

Gender-Inclusive On-Campus Technology Recruiting A Diagnostic Tool

Potential employees come to your on-campus recruiting sessions to learn about what the company does...and also to figure out whether they will fit in with your company culture. This diagnostic tool will help you fine-tune your recruiting sessions to be inclusive and welcoming to people of all genders.¹

This tool is intended for use by recruiters with some exposure to diversity and inclusion concepts. We do not suggest giving this to front-line recruiters without some background and/or training. We think this tool will work best if you task one person with observing and reporting on the session, with no other responsibilities.

Time and Place of the Information Session:

1. Pre-session Info:

Note how many people are present, what genders they appear to be, and what they are doing.

Number of candidates: _____ Women: _____ Men: _____
Number of company personnel: _____ Women: _____ Men: _____

Who is presenting, and what are their roles? (Who is passing out food? Handing out t-shirts? Handling AV? Chatting with candidates?):

Number of candidates (at the start of the session): _____

Women: _____ Men: _____

How many women candidates enter late? _____ Leave early? _____

How many men candidates enter late? _____ Leave early? _____

2. Session Opening

How do the presenter(s) kick off the session? What questions or statements do they open with? Do they discuss company purpose and values or focus on the technology?

¹ In order to determine if women and non-binary people feel welcome in your recruiting sessions, this checklist asks you to make some assumptions about gender from visible characteristics, which is generally not a good idea. Gender is on a spectrum, and a person's gender identity can't be determined just from their physical appearance. The underlying research has been based largely on women's experiences with recruiting. As more research comes out about the experiences of non-binary people in recruiting, we will update this document.

3. Presenter-Presenter Interactions:

How do the presenters treat each other? What are they doing as presenters? Who speaks the most—men or women? Are men presenting most of the technical content, while women are presenting “soft” topics like company culture or work/life balance? If a candidate asks a question during the session, who answers? How do they speak to/about each other? Is there a visible status hierarchy? Do presenters interrupt each other?

4. References to Life Experiences That Might Differ by Gender:

Note references to experience or knowledge men may be more likely to have than women. For example, women tend to join tech later in life, so references to early childhood experiences like video games might make some women feel unwelcome. Other examples include questions about familiarity with tech devices, companies, famous tech people, etc.

5. Valued Traits:

Note any descriptions of a “good” candidate or typical employee. Does the language used suggest a woman or a man? Terms like geeky coder, rock star, intense/obsessive, confident, assertive, etc. are more likely to be associated with men. If role models are mentioned (Steve Jobs, Sheryl Sandberg, etc.), are they women or men?

6. References to Stereotypically “Geek” Culture:

Note references to items or ideas that are associated with “geek” culture, like references to Star Trek/Star Wars, comics, video games, anime, t-shirt messages like “I code therefore I am,” etc.

7. Intimidating Technical Complexity:

Are tech descriptions unnecessarily/inaccessibly complex? Research shows that women tend to hold themselves to a higher stand than men in male-dominated fields like tech, so presentations designed to intimidate the audience will systematically alienate women more than men, even if the women are just as qualified.

8. Work/Life Balance References:

How do company presenters talk about employee work/life balance? What do they say outright about work/life balance, vs. what is implied? Do they say or imply people spend a lot of free time at the company because it’s “so fun”?

9. Other Slide and Video Content:

Who are the people in the videos/slides? Number of men/women, gendered roles/activities, any gender stereotypes, how the women & men in the video are depicted, etc.

10. Other Information about the Swag (not previously mentioned):

e.g. gender-stereotypical t-shirts/toys, not enough women's cuts or sizes

11. Good Gender-Neutral Examples:

Note what's going right! Identify a balance of women and men in videos and among presenters; encouragement for candidates with different levels of experience; emphasizing a contextual, interdisciplinary approach (rather than a myopic obsession with computing); showing multiple images of success (not just geeky coder); no stereotypes in videos and speech; and focusing on the facts of the company.

12. Q&A Section:

Toward the end of the session, candidates typically ask presenters questions in a Q&A format. Who asks questions? Who answers? Do presenters take an aggressive tone or get into an intellectual competition with candidates?

How many women ask questions? _____ How many men? _____

How often do male vs. female presenters answer? _____

Is there any difference in how the presenters treat men and women candidates?

Who approaches presenters after the session ends? Who takes an application or hands in their resume at the end?

13. Anything else:

Take note of anything else in the session that strikes you as more focused on one gender than another, or that you find interesting for any reason.