

What is Inclusive Language?

Inclusive language aims to include as many people as possible by avoiding biases, slang or expressions that discriminate against any particular group of people.

Why is it Important?

The language used in job descriptions and policies is key to creating balance and avoiding the exclusion of groups of people. Adjusting the language used can help your organization attract and retain top talent while also foster the feeling of belonging within your organization.

Did you know?

Women are less likely to apply for jobs unless they meet 100% of the criteria, while men will throw their hat in the ring when they only have about 60% of the qualifications

General Tips:

- Avoid using industry specific jargon – some candidates may not apply to a job if they don't know a particular acronym or word and assume they are underqualified
- Break job descriptions up into “essential” and “desirable” requirements
- Avoid using he/she – try using “you” instead
- Limit the requirements in the job description – having a lot of skills listed may reduce the number of women applicants
- Mention or highlight your organization's diversity and inclusion policies in the job description
- Consider adding a sentence that states “even if you don't meet all the requirements but have similar combined education and experience, we still want to hear from you!”
- Highlight training opportunities provided by your organization

Words appealing to men: ambitious, determined, assertive, dominate the workplace, rockstar, ninja, aggressive, analytical thinking, confident

Words appealing women: empathy, active listening, support, understand, together, feel, connect, interpersonal, share, collaborate, committed, dependable, responsible, community

Inclusive words: adaptable, choose, collaborate, creative, curious, excellent, flexible schedule, multitasking, health, intuitive, resilient, self-aware, socially responsible, thoughtful, trustworthy, wellness program

Masculine Words	Neutral Language
Competitive	Attractive, fair, results-oriented, enthusiastic
Lead(er)	Manager, steer, grow, head
Decision(s)	Choices, conclusions, judgements, outcomes, steps, actions
Objectives	Priorities, targets, goals, aims, intentions, purposes
Expert	Professional, adept, skilled, trained, highly competent
Strong	Able, proven, exceptional, sound, excellent, solid
Analysis	Study, investigation, research, data, testing
Principles	Values, beliefs, rules, ideas, practices, ideals, standards
Active	Energetic, lively, dynamic, mobile
Ambitious	Aspiring, progressive, enthusiastic, energetic
Assertive	Positive, assured
Outspoken	Straightforward, open, honest
Superior	Exceptional, outstanding, excellent, superb

Sample job titles with “man” in the name:

- Businessman → Businessperson
- Chairman → Chair, Chairperson
- Craftsman → Artisan
- Foreman → Supervisor, Boss
- Salesman → Salesperson