



# Recruitment strategies for SMEs

Diversity makes businesses more productive, creative and profitable, and often better at understanding a wider range of clients and customers.

## How can your business benefit from diversity?

To achieve diversity, businesses need to have fair recruitment processes, free from bias and discrimination to attract and hire the best staff.

There may also be other benefits of employing greater numbers of women specific to your industry. For example, the mining industry has noted that having more women on staff is associated with safer worksites.

## How to attract and retain women in your business

- If there are beliefs about what women can and cannot do in your industry or your workplace, challenge them.
- If the image your business presents is particularly “blokey” or masculine, make it more inclusive. See [Test the Messages You Project](#).
- If there are operational issues that might prevent women from applying, including long hours, no flexibility, remote locations, lack of facilities for women, think about how these could be adjusted.
- If you find that you are only hiring people who look, think, or act the same, bias might be affecting your recruitment process. Find out more about bias and how to avoid it in [The Merit Trap](#).





## Job advertisements that encourage female applicants

- Use diverse images, voices and gender-neutral language, and consider having your ads reviewed by professional agencies.
- Where possible, have a female contact person for the job
- Provide information on career opportunities if applicable, and use profiles of women in your organisation or industry
- Encourage women to apply for non-traditional or operational roles
- Think about the flexibility of your work environment and mention any flexible work practices or carer supports your business provides

## Ensuring recruitment is free from discrimination

- Make sure your recruitment team includes men and women trained in recognising stereotypes and bias. [Find out more about unconscious bias.](#)
- Ask recruitment consultants to ensure they consider a balance of men and women for jobs.
- Make sure the selection criteria, the essential skills and experience match what the job needs.
- Broaden the skills and experience required for the job to include transferrable skills and not just specific experiences.
- Standardise your recruitment process and have structured interview questions. Decide how important the selection criteria are before assessing applicants.
- Check that bias is not influencing negative judgements of female applicants, e.g. check if a man answering a question in the same way would get the same reaction.
- Look at the amount of men and women applying and the amount you invite to interviews. Think about having a required percentage of female candidates.
- Ask applicants for feedback on your recruitment process, and provide feedback to candidates who request it.

## Case Study: SA Freight Council

The SA Freight Council knows that it is hard to get women to apply for jobs in a male-dominated industry like transport & logistics. They developed a [guide to support businesses with gender equality](#), which included case studies of women with successful careers in transport & logistics. The case studies described the women's careers, which started in operational jobs on the wharf, and in road transport and airfreight, and progressed to corporate, executive and management jobs.

## Links

Chiefs for Gender Equity, Beyond First Impressions: Reducing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace  
[eoc.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Beyond%20First%20Impressions%20-%20Reducing%20unconscious%20bias%20in%20the%20workplace\\_0.pdf](http://eoc.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Beyond%20First%20Impressions%20-%20Reducing%20unconscious%20bias%20in%20the%20workplace_0.pdf)

Male Champions of Change, Building a Gender-Balanced and Inclusive Presence  
[malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Test-the-Messages-You-Project.pdf](http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Test-the-Messages-You-Project.pdf)

Male Champions of Change, In the Eye of the Beholder: Avoiding the Merit Trap  
[malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MCC-CEW-Merit-Paper-FINAL.pdf](http://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MCC-CEW-Merit-Paper-FINAL.pdf)

SA Freight Council, Gender & Equality in Transport and Logistics: Best Practice Principles  
[safreightcouncil.com.au/userfiles/SAFC%20Reports/Gender%20and%20Equality%20in%20Transport%20and%20Logistics.pdf](http://safreightcouncil.com.au/userfiles/SAFC%20Reports/Gender%20and%20Equality%20in%20Transport%20and%20Logistics.pdf)