

Gender Bias in Selection: Words Matter

The first step to reducing gender bias in selection is to reduce gender bias in initial recruiting. Studies show that **job descriptions favoring overly masculine words** (i.e., those typically associated with masculine stereotypes) **can make a position less appealing for potential female candidates**. The way we phrase our company description and culture, the expected qualifications, and the responsibilities of the position can inadvertently turn away female candidates before they even have a chance to apply. Utilizing more feminine or neutral words can help **make your online job postings stand out as appealing to candidates regardless of gender**.

Instead of...

Try...

Company
Description

"We are a **dominant** engineering firm that **boasts** many **leading clients**."

"We are a **community** of engineers who have **effective relationships** with many **satisfied clients**."

"**Take our sales challenge!** Even if you have no previous experience, we will **facilitate the acquisition** of your **sales abilities**."

"**Join our sales community!** Even if you have no previous experience, we will help **nurture and develop** your **sales talent**."

Qualifications

"Demonstrated ability to **act decisively** in emergencies."

"Demonstrated ability to **respond appropriately** in emergencies."

"Ability to **deal with multiple** senior staff."

"Experience in **providing administrative support services to a team of** senior staff."

Responsibilities

"**Analyze problems logically** and **troubleshoot** to determine **needed repairs**."

"**Respond to problems** and **assess the situation** to find **practical solutions**."

"**Challenge others** to reach the **highest standards** as employees."

"**Motivate others** to reach their **potential** as employees."

Adapted from Gaucher, Friesen,
& Kay (2010)