



# Recruiting in tech

Finding and keeping diverse candidates

By Clémentine Pirlot

# Diverse teams perform better



35%

One [study](#) found that companies the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity in management were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean .

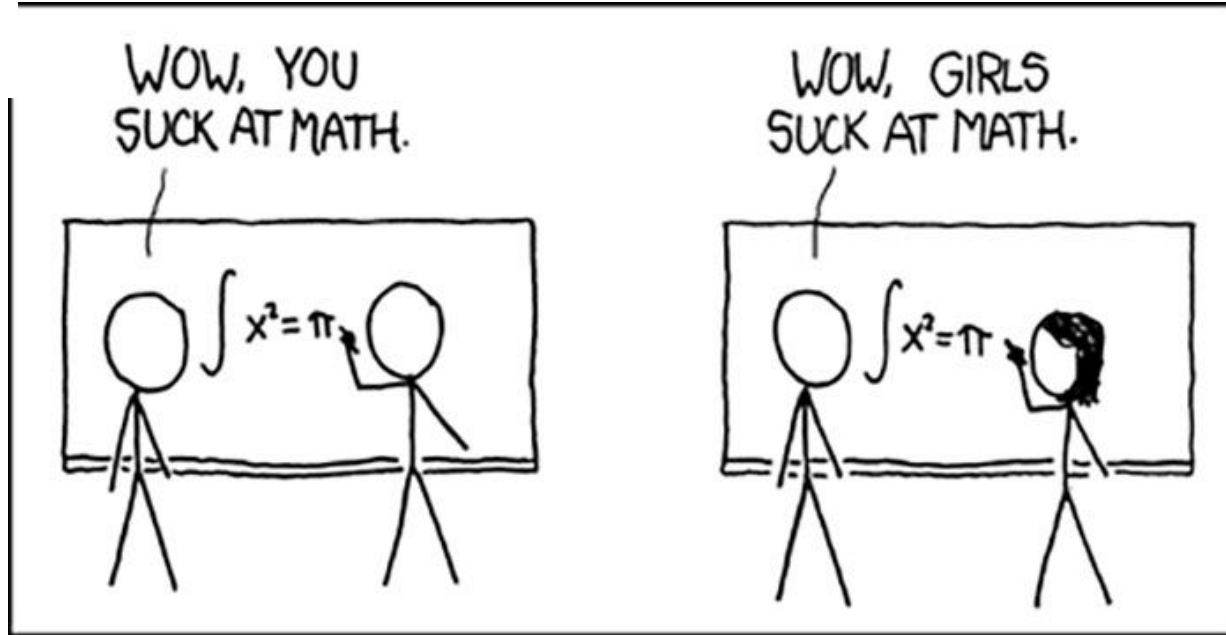
87%

Another [study](#) shows that Inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time.

60%

The same study also shows that decisions made and executed by diverse teams delivered 60% better results.

# Women have to carry a heavier load in the workplace



If a white man fails an exercise you're not going to think white men can't code.

# Stereotype threat



Stereotype threat is a concept in sociology where the performance of individuals who belong to negatively stereotyped groups is impacted.

One [study](#) found that when women were reminded — even subtly — of the stereotype that men were better than women at math, the performance of women in math tests measurably declined. Students in one condition were told that the test showed no gender differences, while those in the other condition were told that the test generally showed gender differences.

Another [study](#) African American students underperformed on a difficult verbal test in comparison to white students when they were told the verbal test was diagnostic of their intellectual abilities. In contrast, their performance improved drastically if they were told the verbal test was not reflective of their abilities.

# Imposter syndrome



Condition where individuals feel unable to acknowledge their accomplishments, skills and talents, and consequently feel as though they've arrived in their current situation by accident.

Men and women experience imposter syndrome but studies tend to show higher rates for women. One [study](#) found that men overestimated the quality of their work relative to women.

Another [study](#) found that men overestimate their intelligence in STEM courses, while women underestimate their abilities.

Imposter syndrome can result in 2 people with the same qualifications looking or sounding unequal.

# Double standards



A [study](#) of feedback found that in the 83 critical reviews received by men, just two included comments on personality. In the 94 critical reviews received by women, 71 included negative comments about personality.

An entire [book](#) about double standards just came out: *How to Be Successful Without Hurting Men's Feelings*.



*Excerpt from "How to Be Successful Without Hurting Men's Feelings" by Sarah Cooper*

# Unconscious bias



Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

35%

One former engineer at Facebook collected data [showing](#) that female engineers received 35 percent more rejections of their code than men.

60%

In one [study](#) in which women and men voiced the same presentations word for word, investors funded male-voiced ventures 60 % more often than female-voiced ventures.

49%

When sent 2 identical resumes, recruiters [found](#) 79% of applicants with the male name and only 49% of applicants with the female name “worthy of hire”.

## Gendered vocabulary

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# Wanted: Ninja Rockstar Code Monkey Hacker Unicorn



Randall Koutnik



Mar 19 Originally published at [rkoutnik.com](https://rkoutnik.com) on Apr 29, 2016

A [study](#) found that women felt that job adverts with masculine-coded language were less appealing and that they belonged less in those occupations.



**All these factors combine everyday**

**How can we solve this ?**

# Compassionate better values in tech

- ▶ ~~EGO~~ HUMILITY
- ▶ ~~ELITISM~~ INCLUSION
- ▶ ~~COMPETITION~~ COOPERATION
- ▶ ~~BEING “SMART”~~ BEING KIND
- ▶ ~~BEING A “ROCKSTAR”~~ BEING A MENTOR

Slide borrowed from April Wensel's presentation. April Wensel is the founder of Compassionate coding, an organization that helps companies become more inclusive and advocates for better values in tech.

@APRILWENSEL

# Write gender neutral ads

You can use tools such as [Textio.com](https://textio.com) to analyze how gender coded your job ads are or paste them on this free [gender decoder](#).

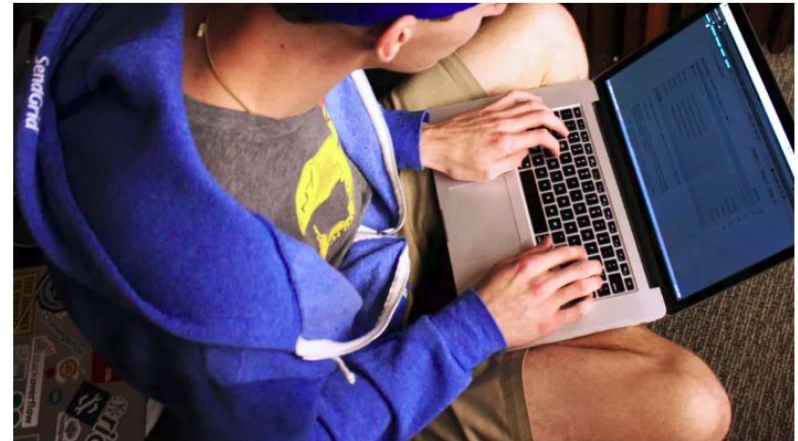
No more rockstars and geniuses!

*“At Slack, male-biased terms such as “rock star” and “ninja” are no-no’s, along with words such as “brilliant” that convey the belief that intelligence, talents, and abilities are innate, rather than traits that can be developed. Research shows that job descriptions that contain such language get fewer applications overall and fewer from women.*

03.24.15 | STRONG FEMALE LEAD

## How Changing One Word In Job Descriptions Can Lead To More Diverse Candidates

When the social media platform Buffer removed the word “hacker” from their job titles they noticed a change in who was applying.



(PHOTO: FLICKR USER HACKNY.ORG)

# Check your requirements



*“Slack also removed explicit requirements like number of years of experience and specific degrees necessary, in the hope that candidates wouldn’t opt out prematurely.”*

Men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them. ([source](#))

A long list of requirements will exclude women and prevent you from meeting great candidates.

Examine each of your ad’s requirements and ask yourself: if a good candidate doesn’t have this requirement, is that a deal breaker ? If not, remove the requirement.

# Avoid unconscious bias



- Remove gender from resumes
- Judge on very specific criterias
- Structure your interviews

Tools like [TalVista](#) can help you check for gendered language, review applications without any gender or race information and structure your interviews.

Determine what skills and attributes are needed and stick to them. Hiring is often very subjective and that allows bias to rule.

Ask the same questions to all candidates, and only ask questions that concern the skills you determined the candidates should have. We will talk about interview structure in more details in a following slide.

# Avoid excluding valuable skills



Don't disregard “soft” skills:

Don't just list coding skills, communication skills and empathy are very important to work in a team, name variables, explain code to colleagues...

April Wensel [suggests](#) to call them catalytic skills rather than soft skills.

## CATALYTIC SKILLS



**the fundamental human skills that  
help us acquire other skills and  
engage more effectively with the  
world**

@APRILWENSEL

7:11 PM  
LIVE

# Technical interviews



DO NOT DO  
WHITEBOARD OR  
LIVE CODING  
TESTS!



# Technical interviews



- Has nothing to do with the day to day job: [data](#) suggests that there is very low correlation between interview scores and actual job performance.
- Will only favor very confident people, excluding humble and insecure people.
- Stereotype threat, imposter syndrome, double standards and unconscious bias all converge here.
- Only 25% of interviewees are consistent in their performance, but the rest perform very differently at live coding.
- When people think they did poorly, even if they actually didn't, they may be a lot less likely to want to work with you.
- After a poor performance, women are 7 times more likely to stop practicing interviews on interviewing.io than men.



# Better technical interviews



Many companies use take home tests or online platforms like HackerRank to test candidates, and have an interview to talk about it .

Employees spend less time on interviews and candidates can code in the comfort of their homes.

Have 2 people do the interview to be more impartial. Two people in the same interview can experience it very differently.

# Better technical interviews

Do not look for people who would solve a problem the same way you would, unless you want to end up with a clone army that will only see the same solution to every problem.



**April Wensel**  
@aprilwensel

When interviewing engineers people love to say, "I want to see how the candidate solves problems," when what they really mean is, "I want to make sure the candidate solves problems like I do, or I'll assume incompetence."

And sadly, this perpetuates the monoculture.



**April Wensel**  
@aprilwensel



Having now conducted many interviews, I can tell you that in interviewing debriefs, you'll often hear something like, "That was a weird approach to that problem. She should have just used \_\_\_\_\_."



Her brain is not your brain! That's why we need to hire her.

# How to structure interviews



- Is the program correct?
- Are there shortcomings in the solution?
- Are there obvious corner cases that should have been covered or commented on?
- Can the candidate explain the solution (data model, algorithm)?

You can find [here](#) a complete interview template example.

After the interview, make sure the 2 interviewers do NOT talk to each other until after they both send their written feedback.

Talking to each other could influence the feedback.

Write the feedback immediately after while it's still fresh in your mind.