



WHITEPAPER

DIVERSITY HIRING:

A Guide to Gender Blind Recruiting and Overcoming Bias

INTRO

It has been proven time and time again, diverse teams are **remarkably more effective** than teams who have the same experiences and perspectives. But, this is not limited to gender and ethnicity. Diverse teams also means different backgrounds, skill sets and different ways of thinking. **McKinsey conducted a study** showing firms with the most gender diversity at the executive level are more profitable than those that do not have as much gender diversity. Leaning toward blind recruiting seems to be the most logical solution, but is this method actually gender blind? Unfortunately, simply removing names from CVs or resumes is not enough to remove our subconscious biases and hire these **profitable diverse teams**.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Diversity Recruiting as a Strategy	4
Orchestras, Reality Shows and HR	5
Making a Case for Blind Recruiting	6
The Power of Language	7
Gendered CVs/Resumes	8
Remove Bias & Unleash Your Potential	10

DIVERSITY RECRUITING AS A STRATEGY

The future is diverse, and it is coming fast. Millennials are currently the **largest generation in the U.S. workforce (35%)** and they are more diverse than the generation before them. Gen Z is about to graduate from college over the next two years, and they're even more diverse than Millennials. **A recent study** shows 81% of Gen Z's have one or more friends of a different race. Diversity is not new to them. However, the issue is most organizations are completely unprepared and treating recruiting like they always have.

Diversity recruiting should not just be a program put in place. It's a strategy that benefits everyone and if we can harness that in our roles, we can make a huge impact. In U.S. commercial banks, even with the use of diversity programs, equality is not improving. Within the last few years, white women's **representation in management dropped from 39% to 35%.**



Within the last few years, white women's
representation in management dropped from
39% to 35%.

The numbers were even worse in investment banks. Even in Silicon Valley, where many leaders tout the need to increase diversity for both business and social justice reasons, most tech jobs are *still* held by white men.

Is the failure of these diversity programs really shocking? Even though companies are saying they are focusing on diversity, they are only using some bells and whistles while still doubling down on the same approaches they have used since the 1960s. Rather than reduce bias and foster an inclusive work culture, the goal of these outdated approaches are to preempt lawsuits within the office.



ORCHESTRAS, REALITY SHOWS AND HR

If our goal is to put the right people, at the right time, in the right jobs...how are we determining who the right people are? Their past work experience? Their school? The dilemma is to differentiate what information would cause a bias and what would inform the company whether the candidate would be an exceptional fit.

Think of the show *The Voice*. The concept of the show seems fairly new - the judges are turned around with no preconceived notions or stereotypes of the performers. The contestants are judged purely on their ability to wow the audience and judges with their singing voice. This blind audition concept stems from decade old studies. Before the 1970s, symphony orchestras were made up of almost all white men. Directors would brush off the statistic by saying these white men were simply the most qualified. In the 70s, though, The New York Philharmonic and The Boston Symphony Orchestra held auditions behind screens so the judges couldn't see what they looked like. They even went as far as having carpeted floor so no one could differentiate the sound of a woman's heels walking to position from men's dress shoes.

Harvard and Princeton took notice of this and wanted to know what came of it.



They found

25%-45%

of female musicians were more likely to be hired.

When women found out the playing field was leveled, the number of female applicants began to skyrocket. This is very similar to blind recruiting. No, job interviews will not be conducted with a screen between the candidate and the interviewer, and the odds of hiring managers taking their inspiration from *The Voice* seems highly unlikely, as well.

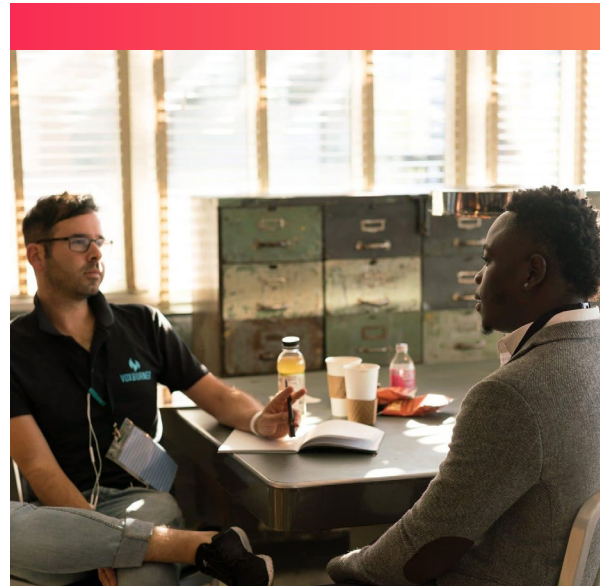


MAKING A CASE FOR BLIND RECRUITING

A study in 2003 by MIT and The University of Chicago found applicants with a white sounding name versus a black sounding name were 50% more likely to get a first-round job interview. A follow-up study in 2015 found if you had a black sounding name, but went to an elite university, you would be selected for a first round interview at the same rate as someone with a white sounding name from a less selective school. Many organizations have implemented processes of removing name, nationality and university names from resumes/CVs when given to hiring managers so they can solely judge on merit and experience.

Studies by the Social Mobility Commission show numerous industries are failing to hire talented young people from less advantaged backgrounds because they recruit from a small pool of elite universities and hire those who fit in with the culture. Specifically, they are favoring middle and higher income candidates who come from this handful of the country's top universities.

Furthermore, recent studies from Royal Holloway University of London and the University of Birmingham suggests **managers often select candidates** for client-facing jobs who fit the 'traditional' image of a role, with many placing as much importance on an individual's speech, accent, dress and behaviour as on their skills and qualifications. This introduces disadvantages for candidates whose upbringing and background means they are not aware of certain dress codes - for example, some senior investment bankers still consider it unacceptable for men to wear brown shoes with a business suit.



A study in 2003 by MIT and The University of Chicago found applicants with a white sounding name versus a black sounding name were

50%

more likely to get a first-round job interview.



THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

From the very beginning of the candidate hunt, you could already be limiting your applicants. Moreover, the way you write your job descriptions is already limiting which gender will be the majority of your applicants. A study by **The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology** found the gendered wording in job descriptions affected who would apply for those positions. They found women were more interested in men dominated positions when the advertisements were unbiased and did not refer to the applicant as *He*. But, still today, there are issues with the way we write job descriptions and titles. Here's how this can be solved:



1. Write job descriptions in a gender-neutral tone.

When referring to the position, only use the official title of the position or use “they.” Also, avoid including words in your titles like “hacker,” “rockstar” or “ninja.” It’s a turn-off for women and you’re likely to get less female applicants.



2. Avoid superlatives.

Excessive use of words like “expert” and “world class” will result in women looking the other way because women generally are more collaborative than competitive.



3. Limit requirements

Identify which requirements are nice to have versus must-have and remove the nice to have requirements from the job description. Research shows a woman will typically apply **if they meet 100% of the requirements**. Men will usually apply if they meet just 60% of listed requirements.



GENDERED CVS/RESUMES



At Oleeo, we focus a lot on Machine Learning and Intelligent Automation. We use algorithms to select great candidates. So, we wanted to know if these differences we see in job descriptions also exist in CVs/resumes, and, do they perpetuate biases unconsciously through recruiters? We partnered with [University College London](#) and conducted the first large-scale statistical linguistic analysis of male and female CVs/resumes across multiple industries and looked at 200,000 applications and CVs/resumes from the UK and U.S.

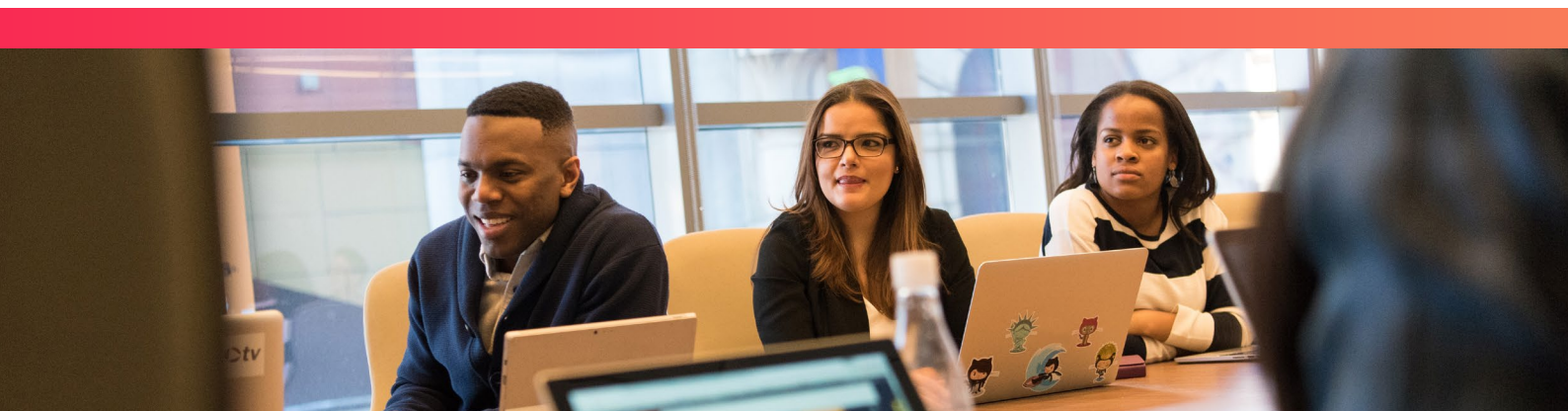
Our first objective was to establish features that may differentiate a male resume from a female resume. We looked at the lexical, syntactic and semantic differences in the text. Then, we wanted to know if these differences are perpetuated or amplified in machine learning. We found, for the industries we focused on, there were 10 words found for each gender that the discriminant word analysis identified. The results were remarkable.

Financial Services

♀ Female	♂ Male
Organize	Equity
Event	Portfolio
Volunteer	Investment
Assistant	Capital
Social	Analyst
Student	Finance
Marketing	Market
Community	Stock
Department	Interests
Plan	Technical

Technology

♀ Female	♂ Male
Volunteer	PHP
Event	C
Assistant	Software
Organize	Linux
Analyze	C++
Plan	Computer
Student	Have
Social	Developer
Conduct	Engineer
Excel	Network



Consulting

♀ Female	♂ Male
Volunteer	Engineering
Assistant	Sport
Event	Investment
Social	Finance
Organize	Analyst
Write	Club
Community	Cost
Student	Financial
Communication	Technology
Research	Technical

Retail and Buying

♀ Female	♂ Male
Art	Football
Child	Play
Volunteer	Sport
Shop	Business
Assistant	Club
Assist	Technology
Social	Computer
Design	Mobile
Organize	It
Create	Leadership



In each industry, we found women used

“SOFT” WORDS.

90% of the top 10 male discriminant words are proper nouns and nouns compared to 68% of the top 10 female discriminant words. Beyond nouns, we found that patterns easily lead to gender identification.

We also found female CVs/resumes tend to be longer, use more unique words and have a higher readability. You may not realize it, but your brain probably knows if you’re reading a male or female resume. These results we found were so significant and solidify the fact that it’s time to reset and remove bias from your process.



REMOVE BIAS & UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL

Using algorithms and **intelligent automation**, we can finally level the playing field with the program's ability to pick out top candidates. Doing so can and will get you the best candidate in the right position. So many women were looked over for a position in an orchestra that would have made wonderful additions to the group. Subconscious biases happen. Once you recognize the bias, you can get around it. Whether it's a screen, a celebrity judge with their back to a singer or Intelligent Automation - you can overcome biases with Oleeo's Intelligent Automation and Recruiting Enablement Platform.



We have the opportunity to remove bias and get back to being human.



UK HEADQUARTERS

5-7 Bridgeworks, The Crescent
London, SW19 8DR
hello.uk@oleeo.com
+44 (0) 20 8946 9876

US HEADQUARTERS

7 Popham Road, 3rd Floor
Scarsdale, NY 10583
hello.us@oleeo.com
+1 (212) 686 7733

**MORE
POWERFUL
TOGETHER**