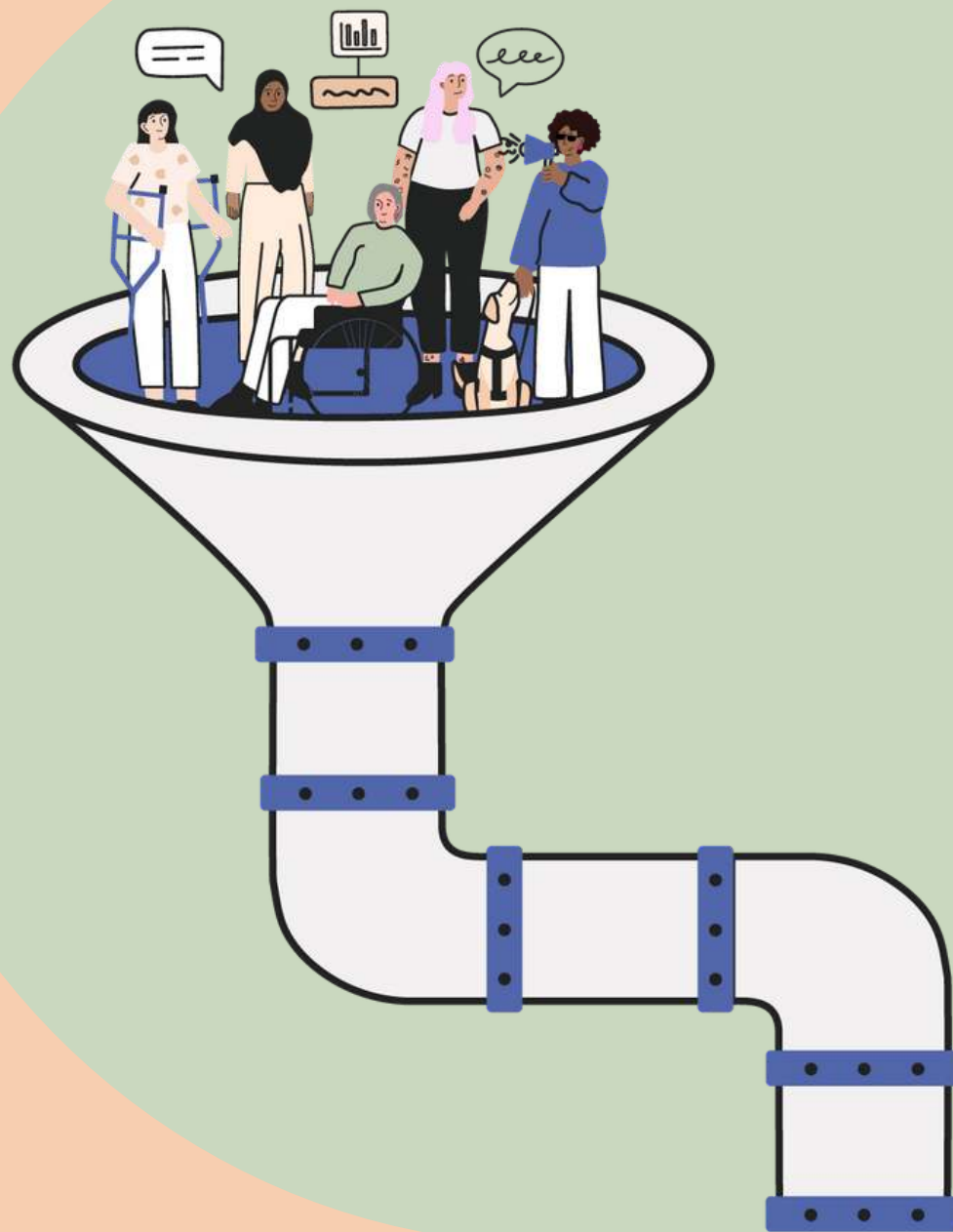


The Driving Workplace Equity Series

# Diversity Hiring Tactics That Trump the "Pipeline Problem"

Actionable data and insights from the experts, employers, and advocates raising the bar for all women in the workplace



## About the Series

WORK180's Driving Workplace Equity Series is designed to provide regular data and guidance to help organizations better understand, identify, and remove barriers for women and marginalized individuals in the workplace.

## About the data

Supported by external data, the reports present transparent findings from WORK180's platform, network of experts and employers, and — crucially — voices from a wide range of women\* in our community.

## About the author

WORK180 promotes organizational standards that raise the bar for women\* in the workplace. It does this by endorsing and supporting great workplaces for all women, and making it easy for women to find them.

*\*by women, we mean all who identify and/or experience oppression as a woman (including cis, trans, intersex, non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals).*

## It's all about enabling workplaces to do better, while empowering women to expect better



### Empower women to expect better

100% of women surveyed for the [WORK180 What Women Want Report 2021](#) stated that they consider gender equity a workplace priority.



### Enable workplaces to do better

According to [McKinsey & Co](#), companies with more women at the top outperform those with few or no women in their leadership teams.



### The world will be better, for everyone

McKinsey & Co also report that unleashing the full potential of all women who wish to work could add **11% (USD 12 trillion)** to our GDP by 2025.

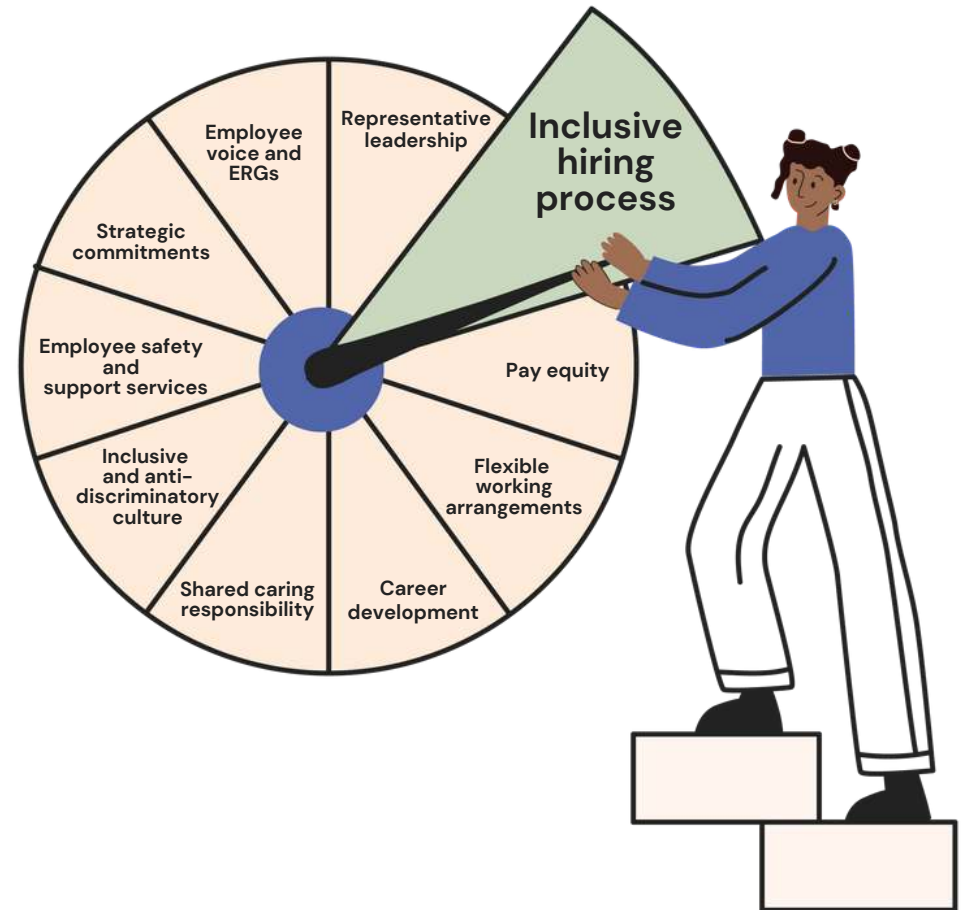
## Each monthly report focuses on one or more of WORK180's 10 key standards for driving workplace equity.

These standards are informed by diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) experts; our community of women and employers; and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, they provide a clear focus for any company committed to creating a workplace where all women can thrive.

For a clear understanding of how each of these standards helps drive equity in the workplace, please visit the [WORK180 website](#).

### This month's focus: Inclusive Hiring Processes

As explored in previous reports from the [Driving Workplace Equity Series](#), a diverse workplace cannot be achieved through hiring alone. However, it plays a crucial role; if employers want to build and benefit from a truly diverse workforce, they must create a fair and equitable hiring process. This means making sure their approach to both passive and active hiring attracts and supports women and candidates from marginalized groups.



## How are other companies attracting and hiring a diverse range of candidates despite the “pipeline problem”? The first step is to stop blaming the “pipeline problem”

In the world of hiring, “the pipeline problem” (or “talent pool problem”) refers to the underrepresentation of women and marginalized individuals in certain sectors and levels of leadership. This “problem” is often cited as the reason employers are not achieving diverse representation in certain areas of their business.

However, research from educational bodies around the world reveals that women and marginalized groups are gaining relevant qualifications at record rates; numbers are going up, yet workplaces are failing to translate these levels of representation into the workforce.

### The pipeline is growing, but workplace processes are leaky

The number of women in the UK studying to enter the tech industry has **increased by 57%** over the last decade.

**Yet,** the number of tech **roles filled by women has flatlined at 16%** since 2009.

**50% of science and engineering degrees** in the US are earned by women.

**Yet,** only **35% of the country’s** science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) employees are women.

**26% of women** who graduated in STEMM (medicine included) in Australia in 2011 had a STEMM role in 2016.

**Yet,** **47% of men** who graduated from STEMM in Australia in the same year had a STEMM role in 2016.



Yes, there's grassroots work to be done in the educational sector to remove the barriers blocking women and marginalized groups from entering certain spaces, but the candidates are out there. It's the employers who recognize this and are willing to put in the work to find, attract, and nurture these individuals that will come out on top.

**Gemma Lloyd**  
Co-Founder and CEO of WORK180



## Beware blaming the "pipeline problem"...



**Jennifer Kim**  
@jenistyping

Citing the "pipeline" for the lack of diversity in your org is a way of blaming candidates for a problem that falls under \*your\* responsibility.

You can solve for it. But you either don't know how, or are choosing not to.

Be honest about it and stop blaming candidates.

10:46 AM · Jul 1, 2020 · Twitter Web App



**Vicki Mealer-Barke**  
@vmealer

#ghc19 Anyone blaming the "pipeline" on the lack of diversity in tech is revealing their ignorance. @ghc #gracehoppercelebration #wewill #diversityintech #womenintech



2:34 AM · Oct 3, 2019 · Twitter for Android



**Elizabeth Luke** @ElizLuke · Jun 20, 2018

Wondering where the talented women of color in media, tech and advertising are? People seem to say there is a #PipelineProblem but that sounds like an excuse. #HereWeAre at Cannes with the queen of breaking barriers @kerywashington

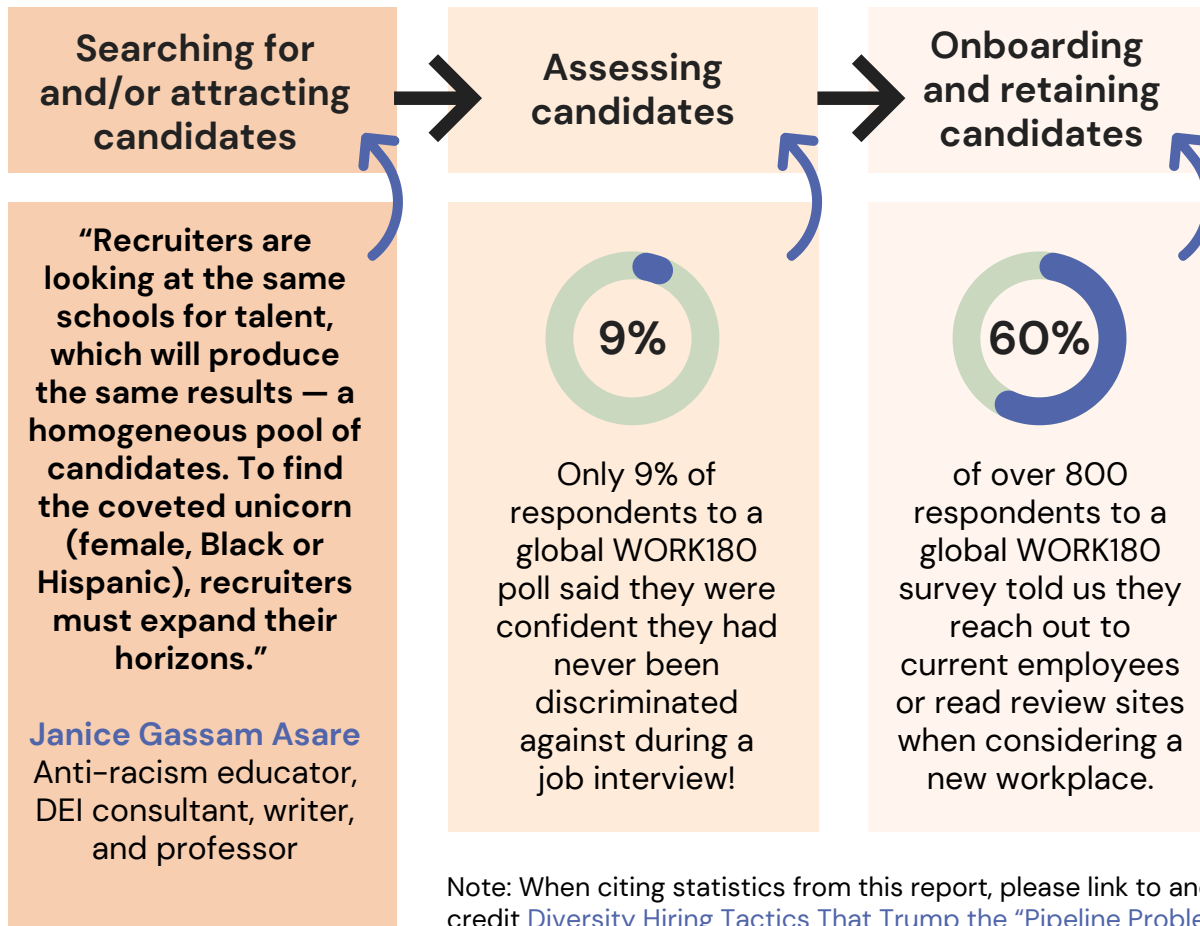


Berry Washington and 4 others



# The real problems can be found in hiring processes

An inclusive hiring process is one built to seek out and/or attract, encourage, and support the successful applications of women and marginalized groups. It plays a crucial role in an effective diversity strategy and, yet, so many well-intentioned companies continue to rely on recruitment processes riddled with biases, breakages, and leaks.



## Recognize these problems in your process?

Without a clear approach, even teams with the best intentions can lose gains in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) due to a leaky pipeline.

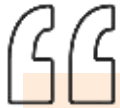
For example, 73% of respondents to a WORK180 poll of people in hiring positions told us they actively considered their unconscious bias\* impacting their hiring process. And yet, 69% of respondents said they had “definitely” been discriminated against in an interview. (22% responded that they were “not sure”.)

While there’s no one way to get it “right”, this report reveals expert recommendations and effective approaches that are working for other hiring teams around the world.

\*Unconscious biases are underlying attitudes and stereotypes about various social and identity groups stemming from the tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. These biases affect how people understand and engage with other people or groups.

To learn more or explore other important definitions in the DEI space, visit [WORK180's Diversity Dictionary](#).

## How to reach the right audience, in the right way



"Does it take more time to widen pipelines into communities that you potentially do not have connections to? Yes, because they're in communities that you do not have connections to... What we need people to do is not just think that by putting out a job description that it will reach all the different people you need it to reach. What we need people to do is actively reach out to the communities working to partner with organizations that help and hold the different talent you're trying to reach."

**Sheree Atcheson**  
WORK180 DEI Board  
Member in [an interview](#)  
with [Aerospace Xelerated](#)



Here's a handy hiring checklist to help you review your process for opportunities to reach and support applications from a wider range of candidates

### 1. Are you increasing your reach by searching in different spaces?



If you only advertise in spaces that certain candidates will access, you'll only get one type of candidate. By switching up the way you've always done things, you can connect with applicants who may not have seen your open job positions in the past.



"We have been working with a range of specialist recruitment organizations, including WORK180, who support talent attraction by proactively promoting opportunities at Telegraph Media Group (TMG)."

**Sarah Lambley (she/her)**  
Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging at  
[Telegraph Media Group](#)



## 2. Are you proactively removing barriers for women and marginalized groups?



Parenthood. Menopause. Domestic violence. These are just a few of the many issues disproportionately impacting the careers of women and marginalized groups. They're also issues that employers can help to tackle with return-to-work programs. Creating such dedicated pathways for people who have had extended career breaks is an increasingly popular and effective way for employers to diversify their hiring pool and have a genuinely positive impact.



**"After a three-year career break, I was anxious about returning to the banking sector. The Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) Returners Program was the first opportunity that acknowledged my anxieties and supported my journey back into doing something I loved."**

Visit the [WORK180](#) website to [read Jasmine's full story](#)



## 3. Are your referral programs proactively inclusive



A recent [report from PayScale](#) shows that job referrals can bring more engaged employees into your company. However, the report also revealed that they tend to benefit White men significantly more than women, especially Women of Color\*.

### Tactics to diversify your referral scheme:

- ✓ Actively request and reward the referral of candidates from underrepresented backgrounds
- ✓ Ask different parts of your company network for referrals (not just your employees)
- ✓ Ask for leads as opposed to referrals.



**"We found that people tend to refer job candidates who look like themselves, so we decided to ask people for loose connections and leads instead of referrals."**

### Candice Morgan

Head of Diversity at Pinterest talking in an interview for the Harvard Business Review

\*While other inclusive terminology is also available, this document has chosen to use the terms used by the referenced report. You can learn more about our terminology choices in the [WORK180 glossary](#).



#### 4. Is the language in your job ads gender-neutral?

Recruitment communications should be written without jargon, idioms, or gendered language that can make potential candidates feel excluded. For example, a study [published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology](#) revealed that women are less likely to apply to jobs that include "male-sounding words in the job description.

After implementing feedback from JobAd180 (a WORK180 tool that quickly identifies gendered language in job ads) employers have achieved an **80% increase in applications from women** for underrepresented roles.



#### 5. Are the requirements of the job putting people off?

"Every requirement line in your job description is another line of exclusion." This point from J.P. Gaston, co-founder, producer and host of The Biz Dojo podcast, is a great reminder for employers to resist the urge to add superficial skillsets to their job ads.

For example, is "English as a first language" essential or would fluency suffice? Does the role really require a university degree or a driving license? Here's a great example of an inclusive and effective job ad by one of our Endorsed Employers, [Whispir](#).

*Even if you don't meet these criteria perfectly but believe you have lots to bring to the role, we encourage you to apply. We know it's tough, but please try to avoid the confidence gap - you don't have to match all the listed requirements exactly to be considered for this role.*

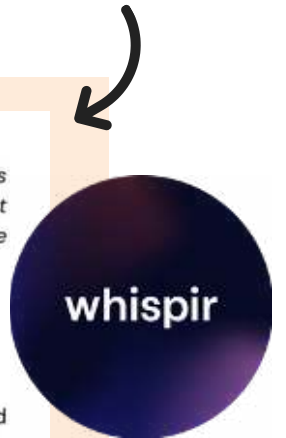
**You will need:**

- Good skills operating and administering Linux
- Some experience working with Cloud Services
- Troubleshooting skills, with a strong focus on root cause analysis and remediation

**You would ideally have:**

- Experience working with Amazon Web Services (e.g. EC2, EKS, RDS, Route 53, Lambda)

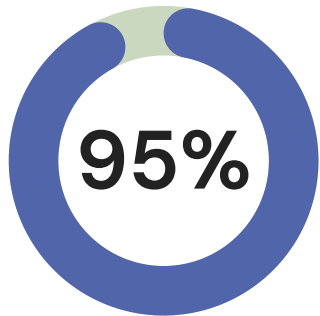
Taken from a job ad for a Junior DevOps Engineer at Whispir, a [WORK180 Endorsed Employer](#).



## 6. Are your benefits, policies, and programs proactively encouraging women and marginalized individuals to apply?



As explored in past reports such as [Flexible Working versus the Great Resignation](#) and [Six Pressing Reasons to Improve Your Parental Leave](#), certain policies are crucial to the advancement of women and marginalized groups. Making these benefits, policies, and perks transparent on your job ads will help you attract, nurture, and retain the candidates your company needs.



of women surveyed agree that flexible working practices are just as important as a competitive package

Note: When citing this statistic, please link to and credit [WORK180's What Women Want Report 2021](#)

## 7. Are your platforms accessible?



Job seekers with disabilities can experience a multitude of barriers when accessing career sites. For example, a poor screen contrast can make it difficult for people with color blindness or low-vision impairments to view or access your roles.

To find more examples of common difficulties job seekers with disabilities experience with careers sites read our guide: [Is your Hiring Process Inclusive? Are you sure?](#)



## 8. Are you proactively showing your commitment?



**14 seconds.** That's how long the average person takes to decide whether they want to apply for your role, according to [LinkedIn research](#). That's why leading employers take steps to communicate their commitment to inclusivity as soon as possible. This can be done through statements of inclusions on their job platforms, strategic commitments on the top of their advertisement, and trusted endorsements.



**“The transport industry recognizes that it needs more women in the business. It's great that we're endorsed by WORK180 because it shows that we are doing something about it.”**

**Anika Shenfield Assoc CIPD**  
Talent Manager at G&W UK  
(Freightliner and Pentalver)

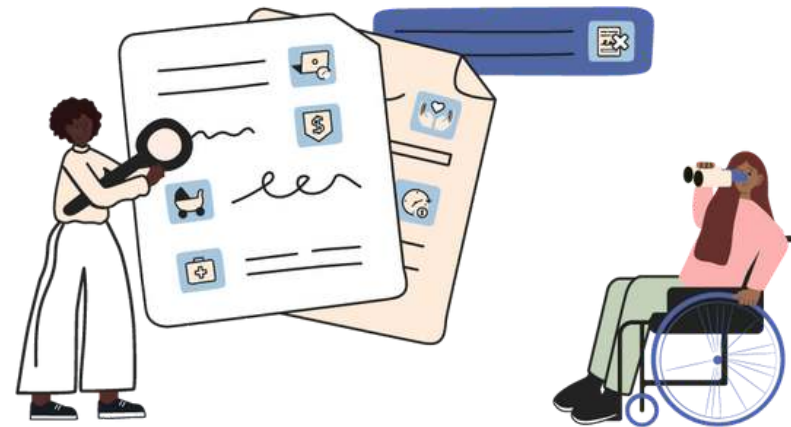


## 9. Are you ensuring people can see themselves in the position?



As discussed in a recent [WORK180 employer think tank](#), organizations have a responsibility to both raise awareness and change perceptions that may be putting women and marginalized individuals off applying for certain roles. Here are some tried and tested tactics from the event's attendees:

- ✓ Actively market and promote roles as gender-neutral, internally and externally.
- ✓ Provide career development opportunities. For example, one participant from the gaming industry shared that they have introduced free coding programs for women within their organization who may be interested in a career change.
- ✓ Ensure representation across all recruitment touch points. Specific examples discussed included ensuring diversity in the talent acquisition team itself, and being mindful of representation when attending career fairs.



## 10. Are current employees celebrating or berating your brand?

As stated earlier in this report, 60% of over 800 respondents to a WORK180 survey say they look to current employees for workplace recommendations — and social media and review sites are making this easier than ever. This means positive employee experience is as important a focus for hiring teams as it is for those responsible for retention.

### Here are some actions you can take:

- ✓ Ensure your approach to employee voice proactively raises the often overshadowed and unheard voices of women and marginalized groups.
- ✓ Openly acknowledge issues impacting your diversity efforts, and be transparent in your plans to address them.
- ✓ Identify advocates within your organization and work together to share their stories and show what's possible at your organization.



**“With WORK180, we’re able to change people’s perceptions of what’s possible for women in the financial service industry, and hopefully inspire other organizations to come along the way. For example, the stories shared by some of our employees prove that it’s possible to enjoy a successful career without being in the office 9–5.”**

**Kate Llewellyn**  
Inclusion Manager at Lloyds Banking Group

**8x**

**On average, the employers we work with have at least eight different strategies for increasing applications from women and other marginalized groups.**

Note: When citing statistics from this report, please link to and credit [Diversity Hiring Tactics That Trump the “Pipeline Problem”](#)

## What happens next?



**“[Employers need to regularly do a] serious analysis and interrogation of the hiring process. Because, again, it’s all well and good that people may get to the start of the pipeline, but are they getting through it? And if not, why not?”**

**Sheree Atcheson**  
WORK180 DEI Board Member  
in an interview with  
[Aerospace Xelerated](#)

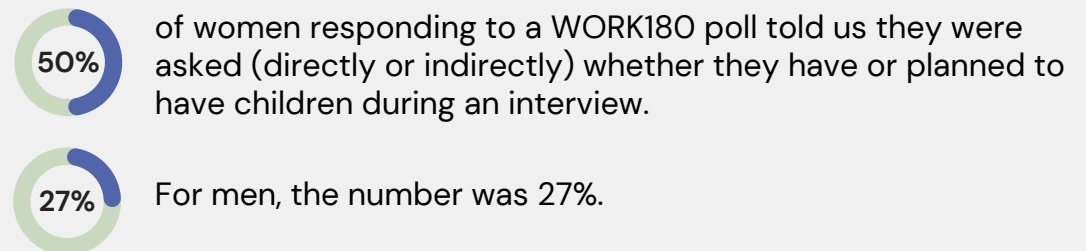


## Take a look at what your candidates could be encountering...

Three social media posts illustrating discriminatory interview questions:

- Post 1:** Natalie Gilmer, Senior HR Manager at Teach Meaner. "As a young graduate I had an interview with a large recruitment firm at the beginning of the interview I was told that "I was of a certain age, returning to Brisbane and I must be looking for my M.R.S. so I could settle down and have kids". At the time I was too young and naive to realise that this was inappropriate."
- Post 2:** Kelly Smith, Customer Operations Support Manager at Transpolar. "As a first-time mum returning from maternity leave, I was asked how I would manage having a role like this (the one I was applying for) and manage having a child. I politely withdrew my application."
- Post 3:** Lorraine Ryder, Business Development Manager at Citadel People. "The first interview question I was asked as a young professional was how I intended to succeed in a mans industry 🙄"
- Post 4:** William Russell. "Age. Every. Damned. Time."

### Discriminatory questions are still being asked:





## Increasingly popular tactics to minimize unconscious bias and create an inclusive hiring process:

- ✓ Anonymized applications
- ✓ Diverse interview panels
- ✓ Standardized interview format and scoring system
- ✓ Commitments on diverse shortlisting
- ✓ Scored skills-based assessment tasks
- ✓ Consistently assessing and reviewing the process
- ✓ Post-interview interviews with the panelists to ensure the interviewer's decision has not been negatively impacted by unconscious bias
- ✓ Inclusive hiring training for internal hiring teams
- ✓ Inclusive hiring training for external hiring teams, like [WORK180's Gender Equity Sourcing Accreditation Program](#)
- ✓ Introducing benefits and policies to support the fair treatment of candidates, such as gender-neutral parental leave



**“Removing bias from a hiring process isn’t a one-time activity. It’s a continuous process of reviewing your process, and the greatest insights come from those actually experiencing it. That’s why we created the WORK180 Feedback Loop, which provides employers with regular and raw insights straight from the mouths of their candidates.”**

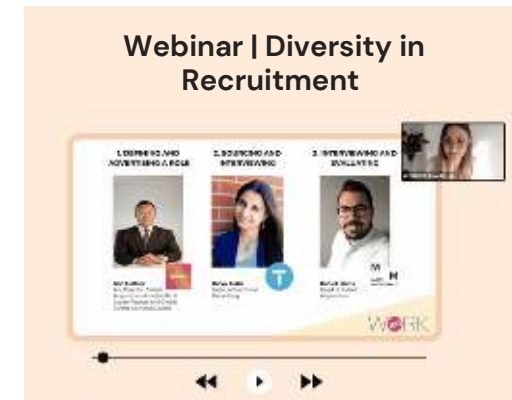
**Jane Cormack**  
Chief Product Officer  
at WORK180



To find out more about the WORK180 products and offerings mentioned in this report and more, book a call with our team today.

[Book a call](#)

# More reading and watching to help you get it “right”



More resources

And don't forget, employers can and must contribute to the creation of a diverse talent pool

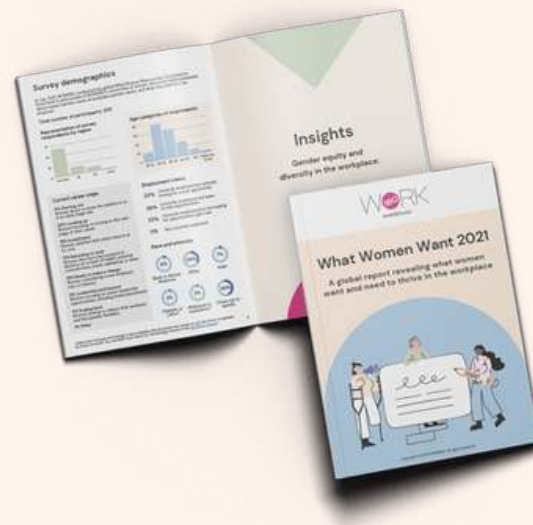
As explored in the report **Five Ways To Develop Diversity (Without Relying On Recruitment)**, companies have the power to create diverse talent pools within their very own organizations.



## You won't want to miss next month's report

Next month, we'll be releasing the latest WORK180 What Women Want Report.

Revealing the results of our 2022 global survey into the workplace wants and needs of women and marginalized groups, this annual report is a must-read for any employer.



## Never miss an update

To ensure you and your team are kept up-to-date with this topic and receive our next report straight in your inbox, sign up to our HR mailing list today.

[Join our HR mailing list](#)

Want to lend your voice as a woman in the workplace? Join our community to have your say, feel supported, and help create a working world where all women can thrive.

[Join our community mailing list](#)



Find out more by visiting the [WORK180 website](#).