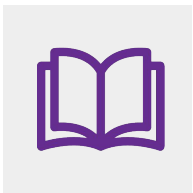
Audit your internship programs to ensure that they are accessible to people from different cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds too. Unpaid internships discourage talented individuals who cannot afford to work for free. Get a head start on ensuring your future workforce is truly diverse and inclusive by focusing on your internship program.

### PAY CONTRACTORS ON TIME

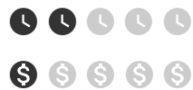
There are many benefits to hiring freelancers or contractors, but it's important to understand how employees and contractors differ because it affects the expectations both have of each other. Contractors have a greater degree of freedom, decide how they work, when and for whom, and even employ other people to help them. Contractors and freelancers might make up a significant number of your workforce, so it is necessary that these partners share your values.

### DETERMINE THE RIGHT TERMS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTORS

The same contract might not work for every employee — there is no “one-size-fits-all.” Giving options and being open to negotiation will avoid conflict and prevent losing talent if someone is not comfortable with the terms of a contract.



# WRITING THE HANDBOOK



**EQUIP NEW HIRES WITH A WRITTEN GUIDE.**

An employee handbook is a document that communicates your company's mission, policies and expectations. An employee handbook should be a "living document." Commit to reviewing and updating it regularly to ensure it complies with changing employment law and reflects your company culture. With an increasingly diverse workforce, conduct an audit of your employee handbook to ensure it reflects your organization's commitment to LGBTQIA employees and people of all genders, races, religions.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

**SHARE KEY INFORMATION**

During the rush that is joining a new company, essential information can go in one ear and out the other. An employee handbook is a tangible resource for new hires that can guide them through the policies, procedures, working conditions and values in the workplace. Use your employee handbook to lay out the inner workings of your organization, from how the phones function to your company values. Anticipate any questions new employees might have and include information that might be considered obvious, or mutually understood. Prepare new employees for success.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR ORGANIZATION AND EMPLOYEES TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE AND INSPIRING**

The drive to create a truly inclusive workplace never ends. As workforces diversify, the range of issues that are important to your employees will expand. Establish an open process through which all employees can highlight any challenges they might face in the workplace; welcome employees' feedback on topics that are important to them.

**IDENTIFY CHAMPIONS**

Form a diverse team of advocates from all sectors and levels of a company who are passionate advocates for inclusion. Having a clear pathway through which feedback on important issues can be reviewed by senior management and integrated into an employee handbook is essential for authentic inclusivity. Challenge these champions to create a better understanding of the needs of all employees and incorporate these findings into company policies that align with your values and goals.

**Tip!**

Benchmark employee handbooks that exist if you need inspiration! Percolate, the content marketing startup, dedicated several posts about their process, and Glitch, the creators of a collaborative development tool, open-sourced their handbook so that anyone can see how the company runs day-to-day.

# CASE STUDY: FAIR RECRUITMENT AT ASANA

**ASANA IS A SAN FRANCISCO-BASED TECH COMPANY WITH OVER 600 GLOBAL EMPLOYEES AND OFFICES IN 7 COUNTRIES. IT IS KNOWN FOR DEVELOPING WORK MANAGEMENT PLATFORM ASANA.**

"Our mission drives us everyday as we build technology that is a force for positive change in the world," said Sonja Gittens Ottley, the Asana Head of Diversity and Inclusion. Asana strives to create an empowering and welcoming work environment, and a key element of the company's success is a diverse and inclusive team. Asana established their own methodology and launched programs dedicated to diversity and inclusion.

## HOW TO DEVELOP FAIR RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

### 1 - Asana's Rooney Rule\*: Inclusion & Diversity KPIs

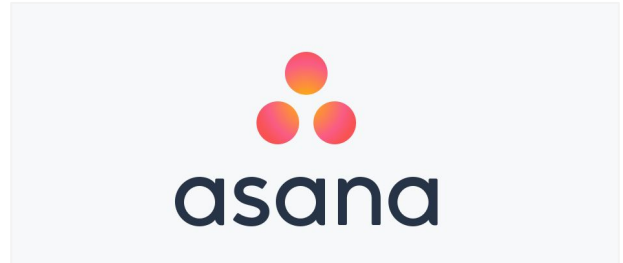
Asana's approach to building a more diverse leadership team is based on the Rooney Rule.

Setting KPIs to attract more diverse talent and be more impactful in your inclusive policy can be a sensitive subject. Asana made the choice to impose KPIs to assess their progress. One of the criteria for Asana's recruitment process is to interview at least one candidate from an underrepresented group and one female candidate for each leading job position.

### 2 - Diversity in the sourcing to get diversity in the team

In order to bring more women onto their team, the company has been creative in their sourcing and recruitment process, and has launched various initiatives:

- An expanded University & Early Career Recruiting program targeted specifically at universities with high representation of minorities and women, including HBCUs and Women's colleges.
- AsanaUP, their software engineering apprenticeship program for individuals who do not have computer science degrees. Launched in 2018, the program has a 100% hire rate to date.
- Partnerships with organizations and events that are aligned with commonly underrepresented communities in tech including Grace Hopper Conference, TechInclusion, Latinas in Tech, Code2040, Tech Trek, etc.



### 3 - Training teams to be comfortable with diversity and inclusion

Asana organizes robust employee training for their recruitment teams, hiring managers and recruiters. The company also organizes internal discussions about biases and behaviors. Most of the following sessions are required for all employees:

- ★ Comprehensive D&I curriculum during onboarding for every new hire
- ★ Quarterly "Ask Me Anything" events with the Head of Diversity and Inclusion
- ★ Mandatory harassment training
- ★ Bias training
- ★ Inclusive Leadership training
- ★ Interview Skills training

The results: A 40% increase of female employees in Asana global offices in 2018/2019.

*\* Rooney Rule: The Rooney Rule is a National Football League policy that requires league teams to interview ethnic-minority candidates for head coaching and senior football operation jobs. It is an example of affirmative action, even though there is no hiring quota or hiring preference given to minorities, only an interviewing quota. It was established in 2003, and variations of the rule are now in place in other industries.*



## — EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES —

Employees should feel like they can grow within an organization, making it crucial to empower them to reach their full potential. Putting structures in place that address issues in the tech industry, accelerate growth and raise confidence will ultimately increase job satisfaction and employee retention.



# MEETING EMPLOYEE NEEDS



**MAKE TECH A PLACE FOR EVERYONE.**

Life gets in the way of our best laid plans. Flexible work options empower employees by letting them arrange their work schedules in a way that accommodates their personal life and needs. Providing an array of working practices and leave options shows current and potential talent that you respect both their professional and personal well-being. Life experiences are essential to growth: let employees know they can grow within a company.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

**BE FLEXIBLE**

For an in-depth look at solutions such as remote work, flexible hours and 4-day workweeks, please see "Embracing Flexible Schedules."

**IMPLEMENT A PAID FAMILY LEAVE POLICY**

Having a paid family leave policy guarantees that employees have the ability to take time off from work to address personal family needs without worrying about their finances or job security. Paid family leave should be gender-neutral, job-protected, and fully funded leave that facilitates an employee's return to the same employer and promotes talent retention and career progression.

Providing paid family leave to people of all genders is critical. Remember, families come in all shapes and sizes. Only offering leave to women inherently biases them as caretakers and can negatively affect the pursuit of gender equality in the workplace. Share your policy with all employees and make it clear that paid family leave is for everyone.

**ACCOUNT FOR A VARIETY OF NEEDS**

Family care needs go beyond childcare. Creating an integrated, needs-based package of benefits to support employees can have a profound effect on employees' lives, thus improving the workplace culture. Employers can provide a range of job-protected and paid family leave options for all employees, including men, as well as adoptive and surrogate parents. Options include maternity, paternity, and parental leave; medical leave; childcare leave; family leave to care for an elderly, disabled, or ill family member; and long-term and emergency leave.

Tech companies have responded rapidly to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and in doing so, have proven that flexible working conditions do not mean reduced productivity or profitability. Make flexibility a company value and support employees to work their best as their personal circumstances change.

**SUPPORT A SMOOTH TRANSITION BACK**

Formalize a process that supports the transition back for employees returning from leave. This process could include meetings and conversations that bring returning employees up to speed on project progress, new work and new hires. To do this, your HR department can put together a welcome back checklist that is standard across the organization. The goal is to make the transition back to work as seamless as possible.

**Tip!**

LeaveLogic is a parental leave management platform for both employees and employers that creates individualized leave plans. It consolidates an employee's benefits and family choices, manager discussions, company policies, and up-to-date federal, state and local regulations in one place.



## SUPPORTING THE REMOTE WORKER



### A VIRTUAL WORKSPACE PEOPLE WANT TO WORK IN.



Implementing supportive and clear “office” protocols and practices can raise motivation, productivity and happiness. In the covid-19 era, our “offices” have become our homes, changing many of the ways we communicate and structure our interactions. Given the new normal of virtual offices, it is important to make this “workplace” as inclusive and empowering as possible.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN OPENNESS AND PRIVACY

Virtual office spaces that require a complete reliance on email, chat, conference and video calls, giving employees more access to each other's' home lives than ever before. While these tools are necessary to remote working, they can often blur the lines between “work life” and “home life” if not implemented thoughtfully. Set ground rules for employees to follow that protect their personal space and time.

#### The “New Normal”

Public health advice relating to offices and physical workplaces is fast changing. It is important that employees are supported to work in a way that best protects their health and wellbeing. Depending on your employee's personal considerations, such as an at-risk family members, reliance on public transportation, or caring for children, their ability to resume work in the office could vary widely. This must be taken into account, along with government guidelines, when organising the workforce.

According to the UN, women are becoming unemployed at rates disproportionate to that of men due to the pandemic and measures to prevent its spread. Additionally, care-taking burdens being placed on women are reducing the number of hours they are able to work. Be flexible and open to alternative working schedules for all employees to ensure they can tend to personal and professional responsibilities. When the time comes for employees to return to the office, be as forthcoming and flexible as possible.

#### The Home Office

The home office has become a staple feature of the modern workplace. Not all employees will have the space or resources to have a dedicated work-space, and some are sharing their workspace with other co-workers, family members and children. Create a culture that is understanding of background noise, unexpected interruptions or appearances from other people sharing the space..

Ensure that employees have as many benefits of a traditional workplace while working at home, make computer hardware readily available to all employees, ensure that all files are accessible remotely and if the budget allows, consider a stipend for employees to equip their home work spaces. Amend the employee handbook to include best practice on using new technologies like slack and zoom, encourage employees to provide their working hours in their status, and make using video an option for all staff.

#### Gender Recognition at Work

In a physical office space, use a combined gender symbol to indicate that a bathroom is for use by people of every gender. In a virtual office space, add your pronouns after your name on all online platforms. Don't be afraid to ask LGBTQ+ team members, individually or through employee resource group, what supports they would like to feel fully seen in the workplace culture.

Be careful not to make assumptions about a person's background or lifestyle based on their physical appearance in the office or in video meetings. Take care when using pronouns, making references to a partner or spouse, or intimating parenthood. These are all ways in which we can unknowingly stereotype individuals and make people feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.



## SETTING UNBIASED & MEASURABLE GOALS



### SETTING AMBITIOUS BUT ATTAINABLE WORK GOALS FOR EVERYONE.



The tech industry is well known for its dynamism and energy. In an industry that pioneers predicting the problems of tomorrow and engineering solutions, goal setting can be a difficult task. Here are some tips on how to decide on goals, inspire all team members to action, and evaluate performance fairly and in an unbiased manner.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### KEEP THE GOALS SMART

Research in organizational psychology highlights that, in order to make the goal-setting process efficient, objectives must be SMART. The acronym refers to:

- **Specific:** If your goal isn't specific, how will you know it has succeeded or failed? Specificity breeds success.
- **Measurable:** When you can measure a goal, you will also be able to tell if the goal was met successfully or not.
- **Achievable:** Be ambitious, but realistic. Goals should be challenging but not impossible.
- **Relevant:** Make sure that these goals are relevant to the people who will utilize them and aligned with the organization's objectives.
- **Time-bound:** Goals cannot be unending. There needs to be a time period during which the goal can be carried out and the objective met.

### COLLABORATE

Identify your goals and work collaboratively with employees to plan your organization's success. Goal setting involves the development of an action plan designed to provide motivation and guidance towards achieving a goal. Resource your teams to achieve their targets and challenge them to be ambitious.

### 360° ASSESSMENT

When reviewing an employee's performance, interview people they've worked with to get a global idea of their performance. This will provide objective and diverse performance reviews, as opposed to the unique vision of a manager.

### USE STANDARDIZED SYSTEMS TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

To avoid any bias, build a clear assessment grid. Measure performance based on goals that you have set.





# TRANSPARENCY

## HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE REGARDING PAY AND PROMOTION DECISIONS.



Transparency creates trust between employers and employees, helps improve morale and lowers job-related stress while simultaneously increasing employee engagement and boosting performance. With a workforce that is blended between virtual and physical, it's important to be intentionally transparent. When it comes to pay and promotion, being open and honest about how you review and reward performance can boost employee engagement and ensure your commitment to equity.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### CREATE A TRUSTING, HONEST ENVIRONMENT

Being transparent with your employees creates a shared understanding of each party's role within a team's overall mission, as well as an understanding of the organization's commitment to value performance. Consider why you're choosing that level of transparency to ensure you're building towards a trusted, constructive culture. Be intentional in how you create this environment throughout recruitment and ongoing review processes. As teams become increasingly remote, regular check-ins, performance and 360 reviews should form a more important part of how an employee is performing.

### HAVE CLEAR COMPENSATION CRITERIA

Being transparent about the factors that go into determining each employee's financial compensation will ensure that all parties are confident that equal work is rewarded with equal pay. Openly sharing information about compensation will help a company retain talent, recruit key hires and reduce the gender pay gap. Normalise disclosing salary structures in an office culture and remain accountable to your commitment to equity!

### BEYOND PAY & PROMOTION

Transparency is not just about sharing criteria that determines each employee's pay and promotion prospects – it also invites and values feedback from all team members. As employees grow within their roles, they can identify improvements for the inner workings of your organization that may go unnoticed at the top level. Make it clear you value these insights and are open to hearing feedback too. Consider any questions employees or applicants might have about how a company functions and be precise about what employees can expect at every stage of their careers with the company. Being transparent ultimately shapes and strengthens company culture. It's a means of fostering an environment that is constructive, fair and honest.

# CASE STUDY: HOW ALAN SHAKES UP THE RULES

**ALAN IS A SOFTWARE-AS-A-SERVICE STARTUP THAT HAS CREATED A WELL-DESIGNED INSURANCE PRODUCT WITH TRANSPARENT PRICING AND POLICIES TO MAKE HEALTHCARE MORE ACCESSIBLE.**

From 16 to 200 employees in three years, Alan is growing fast, and there's more growth to come thanks to its fundraising of \$45M. The founders, Jean-Charles Samuelian and Charles Gorintin, are well known for disrupting the insurance market and management rules. Meetings are banned, managers have been replaced by "owners" and diplomas are no longer criteria for recruitment. Alan is a model of transparency at all levels for more equity and inclusion.

## **AN INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Alan's objective has always been to attract more diverse talent by limiting bias in recruitment and having more mixed and diverse teams. All employees are involved in recruitment (regardless of their position in the company or seniority level) and interview panels are as diverse and representative of the company as possible. Alan's recruitment process includes an initial interview to assess the candidate's motivation and talk about the company and job position; an interview to test technical skills; an interview to discuss a candidate's background (skills) and values; and lastly, one full day spent at the office. In order to be fair with each candidate, recruitment is never based on feelings. Since implementing these changes, + 36% of women or non-binary individuals have joined Alan's team.

## **A STRONG EFFORT IN THE SOURCING PROCESS TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE**

Alan's sourcing process is more and more oriented towards women. They work with key players and specific networks such as Girls in Tech or Duchess to source more women.



## **MANAGERS REPLACED BY "OWNERS"**

Alan replaced project managers with "owners" in order to facilitate the decision-making process and bring a variety of insights to the table. For each workstream, Alan chooses an "owner" who is responsible for making final decisions. The owner states his or her point of view, suggests solutions and gathers the opinions of others internally. Anyone can challenge an owner's decisions, but it is the owner who makes the final call.

## **A PAY SCALE MADE PUBLIC**

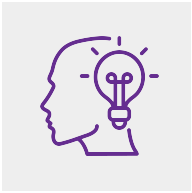
Negotiation regarding pay is not a part of the hiring process at Alan. Instead, the company has defined (and made public) a salary scale based on job level and experience. During the recruitment process, everyone who has met the candidate decides their position on this grid. Salary is not based on a candidate's background, degree or negotiation skills. Sometimes they are offered a lower salary than expected, sometimes a much higher one.

## **REDUCING PAY GAPS**

To prevent pay gaps among employees, Alan schedules reviews every six months. Depending on an employee's performance and progress, the review panel will decide if they can move to a higher pay bracket.

## **AND EVEN MORE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES!**

In order to bring in more diverse talent, Alan also offers flexible working hours, remote work options, unlimited vacation and extended parental leave.



## IDEA PROCESSING



### FOSTER CREATIVITY WITH AN INTERNAL LAB OR THINK TANK.

The tech industry continuously reimagines how things work. It's a sector that relies heavily on tech-savvy and creative individuals. Open the floor to ideas from employees and have a system in place for receiving and reviewing those ideas. This will empower a team by encouraging experimentation and collaboration.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### DEDICATE TIME

Creativity needs space to breathe. This process can have an uneasy relationship with productivity metrics. Creativity is essential to long-term success, but finding the time can seem impossible in the deluge of emails and meetings. Give employees privileged moments dedicated to innovation that get them outside of their day-to-day environment. Consider the value of free time, seminars and outings to inspire creativity.

### DEFINE THE PARAMETERS BEFOREHAND

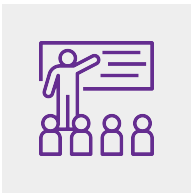
Without a structure or plan in place it's more likely for solid ideas to be lost and not followed-through on by management. Decide on a budget, how much time to dedicate to ideas and pitches, and which topics (e.g., the core business model, internal processes, company culture) you will accept.

### CONSIDER THE FORMAT

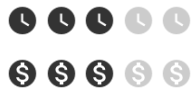
Align the format of creative thinking with company values. Unstructured free time might be the preference of some companies or industries; others might be better suited to a more rigorous innovation structure. It might suit some teams to unite employees together in competition and others by engaging in collaborative activities. When it comes to creativity, don't be afraid to fail.

### RECOGNIZE EFFORTS AND REWARD SUCCESSES

Let employees know their thoughts and opinions are valued and appreciated. Consider how best to reward creativity inline with your values, budget and goals. What does success look like when it comes to creative thinking in your company?



## INTEGRATED TRAINING



### HELP EMPLOYEES HONE THEIR SKILLS.

The tech industry is constantly churning out new digital tools and coding languages that require training, making continuous learning and upskilling absolute necessities. Offering employees a range of training options and formats will allow them to invest in their growth in a way that works best for them.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TOPICS

Identify topics important to your company that employees can learn about through training.

### LIST TRAININGS CURRENTLY OFFERED

Benchmark all types of training your company is currently offering, but also where training is lacking, either in content (specific topics) or in form (online versus face-to-face). How do these types of training match your company's needs?

### DEFINE A STRATEGY

Define a strategy at the top of management, and then implement it in a way that's easy for your company. Give the resources needed for training, whether a small stipend aimed at training, or just a few hours each week dedicated to it.

### PROVIDE DIVERSE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Different teams within the same company can have different needs in terms of training and upskilling. They have different skill sets to improve, topics to focus on, and time frames to work with. It's necessary to recognize these differences and provide a range of training opportunities such as online courses, in-person classes, digital news subscriptions, seminars, and attendance at tech conferences (local, regional, national). There are also more innovative learning solutions such as Helpboard (I need help on / I can help you with), learning groups, and on-the-job training (with a colleague).

### COMMUNICATE AND ENCOURAGE

Make it clear that personal and professional growth is important to the company by communicating the available training opportunities, promoting them, and encouraging everyone's participation.



# MENTORSHIP & CO-DEVELOPMENT



## BUILD A PLATFORM THAT FOSTERS INTERACTIONS WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION.



The purpose of an internal employee network is to give employees the opportunity to learn from one another and find inspiration within their company. Have a process in place that removes barriers between employees working in different departments, teams and levels of seniority in order to foster valuable interactions.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### BUILD A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

A mentorship program can help new hires find an anchor, someone to talk to about their career and what to expect at their company. Consider what is an appropriate method for mentors and mentees to get to know each other. Does it suit the onboarding or development of a mentee to have a mentor from the same team, level of seniority or demographic? Resource these relationships appropriately to ensure their success.

### REVERSE MENTORING

Reverse mentoring entails pairing younger employees with more senior team members in a company in order to mentor them on new strategies, skills and culture. It empowers the company as a whole by encouraging the members of a multi-generational team to work better together, learn from each other and combine their knowledge.

### CO-DEVELOPMENT

Co-development is another platform for internal learning that encourages coworkers to problem-solve together. In general, 4 to 6 employees participate in a co-development session. One team member brings a topic to discuss (such as a challenge they are facing on a current project), and the other members propose solutions. Co-development is a means of creating a more personal environment for resolving issues.

### SHOW OFF DIVERSITY

Diversity should be celebrated! Promote the profiles of people in your company who embody your values. Recognize and be proud of the women, people from minority backgrounds, people of color and LGBTQIA people who make the company culture something everyone can see themselves reflected in. Hosting a panel of inspiring figures working at your company will show potential candidates that there are opportunities for advancement and mentorship. Remember the old adage: "If you can't see it, you can't be it!"

**Shannon Burt**, Technical Instructor at NPower says:

“



“You need to value what different people bring to your organization in order for you to genuinely entice them to align with your mission and your goals. You have to understand the value that a black woman in tech brings to your organization and then create a narrative that speaks directly to black women in tech. Right now there aren't many tech companies that are doing that.

There are small groups of black women, or women in general, or minority groups that are coming together around tech, but if one company were to step up and create a true narrative that wasn't a subset of the diversity and inclusion department, I think the organization would be pleasantly surprised to see that they will have a lot more female black women applications.”

”

# SOPHIE VIGER: TRANSFORMING TECH CULTURE

**SOPHIE VIGER IS THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ÉCOLE 42, A TEACHER-LESS, TUITION-FREE CODING SCHOOL IN PARIS.**

## Why did you decide to start a career in the tech sector?

To be honest, I did not really choose a career as a developer. Before embarking on tech studies, I tried out many different paths, from biology to musicology. I was interested in everything and never truly specialized in a field.

When I discovered programming, I realized I was not only very good at it, but also very good at explaining and formalizing it. What I found difficult was the attitude of the experts who often made things look obscure and “hermetic.” It seemed like they wanted us to believe that their knowledge was very difficult to access, but programming is actually very simple.

In 2013, I became the director of Web@cadémie and discovered my love of teaching an audience of young people who have left the school system. These young talents have a great sensitivity – they are gems. I also discovered my love of project-based pedagogy, which places the responsibility of learning on the student. This is why, when I was asked to join École 42 a year ago, I did not think twice before accepting the offer.

## What has been your experience in the tech sector and how do you inspire other women to pursue this path?

I was interested in everything that “belonged” to the male domain. For example, I remember when my brother was given a ZX81, the first tiny home computer that was typically offered to boys; I did not wait a second to get my hands on it. When I entered the professional world, I did not really notice the hurdles that were placed in my path, because for me, these obstacles were not actually obstacles but rather sources of motivation. I had been raised to question my skills in order to improve myself, and ultimately, my upbringing made computer science a perfect match.

Initially, my approach to inspiring women in tech was saying, “We need to strengthen women and tell them they can do it, but it’s up to them to advance



CREDIT:: Bruno Levy

themselves.” Taking a step back, I realized there was a problem with that mentality — that it was somewhat limited and sexist.

## What are your initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion in tech work culture?

At École 42 we have started implementing different initiatives aimed at making inclusion and diversity a part of our DNA. I think many of these initiatives could inspire tech companies, regardless of their size.

In my opinion, work culture is very much driven by management. Executives have the purview to develop a business culture from the ground up and can be an organization’s most efficient agent of change. Before I arrived at École 42, it took 5 years to go from 7% to 14% of female students; after I joined the team, the percentage increased from 14% to 21% in a year.

Tech culture is extremely sexist, and it is management’s responsibility to listen and act on all employees’ feedback. Providing resources for streamlined communication is of the utmost importance. At École 42, we are making efforts to eradicate sexist culture from the workplace. Most notably, we have started a think tank that meets every few weeks to foster innovative ways of being more inclusive. This group is comprised of current students, former students, external contributors and private business partners, all of whom collectively contribute to the ongoing endeavour of extinguishing sexism. Employees who have experienced sexism firsthand are essential in this critical undertaking.

In order to address discrimination, we created a "social report" email address to which either people who witness or experience discrimination can write. We address any form of discrimination — sexism, homophobia, racism — because diversity is diversity. We must talk about different forms of discrimination and not isolate the subjects because it is the same engine that activates them. Above everything else, you need to have a system in place. When discrimination happens, what will you do to address it? At École 42, the accused person is convened, we talk to them, and if they repeat the offence, they are summoned again and sanctioned. We also make an effort to show the positive work that we do. We are a school that actively opposes discrimination. Diversity should be celebrated, and our school certainly does that.

In order to increase and maintain diversity at École 42, we decided to assign 50% of places to men (which get filled very quickly) and 50% to women (which take more time to fill). We continue to encourage women to apply by reminding them that there are still openings, and eventually we open the remaining spots to everyone. It's important to note that quotas are very complicated and must be treated with extreme care. If a student [or new hire] feels as if they were chosen because of their diverse background and not their skills or experience, that can make them feel illegitimate.

Although sexism is very much present in tech culture, we are definitely moving in the right direction. There are aspects that have improved despite everything (for instance, the wage gap is narrowing), and we can't say the opposite. There's always a delay between acknowledging a problem and working towards resolving it. Change takes time, and changing tech culture needs not only management, but also committed individuals who share the same vision.



One final piece of advice is to look towards your "ecosystem" and work with other like-minded organizations around you. Even if a company has women in decision-making roles, that company's culture is not necessarily inclusive. When wanting to implement a new initiative, consider calling on an outside firm or an expert. In order to bring more female students to École 42, we work with the national employment center, which encourages women to discover our school. We also partner with organizations that support the integration of women into tech and through which they can connect with mentors and investors.



## — EMBRACING FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES —

Professionals across industries are gravitating towards companies that promote work-life balance. It's where we're going, and it's a trend that makes sense. Your employees have different needs, and meeting those needs is essential for retaining employees and attracting new ones.



# DISRUPTING THE 9-TO-5

A company's performance depends on its employees. The ability for an employee to do their job effectively depends not only on their skills, but also their social, physical and mental well-being. This is why many companies in tech and beyond are reconsidering the conventional 5-day-per-week, 9-to-5 office job. The growth of remote working as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has made flexible working schedules essential for some and an attractive perk for others. Between new tools for workplace communication and project management, and the nature of tech work itself, "disrupting the 9-to-5" is very possible, and companies are getting inventive to ensure their employees can achieve personal and professional balance, even in unprecedented times.

As with most things, there are potential pitfalls. Finding a model that works for a company is a trial-and-error process, and a company might have to pilot different schemes before finding what works. However, the benefits of breaking the 9-to-5 that provide employees with greater autonomy are worth the effort. Flexibility gives employees control over their schedules and allows them to lead more balanced, stress-free lives, which in turn boosts productivity and motivation. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) increase employee engagement and well-being as well as productivity.

The fact that companies of all sizes are performing just as well, if not better, while being flexible shows it really is possible for people to work in an atmosphere and on a schedule that fits their personal obligations. It all has to do with having the correct policies and communication channels in place. With the right plan, employees can match the same quality of work no matter when and where they're working.

At the end of the day, giving employees flexibility is about trust, because it's not only working arrangements that change, but also working relationships. "Disrupting the 9-to-5" requires a change in mentality, but with time, innovation and patience, you can discover a plan that works best for your team.





## DISRUPTING THE 9-TO-5 FLEXIBLE HOURS

### WHAT IT IS:

Remote work is a situation in which an employee works mainly from home and communicates with the company via email, calls, management tools, etc. Remote work became the norm for many as the Covid-19 pandemic required the temporary closure of office spaces, but it looks set to become a mainstay of the new normal. Having flexible hours makes it possible to arrange one's own agenda, facilitate family life and a work/life balance. It allows employees to choose their start and end times for the work day.

### WHAT IT'S NOT:

Working on a flexible schedule does not mean working in isolation. In fact, working flexibly requires clear and effective communication in order to build trusting relationships among employers and employees.

### WHAT IT REQUIRES:

Flexible working arrangements require clear schedules and management processes. A system must be in place.

- For a healthy and efficient working environment, employers and employees need to know when and how they can reach employees who are on flexible schedules. This will avoid misunderstanding and frustration, and keep up productivity.
- In order to comply with administrative procedures, employers need to be available during the working hours of their employees.
- Finally, there must be a strong corporate culture in place in order to maintain team spirit and morale.

### WHAT IT OFFERS TO EMPLOYEES

- **A good work-life balance:** Greater flexibility in determining their own working hours means employees will benefit from a better work-life balance. This is especially important for parents who need the right balance between childcare responsibilities and work.
- **More productivity:** Employees can decide to work on a time frame during which they are most productive.
- **Improved physical and mental health:** Flexible hours minimizes stress and prevents burnout, allowing employees to focus not only on work, but on themselves and their personal well-being.

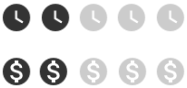
### WHAT IT OFFERS TO EMPLOYERS

- **Less absenteeism:** Being able to set up their own schedules means that employees can be on time (to virtual meetings, etc); this in turn reduces absenteeism and improves punctuality.
- **Less turnover:** A good work-life balance means that employees will have greater job satisfaction. This means higher staff retention and lower staff turnover for employers.
- **Stronger relationships and company image:** Respecting employees' time makes them feel valued, which ultimately reinforces their commitment to employers and strengthens their sense of belonging within a company. All of this improves a company's image.



# DISRUPTING THE 9-TO-5

## PART 3: THE 4-DAY WORKWEEK



### WHAT IT IS:

The 4-day workweek consists of working 4 days a week instead of the conventional 5 days. This can be implemented in two ways: either by reducing the number of weekly working hours with pay maintained and workdays kept to 8 hours, or by maintaining the number of weekly hours with an increase in daily hours to fit into 4 days.

### WHAT IT'S NOT:

The 4-day workweek is not about working less and earning less. Employees keep the same salary but have 3 days off per week.

### WHAT IT REQUIRES:

- **Prioritization:** Consider canceling or consolidating meetings, and assessing who needs to be present for which meetings and projects.
- **Team training:** Taking on the same workload with one day less requires guidelines for time management and efficiency to ensure employees can achieve the same results in less time, or with one less workday.

### WHAT IT OFFERS TO EMPLOYEES

- **One more day off:** The obvious perk of the 4-day workweek is having one day more to focus on yourself. It allows employees to de-stress, spend time with family and friends, and take care of anything they would typically have to put off until the weekend.
- **Improved work methods:** The 4-day workweek imposes a time crunch, but that's not necessarily a con. Having to condense the workload of 5 days into 4 means that you have to reevaluate how you work and find your best methods. Procrastination and poor communication can no longer be afforded, and you have to trim the proverbial fat, but along the way you can discover and develop outstanding professional skills. At the end of the day, knowing how to adapt to the 4-day workweek is an invaluable life lesson.

### WHAT IT OFFERS TO EMPLOYERS

- **Better management:** Embracing the 4-day workweek means that employers and employees alike need to adapt to a new work style. Employers become better managers, learning not only how to accommodate individual employees' work methods, but also how to make those methods mesh together in a cohesive way.
- **A happier team:** Although employees have to make a huge effort in terms of getting work done effectively and efficiently, they know they will have time to decompress and will look forward to it. They will be satisfied knowing that the company they work for respects them on both a professional and personal basis.
- **More recruitment:** While the 4-day workweek is gaining traction, it remains a unique option you don't see available at every company. Offering the 4-day workweek can therefore attract more candidates because it makes your company stand out. It shows that your company is inventive and respectful, that your team works well together, and that your employees have developed invaluable work skills that candidates can gain too.

# DISRUPTING THE 9-TO-5

## CASE STUDY: WILDBIT'S 4-DAY WORKWEEK

**WILDBIT IS A SMALL AMERICAN SOFTWARE COMPANY WITH 30 EMPLOYEES BASED IN 6 COUNTRIES. THEY ARE KNOWN FOR DEVELOPING POSTMARK, BEANSTALK AND CONVEYOR.**

In May 2017, American software company Wildbit started experimenting with a 4-day, 32-hour workweek. Founder and CEO Natalie Nagele's decision to implement the change was inspired by computer scientist Cal Newport's book *Deep Work*, which argues that creative minds max out at 4 hours of "deep" (i.e., truly thoughtful and cognitively focused) work a day. "Anything beyond that is either diminishing returns, meaning you are doing less quality work," said Nagele in an interview with *The Observer*.

### THE EXPERIMENT

Not wanting to make any permanent changes without seeing the effects the new workweek had on their team and customers, Wildbit originally limited its experiment to the summer. Everyone worked four days per week. No hours were tacked onto the workday and there was no reduction in salary. Most of the team took Fridays off, but in order to remain available to clients, the Customer Success team alternated Mondays and Fridays off, and the development team had an on-call rotation for Fridays.

### THE CHANGES

In order to make the 4-day workweek a success, Wildbit had to change some of their work policies. Because the new setup meant an additional 52 Fridays (or Mondays) out of the office a year, the company decided to reduce paid-time-off from 25 to 20 days. They also did not allow employees to "swap" days (take a day off mid-week and work on Friday so it wouldn't count against their PTO) because it was too disruptive to the workflow.

In addition to changing work policies, Wildbit had to change their work habits. Shortening the workweek meant the team had to look at how their time could be used most efficiently. The company limited employees to two 30-minute team meetings per week, and used Basecamp's automated, text-based check-ins in lieu of daily meetings. The marketing team was asked a daily question ("What are the 1-3 most important



things you want to finish today?) and the full Front of House team was asked one question at the end of the week ("How's your weekly goal looking, and what's your 'no-matter-what' for next week?"). Employees also learned to avoid disrupting their colleagues' work, sending Slack messages only when something was urgent and emails for less important matters. If they needed to focus or were on a roll, employees could close Slack entirely and were not pressured to constantly check emails.

### THE RESULTS

The 4-day workweek was such a success for Wildbit, they've extended the experiment indefinitely. Within the first year of the shortened workweek, the company launched more features than it had the previous year. They had become a more productive team; they had learned how to avoid distractions, define their roles and responsibilities, prioritize tasks, plan ahead and meet only when necessary. And most importantly, employees had a better quality of life. Employees had more time out of the office to spend however they wished, which reduced burnout and helped them return to the office happier and refreshed.

## ULTRANAUTS - FEATURING MIA ARMSTRONG A LEADER IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

**ULTRANAUTS PROVIDES HIGH-QUALITY SOFTWARE TESTING SERVICES TO TOP TIER FORTUNE 100 AND 500 COMPANIES AROUND THE WORLD. OVER 75% OF THEIR EMPLOYEES ARE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM AND 45% IDENTIFY AS WOMEN OR NON-BINARY. FOUNDED IN 2013 BY MIT GRADUATES RAJESH ANANDAN AND ART SHECTMAN, ULTRANAUTS' MISSION IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT NEURODIVERSITY IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR BUSINESS.**

According to Crunchbase, the company's competitive advantage comes from their neurodiverse and differently abled staff, who can have heightened abilities that are an exact match for software testing such pattern recognition, focus, attention to detail, tolerance for repetition.

However, Ultranauts thinks their competitive advantage extends beyond this, explaining to the New York Times that the advantage is that people on the autism spectrum are a diverse group. "One person may recognize patterns quickly, while another has a more measured cognitive style but arrives at different patterns and ways to fix code. The key lies in harnessing the varied talents of teams."

Ultranauts is also the world's first fully remote workplace for cognitively diverse teams, with colleagues working in 20 states across the U.S. While companies across the globe have been wrestling with the transition to a virtual working environment, Ultranauts has been implementing innovative structures that allow their employees to achieve their professional goals in a supportive environment. As part of this, Ultranaut employees follow a distinctive set of policies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion.

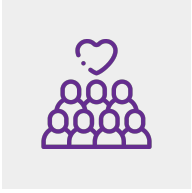
Mia Armstrong (they/them) was the second Engineer hired by Ultranauts, starting as a part-time employee while she obtained her degree in Computer Science. Prior to joining, Mia had no experience in Software Engineering, and had spent nearly 20 years as a Pastry Chef. Ultranauts does not use an applicant's prior work experience as a measure of "fitness" for the company. Instead of conducting formal interviews, which can be a challenge for neurodiverse individuals, candidates complete a series of aptitude assessments and work simulations that measure things like problem solving and applying feedback.



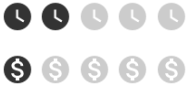
Mia knew she was interested in a career in tech, but wanted to make sure the company was the right fit. "I wanted to be part of a company that values personal relationships and not just being another cog in the machine. I didn't want to work at another 'good ole boys' tech company where they don't value individuality if you're not a man, and your opportunities are limited." Mia, who is on the autism spectrum herself, believes that Ultranauts approach to valuing its workers individual needs, is key to their business success. "Every day we update our Biodex to describe our energy level for the day and our interaction level. Other people can see this and tailor their own interactions with us." Each employee's biodex also includes things like their areas of expertise and preferred learning style.

Ultranauts also ensures that their staff can engage no matter their communication preferences or different abilities. All virtual meetings have closed captioning, and each is recorded, transcribed and archived to accommodate workers who prefer reading to listening and foster a more open organization. This includes weekly leadership meetings and includes the decisions made and reasons behind them.

Mia believes that companies like Ultranauts are the way of the future for tech: "A lot of fields have a set way of doing things, and in order to keep up with tech changes, you need people who think differently and have different mindsets and perspectives."



## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND SUPPORTING THE REMOTE WORKER



Ultranaughts has been growing at over 50% annually while simultaneously building the world's first fully remote workplace for neurodiverse talent. With a workforce in 20 states across the U.S., 75% of whom are on the autism spectrum, the Ultranaughts have created an environment where fewer than 15% of employees feel lonely at work compared to 40% of the American workforce. Here are some insights into best practice tips for investing in a culture of virtual teamwork that will increase productivity and inclusivity from a company who has set the standard.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

### ESTABLISH CLEAR GROUND RULES FOR WORK

Set clear expectations for all team members vis-a-vis availability during business hours and communications after hours; define proper etiquette for using real-time collaboration tools (Slack, Teams, Skype, etc)

### UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORK HABITS

Not being able to "read" a team member's reaction or walk over to their desk to get a response can result in friction and delays and can lead to misunderstandings. Don't assume everyone has the same preferences as you do, instead share your preferences and ask your colleagues for theirs.

### MONITOR TEAM WELL BEING FREQUENTLY

Not sitting next to each other means not seeing when a team member isn't doing well or might need help.. Why not poll team members as frequently as possible with questions / statements constructed based on what's most important to the team as a whole..

### PROVIDE MULTIPLE CHANNELS FOR FEEDBACK

Being remote makes it harder to express frustrations, which can fester into real problems. Provide multiple means for sharing questions and concerns on a regular basis such as an open Q&A forum at company meetings and an "always on" forum where questions can be shared anonymously and responses are shared publicly

### ENCOURAGE COLLEAGUES TO HELP EACH OTHER

Without the subtle belonging cues that create psychological safety, team mates can feel more anxious about how they're doing/how things are going. Encourage positive feedback one-on-one and in public forums (e.g. a #kudos channel in Slack), and regularly call out helpful behavior.

### CREATE SPACES FOR REAL-TIME COLLABORATION ISSUE

Group interactions of remote teams are often limited to calls while creative collaboration and problem solving often happen outside scheduled meetings. Why not set up a virtual space for "Working Meetings" (e.g. a Google Hangout) that's always on, where everyone on the team is welcome to come and go as they please,

### CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CASUAL INTERACTIONS

Casual interactions in communal spaces disappear when everyone is remote, but are essential to building relationships/strengthening bonds. Set up a virtual hangout spaces that encourage ad hoc gatherings

### HOST SOCIAL GATHERINGS AND CONTESTS

Social events help strengthen bonds between team members and allow for interactions across teams, but don't readily translate to a remote workplace. Host employee contests virtually on a regular basis (the first one can encourage team members to come up with contest ideas) and consider hosting a virtual office "party" with pre-defined contests and games replacing unstructured socializing.

### MEETING EVERYONE WHERE THEY ARE

The Ultranaughts Biodex is a user manual for people, designed to empower diverse teams to work effectively together remotely. A biodex is especially supportive of diverse teams, where colleagues can represent a wide range of work experiences, social norms, or learning styles, and for remote teams where "reading" a team member's reaction or walking over to their desk to get a response is not an option.





## — KEY TAKEAWAYS —

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Where to start?

Becoming an organization that is truly gender inclusive requires thoughtful reflection that leads to intentional changes. Examine the gender balance in your organization and undertake an audit of the protocols and practices that have produced the current composition of your workforce. Changing the status quo requires intentional and considered actions. Remember that you can't change what you don't measure. Here are the five key metrics that are crucial when it comes to gender inclusion and achieving parity:

1. Recruitment
2. Pay and benefits
3. Retention
4. Advancement
5. Representation

## What practical tips exist to make my organization more diverse and inclusive?

In this guide we have presented the results of research and interviews with women in tech, employers, NGOs and other organizations in the US, France, Tunisia, Belgium, Morocco and Italy. We have identified 4 key principles that are crucial when it comes to gender diversity and inclusion:

1. **Shape your culture with intention**
2. **Employ inclusive recruitment tactics**
3. **Welcome diverse lifestyles**
4. **Empower all employees**

As we proceed towards more diverse workforces in evermore inclusive workplaces, remember that there is no one-size-fits-all solution! Companies might face unique challenges between industries, locations and demographics. Our goal in this guide was to present relatively universal principles and concrete actions that your company can take to improve your diversity and gender equity no matter where you are.

## Make diversity and gender inclusion a priority.

It's imperative to recognize that the world relies heavily on the tech industry and will continue to do so. Every tech company and the decisions they make will ultimately play a role in shaping the future workforce. The commitment to making tech a more diverse and inclusive place should not be based on "vanity metrics," but rather on the fact that the success of a company (and the industry as a whole) relies on the abilities and visions of its workforce. Recruiting, supporting, and retaining a diverse workforce will accelerate this success.

The supply of talented tech workers ready to fill available jobs still falls far short of the demand. If the tech industry focuses on achieving gender parity and supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain the right skills, this gap will shrink significantly. Without true representation, tech foregoes new talents and different perspectives, and the industry will suffer. Without diversity of experience and thought, what will the future of tech look like?

The good news is that change is already happening and the industry is seeing more and more companies invest in a diverse and inclusive workforce. They are recognizing the problem, and reflecting on unconscious and conscious biases and misconceptions. They are reconsidering and improving company culture, actively searching for diverse talent, making changes to welcome talent with different lifestyles, and investing in the future success of employees. As a result, workplaces are becoming more inclusive, pay gaps are decreasing, and more women can see themselves thriving in the tech sector.





## — SOURCES —

# SOURCES & INSPIRATION (1/2)

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# POW' HER IN TECH