



orbis

FINDING

FEMALE

TALENT

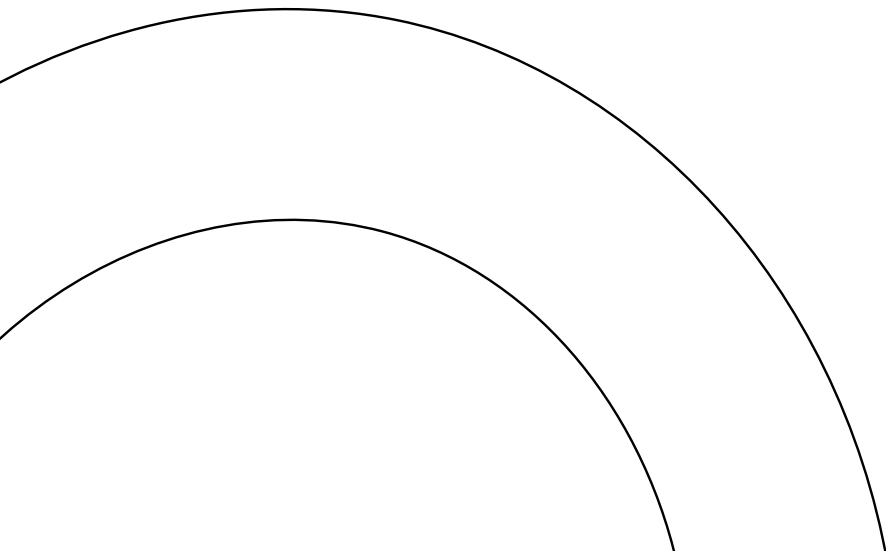
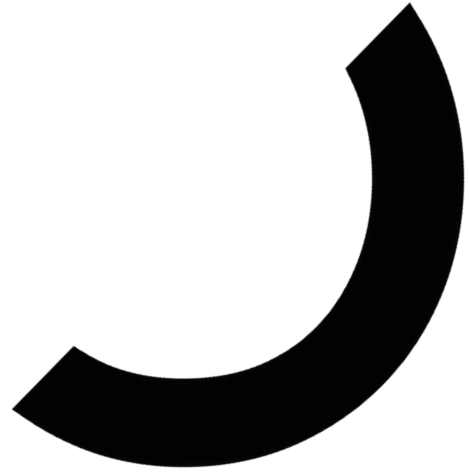
THE ORBIS WAY

WHY DIVERSIFY?

We now have empirical evidence that diverse teams work better. It's not just HR that earns dividends from taking diversity and inclusion seriously; hiring a broad variety of talent is a smart business decision.

A [range of studies](#) by McKinsey consistently found that diverse companies are more profitable and better performing than their competitors. The difference was profound when comparing ethnic diversity, but highly significant for gender too.

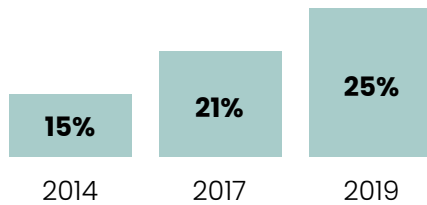
Female talent makes up just over half of the UK workforce, but their representation in 'STEM' careers, while slowly increasing, is predicted to reach [less than 29% by 2030](#). If diverse teams do better, finding female talent should be everyone's priority.



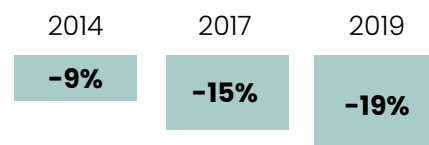
THE RESEARCH

Diverse teams outperform non-diverse teams, and the difference is becoming more extreme for both groups.

Likelihood of the most gender-diverse businesses to overperform:



Likelihood for the least gender-diverse businesses to overperform:



The process that leads diverse teams to perform better has been evaluated by researchers at the NeuroLeadership Institute. The workflow that leads diverse teams to success looks something like this:

1. They collectively recall more information.
2. They evaluate that information more accurately.
3. They use their evaluations more creatively.

[Source](#)

THE PROBLEM

Despite a widespread understanding that diversity is ideal, McKinsey's latest study shows we're making limited progress. It's difficult. Businesses across the board are struggling to find female talent, but the issue is particularly severe in industries like technology, finance and IT.

To intensify the issue, organisations with over 250 employees are now legally obligated to report Gender Pay Gap information. The pressure on businesses to diversify is now a matter of compliance as well as economical decision-making.

The female talent simply isn't there

The most common obstacle we hear from businesses trying to balance their gender ratios is the lack of diverse talent itself. Male-dominated industries may be offputting to women. STEM subjects still attract more males than females.

Taking traditional childcare responsibilities into account, as well as other barriers to female technology career uptake, it's difficult to find women with the already rare skillsets needed to fill these roles.

You aren't sure what to look for

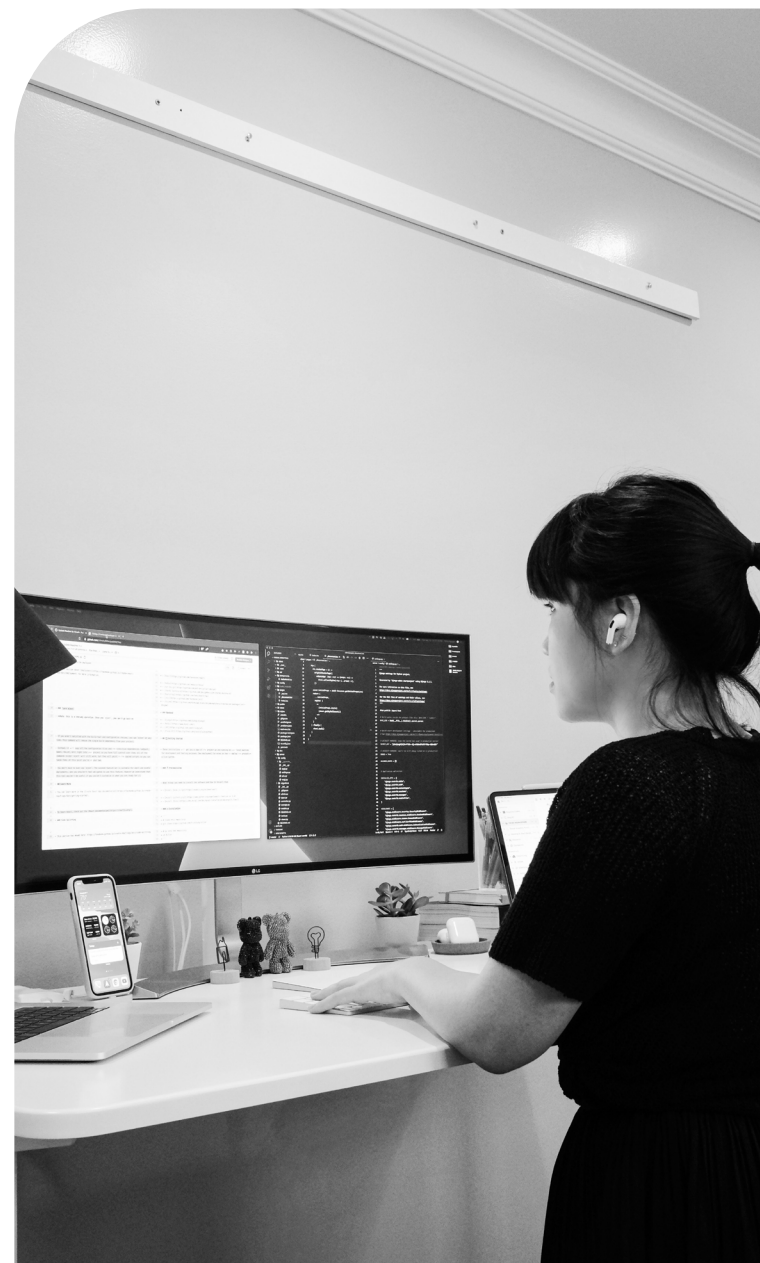
Companies that stick with one recruitment strategy will continue to find the same talent. In this sense, it's hard for non-diverse teams to identify what exactly needs changing to attract and retain different candidates.

Diverse teams are better at hiring diverse team members. It's a vicious cycle.

Pressure from HR and D&I teams is off-putting

Pressure from teams handing out diversity and inclusion targets is often counterproductive. Business leaders who identify where they could improve don't need to be shamed for it. Asking for help from specialists sometimes feels like an overwhelming admittance of failure, but it isn't.

Actionable solutions are needed to assist businesses in finding the right talent.



THE SOLUTION

An effective strategy for diverse recruitment is complex and must be handled sensitively. Studies show that insincere diversity is more damaging than non-diversity itself, so tackling the issue creatively is key.

Building diverse teams involves playing a subtle balancing game and thinking outside the box.

The Orbis Way

Orbis has built scalable pipelines of female talent and undergone extensive research and market mapping to solve the problem.

Our bespoke search methodology includes:

Purpose-built and tested search strings

Our search strings are specially refined to include diverse candidates, even among traditional talent pools. We've tested and adjusted these to identify what works best among each group.

Unique candidate grading system

We use a distinctive grading system that ensures complete fairness while also allowing us to identify the talent our clients need most.

Creative search locations

We've built methodologies that find unique candidates where traditional strategies can't. Our consultants conduct and build on extensive research into the backgrounds of ideal candidates.

A community approach

A large portion of our roles are filled using industry recommendations and personal relationships with candidates. Examples include Orbis' Women in Tech events and Orbis-produced podcasts.

Discreet, confidential management

Some organisations we work with have little or no diversity in their teams. We create a sense of ease by handling the subject sensitively and confidentially. Our consultants are realistic in the fact that, sometimes you do need to tick some boxes.

Specialist diversity and inclusion training

Our consultants know how to communicate with hiring managers and candidates to ensure a cultural fit between both parties. This includes sensitively evaluating disparity between an organisation's current and ideal culture.



WHERE TO START?

Recruitment Methodologies

Creative search methodologies are the key to finding diverse talent. Your methodology should be targeted to identify women in areas that aren't traditionally used for candidate sourcing.

Orbis can help identify spaces you may be able to reach more female talent.

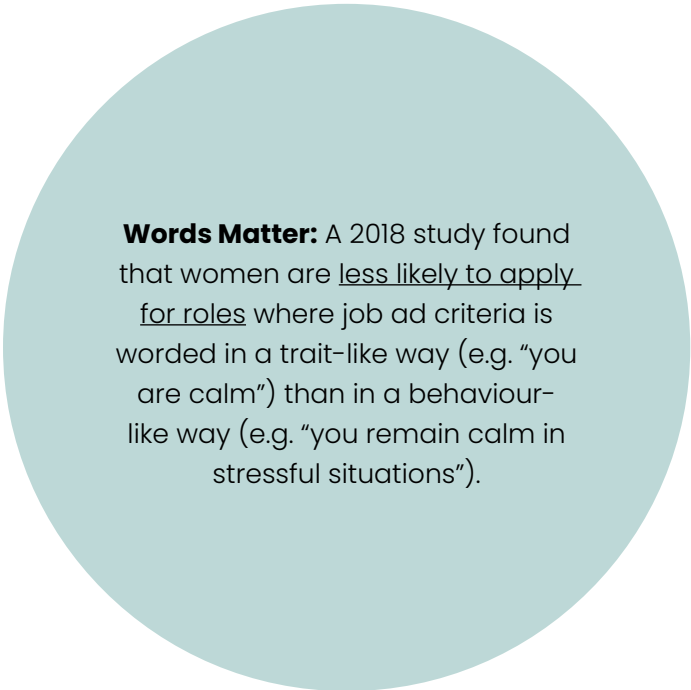
Search Criteria

Consider loosening certain background criteria in favour of the qualities that make diverse teams more successful. While a mother may have had to study part-time, excluding her from many prestigious educational institutions, she will have gained invaluable transferable and technical skills.

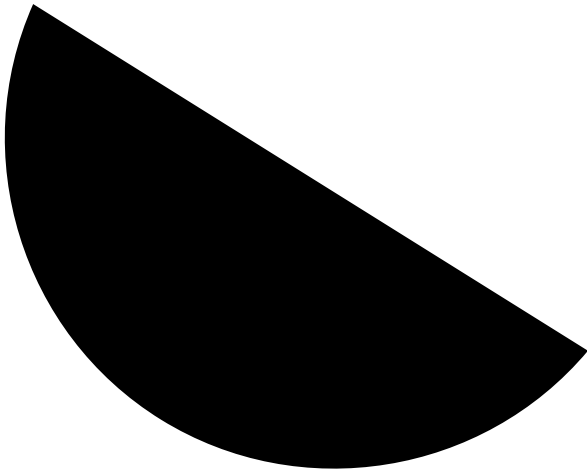
We recommend encouraging stakeholders to regard the differences as complementary, rather than thinking of them as a one-way compromise.

Job Ads

Job ads should always use inclusive language, but what does that mean? Gender-neutral wording that focuses on skills and job titles is ideal. It might also help to include a statement about your diversity commitment in the copy of the ad.



Words Matter: A 2018 study found that women are less likely to apply for roles where job ad criteria is worded in a trait-like way (e.g. "you are calm") than in a behaviour-like way (e.g. "you remain calm in stressful situations").



The same goes for your branding. If your website shows an all-white, all-male team, women may be put off from applying. While you should avoid tokenism, it helps to showcase variety among your team's background where you can.

Interview Process

Hosting some or all of the interview process online makes tech roles more accessible to women. As they remain the primary caregivers, family and other commitments make it difficult for female talent to access traditional interviews.

Where possible, include female senior management on the interview board. Having female representation on the board helps make your business seem more attractive, and it reduces the chance of a fair, well-rounded interview.

Policy Updates

If your company policies don't reflect your move towards diversity, your company is unlikely to attract diverse talent. Provide benefits that make your business accessible to everyone. Mentorship programmes, maternity packages, flexible working arrangements and clear policies around salary review are attractive to many women in tech.

Avoid Reactive Recruitment

Hiring female talent as and when roles are created leads to slow and challenging outcomes. Orbis takes a proactive approach that is effective before your requirements become urgent.

Inclusive Interview Checklist:

- Is your interview accessible to all candidates?
- Is your panel as diverse as possible?
- Have you created a welcoming atmosphere?
- Are your interview questions structured and behavioural-based?
- Are you using inclusive language?
- Have you checked for leading questions?
- Have all interviewers had unconscious bias training?
- Are people from a range of backgrounds represented in the talent pool?
- Are all candidates being assessed

Inclusive Language Throughout:

A study published by Management Science found that women are less likely to ask for a raise when it's not explicitly stated that salaries are negotiable. This highlights the importance of using inclusive language throughout your business - from marketing right down to company policies.

Unconscious Bias Training

Even with the best intentions, we all have unconscious biases. It's human. Unconscious biases don't belong in the recruitment process, and specialised training can help counteract them.

Examples of Unconscious Bias Training:

Implicit Bias Training

This type of training focuses on raising awareness about unconscious biases many of us hold. These include gender biases, which are most likely to jeopardise your diverse recruitment strategy. It helps us understand the impact of bias in recruitment and how to actively counteract them.

Stereotype Threat Training

Stereotype threat causes individuals to feel at risk of conforming to negative stereotypes about their social group. Training on stereotype threat can help us understand how it affects candidates and provide strategies to mitigate its impact. It's useful for helping organisations create a supportive environment that allows female candidates showcase their abilities during the recruitment process.

Inclusive Language Training

Language plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions and biases. Inclusive language training helps us understand how certain words or phrases can inadvertently perpetuate gender biases. This training helps businesses promote the use of inclusive language. Like in your job ads, it's useful to avoid gender-specific terms in the workplace.



Unconscious Bias Mitigation

This training deep dives into the cognitive processes behind biases and provides techniques to mitigate their effects. It teaches us to recognise bias triggers, challenge their assumptions and make fairer, more objective decisions. It's particularly useful for helping organisations create an inclusive selection process for female candidates.

Diversity and Inclusion Training

A great diversity training program focuses on creating an inclusive workplace culture. It educates us about the benefits of diversity and challenges unconscious biases. It also teaches businesses to strategically foster an inclusive environment. Creating a culture that values diversity will attract and retain more female talent.

Structured Interview Training

This training emphasises the importance of using structured interview techniques to minimise bias during interviews and subsequent evaluations. It provides guidelines for developing standardised interview questions and evaluation criteria, to ensure all candidates are assessed fairly. Implement structured interviews and follow our Inclusive Interview Checklist to reduce the impact of unconscious biases on your ability to find female talent.

STAFFING DATA AND DIVERSITY

Measure staffing data to get an overview of your current gender balance. Taking time to understand your diversity position will help you create a strategy for improvement.

We recommend tracking the following metrics:

Number of women on the board

Fair and equal pay to female peers across seniority levels

Number of female managers and junior leaders

The attrition rate of females

Processes that allow staff members to disclose their gender and pronouns

How these numbers are spread across departments

Male/Female ratio

Female representation amongst technical teams

Staff benefits that are inclusive of women

Leadership training on unconscious bias and other sessions focused on diversity and inclusion

Salary structure transparency and data to deny or justify gender pay gaps

Business support for female employees

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WHO'S DONE IT WELL?

These case studies have worked with Orbis to successfully hire more female talent.

Investment Management Leader

A leading global investment management company approached Orbis to find the top 20 female, executive-level software engineers in London. They also wanted to speak to the top 10 candidates of the same criteria for the Boston area.

The organisation had no open roles but were aiming to open conversations with top talent with a view to hiring at their most senior levels over the coming years.

Outcome

Orbis found exceptional female talent that surpassed the search criteria. The talent was so strong that the hiring of numerous candidates was brought forward to the time of the search.

The organisation has since received worldwide appraisal for its diversity advancement and set a previously unseen precedent for the industry.

Financial Information Leader

The world's largest business, finance and technology news provider engaged Orbis as their exclusive supplier of diverse software engineers in the US. They had over 800 open roles and were looking to diversify.

These roles were already notoriously challenging to recruit for as the candidates are highly sought after, so the additional diversity requirement presented a unique challenge.

Outcome

Orbis sent 3-5 candidates per week and facilitated a steady hiring stream within the requested time frame.



ORBIS-IDENTIFIED FEMALE TECH TALENT

Candidate #1



Role

Software Engineer

Previous Companies

Twitter, Amazon & Microsoft

Educational Background:

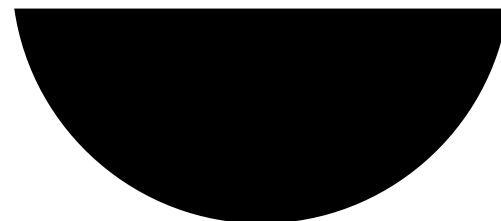
1st Class BSc in Computer Science,
University of Birmingham

Technical Skills

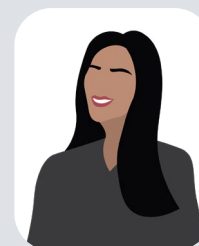
Scala, Rust, Typescript, JavaScript, C#,
C++, SQL, Thrift, RPC, REST, Node.js, .NET,
PostgreSQL, AWS, CI/CD, Jenkins, Kafka,
Cassandra, ElasticSearch

Transferable Skills

Leadership, mentorship, public
speaking, training programme creation,
hiring and acquisition



Candidate #2



Role

Software Engineer

Previous Companies

Ocado, Privitar

Educational Background:

Upper Second Class MEng in
Computing, Imperial College London

Technical Skills

Java, Python, C/C++, Elixir, Git, Docker,
PostgreSQL/ Oracle/MySQL, Hibernate,
Spring, Neo4j, MongoDB, Elasticsearch,
Django, Bash, terminal, gRPC

Transferable Skills

Agile working, project management,
leadership, data analysis

*These profiles are random and anonymous examples of female talent in our database.

OUR FEEDBACK

"Aaron was a fantastic recruiter and helped me to secure my current role. Aaron presented me with a role that was really appealing and perfect for the next step in my career. From the first phone conversation, and throughout, Aaron endeavoured to answer all my questions and ensured everything ran smoothly with each successive stage of the interview process, through to an offer. He's an absolute superstar and has matched my current skills, interests and cultural specifications perfectly. I would highly recommend Aaron for anyone looking for their next role!"

- Engineering Manager at Privitar

"Matt is a breath of fresh air in the job market space. From his initial outreach to interview process and final offer round, he took well care of my journey. His professionalism and personalized attention speaks to his ethics and shines a bright light in what could otherwise be a grueling process. I highly recommend working with Matt - he will tailor to your needs. It's wonderful to be guided by someone who cares about your success."

- Senior Software Engineer at Bloomberg LP

"I had the best experience working with Cameron to secure my new job. He is very positive, genuine and very well prepared. I felt he put in extra effort to prepare me for the interviews and communicated my needs to the employer. Some highlights that helped me the most as a candidate:

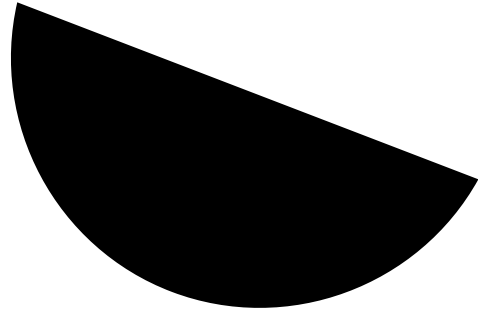
- Asked me to prepare insightful questions about the role and the company and held me accountable for it.
- Provided feedback on my questions
- Shared some key points on what to focus on each interview
- Got very fast feedback from the employer for both interview rounds

I'd love to work with him in the future."

- Head of Networks at Aviva

"Matt was the best recruiter I've ever worked with! He provided awesome information to help me prep for the various phases and the interview process. He also continued to stay in touch each step of the process and kept me informed with what he knew. Matt seemed to care whether I actually got the position and was very involved with helping make that a reality. I sincerely appreciate Matt's involvement in my job search!"

- Software Developer at Cityblock Health



CONTACT ORBIS TO SUPPORT YOUR SEARCH FOR FEMALE TECHNOLOGY TALENT

Our recruiters are specially trained to find top technology talent. This includes diversifying teams while maintaining the confidential quality our clients appreciate. Get in touch to discuss your recruitment goals.



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CONNECTING EXCELLENCE

