

BEST PRACTICE JOB AD TIPS: ATTRACTING WOMEN TO YOUR BUSINESS

Why aim for diversity in the workplace?

Building a diverse workforce makes both financial and social sense. As McKinsey & Company's January 2018 report "Delivering through Diversity" concludes, "Many successful companies regard I&D [Inclusivity and Diversity] as a source of competitive advantage. It makes sense that a diverse and inclusive employee base – with a range of approaches and perspectives – would be more competitive in a globalised economy."

A 2019 report commissioned by the SBS and authored by John O'Mahony from Deloitte Access Economics found that improving social inclusion could amount to a \$12.7 billion annual boost to the Australian economy, lifting the GDP growth, improving health and employment outcomes, increasing workplace productivity and reducing the cost of social services. The report estimates that increasing the share of women in senior leadership will boost Australia's GDP by \$5 billion through more creative and innovative workplaces.

Research by the International Monetary Fund concluded that women and men bring "different skills and perspectives to the workplace, including different attitudes to risk and collaboration." The IMF identified some of the key benefits of having more women in your workplace as:

- A bigger boost to growth
- Higher productivity
- Higher male incomes (due to generally higher productivity and the wage growth that goes with it).

Keen to embrace diversity and help your business thrive?

A basic starting point is to make your job advertisement more appealing for diverse audiences. How a position is advertised is crucial to attracting the right sort of people for the job. A good advertisement will focus exclusively on the essential skills and abilities needed to do the job. Only refer to personal characteristics, such as age, sex, marital status or race, if they are part of the genuine requirements of the job.



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Here are a few tips to help you target women in your job advertisements:

- Balance masculine- and feminine-coded words. Overly masculine words imply an overly masculine culture, which is off-putting to both women and minority groups. For example, avoid words such as “rockstar”, “driven”, “expert”, “kicking/crushing it”, “elite”, “top level”, “ambitious”, “dominant” etc. and focus on words such as “collaborative”, “growth mindset”, “creative”, “supportive”, “adaptable” “team player”, “community”, “loves learning” etc. A job description that’s written in a balanced way shows that you have an open, inclusive culture that supports learning and encourages collaboration. Use this tool to check how your job descriptions are coded: <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>
- Minimise the essential requirements on your job ads. Most women will apply for a job only if they fit 100% of the criteria, while men will apply if they fit about 60%. This is because many women struggle with “Imposter Syndrome”, thinking that they’re not good enough for a position even when they are more than qualified. Rather split your requirements into “essential” and “desired” sections.
- Make it clear that becoming part of your business will provide structured, supported opportunities for learning and career growth, into managerial roles as well.
- Emphasise the family friendly benefits and policies your business offers and supports.
- Emphasise any flexible working options.
- Emphasise pay equity, and the wages/ salary package you offer.
- Emphasise that your workplace is a safe space where sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Add testimonials (written or visual) from employees similar to your target applicant to your job descriptions, showing the reality of what it’s like working for your business.
- Add links to or information about any internal business policies that support or may be of interest to the target applicant.
- Make it clear that your business embraces diversity, and supports their team in ways that meet their needs and help them grow. Really mean it!
- Stop encouraging “forced fun”, such as using terms like “work hard, play hard”, or listing perks of the job as “beer after work”. Many women have responsibilities that make it difficult to attend out-of-hours events, which in turn makes it harder to build meaningful connections with colleagues, and network with senior managers.