



Communicating with talent: It's not all in the job advert

It is widely accepted that a company's recruitment practices play an integral role in successfully achieving a diverse business.

Creating broader talent pool access, a wider range of skills within your workforce, a team more representative of customer bases and greater cultural awareness are all benefits of having an inclusive recruitment process.

Reviewing job adverts for language that creates bias has become popular, but it is really the tip of the iceberg when it comes to fully promoting diversity and inclusion in recruitment.

So Energy understands that a gender-neutral advert is only one piece of the puzzle. If the rest of the recruitment process doesn't reflect the gender-neutral advert, then this single element of a multi-staged process could lead to a higher number of female than male candidates dropping out.

Having already introduced improvements on latter parts of the recruitment process by providing bias and interview training for all hiring managers, and better balanced, more representative panels for interview boards, So Energy focussed its attention on addressing the issue highlighted in its data (see below) – that revealed that not enough applications were being received from female candidates at the early stage of the recruitment process.

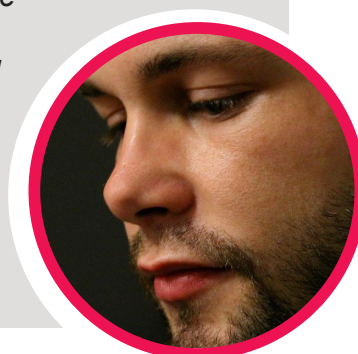
What did So Energy do about it?

The answer... communicate better

Working collaboratively alongside all functions across the business and leveraging the use of witty.works.com – a digital writing tool for inclusive language – So Energy reviewed all of its job adverts for gender bias language. Other communications were also evaluated, including templated emails, interview invitations, website pages and candidate documentation that is sent as part of the process, such as presentation briefings and pre-interview information packs.

"These interventions will have a positive impact on supporting our ambition to create the most diverse candidate pool possible that remain in our business and enjoy many career defining moments in the years to come."

Jason Tunney
Talent and Inclusion Lead



58%

More than
half of job offers were
made to women during
3-month period,
up from 34%

As the data predicted, inconsistencies existed in how gender neutral the language being used was through the various communications.

So Energy's Talent Team set to work! They **produced all new communications, running them through a gender decoder** to ensure there was consistency and replacing any communication that didn't meet the requirement of having a gender-neutral score. Most notably, care was taken to make as few other changes to the process as possible to ensure the results reflected only the improvements made to communications and no other confounding variables. The Team wanted to simply understand from this piece of work what impact improving communications could do to the organisation's application process metrics.

What were the results?

Since reviewing and improving its candidate communications with more gender-neutral versions, So Energy has seen a significant increase in the number of female candidates initially applying and then successfully moving through each stage of the interview process.

Additionally, the data continues to show that women are more successful at the final interview stage, with a higher proportion on them gaining an offer of employment over their male counterparts. As a result of these changes, So Energy has hired more female than male applicants over the three month observation period.

What 's next?

With the bulk of the company's hiring taking place in the early careers space and the diversity of its middle management being an area of focus in 2023, So Energy is rolling out a similar exercise on all its internal hiring communications with the hope of seeing an equally positive result. The scope of this exercise will also be expanded to look at other areas of diversity, starting with ethnicity, to see how communications perform.

PRE COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE				
Applications	First round interviews	Final Interviews	Offers	
63%	65%	75%	66%	Male
37%	35%	25%	34%	Female

**Jan 2022 to Jun 2022*

POST COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE				
Applications	First round interviews	Final Interviews	Offers	
54%	52%	43%	42%	Male
46%	48%	57%	58%	Female

**Jul 2022 to Sep 2022*