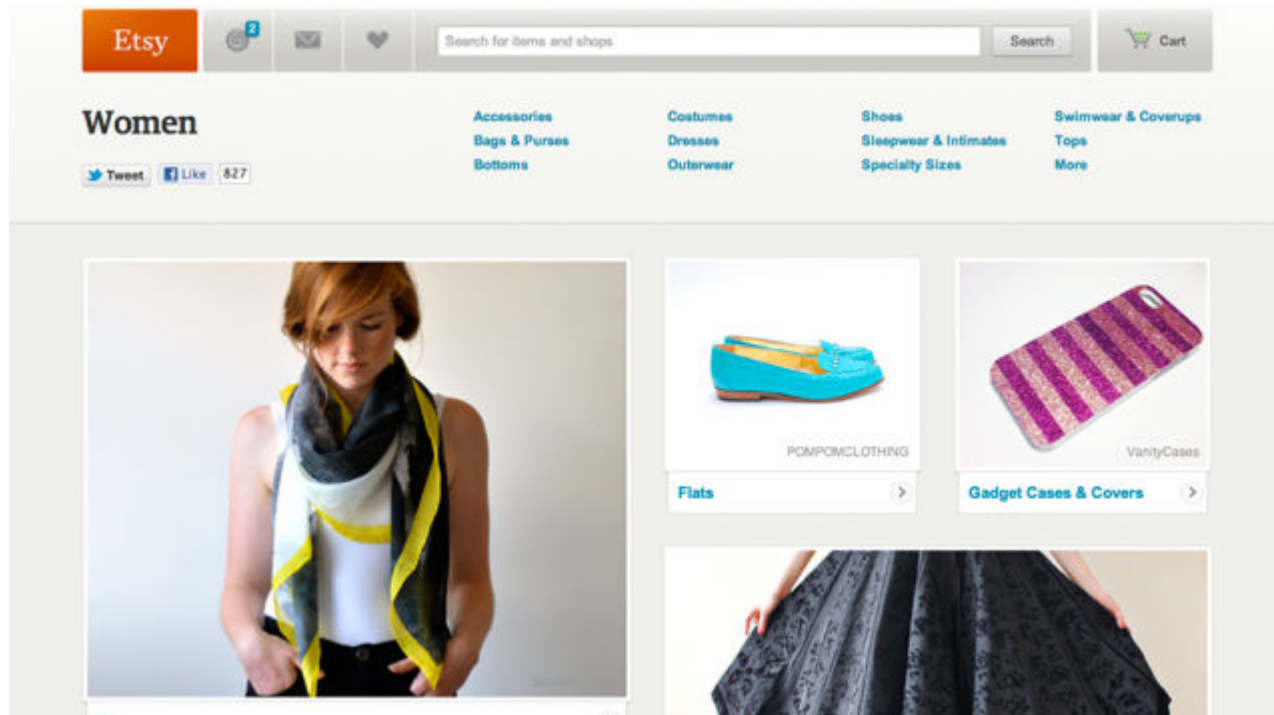# Etsy's Revolutionary Yet Simple Policy Results in More Female Engineers

Dodai Stewart, 12/13 2:20pm

http://jezebel.com/5990132/etsys-revolutionary-yet-simple-policy-results-in-more-female-engineers

What happens when 80% of your customers are female, but your engineers behind-the-scenes are 87% male? If you're Etsy, you try to fix it.

We often discuss the challenges facing women in STEM jobs: Men hold 75% of the positions in science, technology, engineering and math — and make 14 cents more on the dollar than their female colleagues. Studies find that girls do well in science in many nations, just not the US. For some companies, there's a catch 22: If you have no women working for you, you might find it hard to get women to work for you: Does a female engineer really want to go work for a company where she's the only woman in the office?

But as Anya Kamenetz writes for Fast Company, instead of *searching* for awesome female engineers, Etsy decided to *create* some:

> When Etsy stopped poaching and started training junior women to be rockstars, more senior engineers—men and women—saw the company's progressive policies and started calling.

Basically, Etsy partnered with a couple of other companies and *invested* in junior employees:

> Etsy, together with 37Signals and Yammer, kicked in for $7,000 in grants to cover women's living expenses for a Hacker School session held at Etsy's offices in the summer of 2012.

(For the uninitiated, Hacker School is a three-month intensive free coding training program in New York that trades on its culture of mutual respect.) Over 600 women applied, which Hacker School narrowed down to 23 attendees, or half of the Hacker School session for that semester.

The investment paid off:

As of January 2011, the company only had three female engineers out of 47. […] Today, Etsy's engineering team is 20 ladies to 90 guys, or 500% more women than two years ago.

The women are still a minority, but a *five hundred percent* increase is nothing to sneeze at. Etsy considered diversity *vital* to the product, and bringing in more women has had a big impact on the company:

After word spread in the engineering community about Etsy's Hacker School Grants, they attracted some very high-level candidates, men and women "whose names you would know," who weren't explicitly job hunting, but loved their initiative, leading to two senior-level hires and three more who are in talks.

A win-win, all around.