



Women: **The Future of Tech**

5 Strategies to Hire
More Women You Can
Adopt Immediately

#FINDYOURFORWARD

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Introduction

Women's participation in the labor force hit a 33-year low of 57 percent in January 2021. Due to the pandemic, many lost their jobs or were forced to leave to tend to children who could no longer attend school, among other reasons. And unfortunately, 40 percent of the 12.5 million women-held roles that were lost between February and April 2020 were still vacant as of February 2021.

However, things are on the upswing, especially for women in the tech industry. **Nearly two out of three women want to reenter the workforce and of this cohort, 8 out of 10 would like to work in a STEM role.** Women also currently account for a quarter of software positions. That metric has remained largely unchanged since 2016, but even still, it's clear that in this post-remote work talent market, women have an interest in not only working in tech but securing roles that have been historically filled by men.

Thankfully, companies in the industry have been meeting *some* of this demand in hiring more women. **For example women and non-binary professionals were hired at 80 percent of companies in 2021.** Additionally, women and individuals that identify as non-binary made up less than 40 percent of the workforce at 53 percent of companies in 2020, and this metric improved 14 percent the following year. There is still a vast amount of work to do to further diversify the industry, but progress is being made.

Tech companies have a huge incentive to hire more women today, specifically those interested in STEM. Many businesses are scrambling to both diversify their teams and fill highly sought-after technical roles — hiring more women can be a major part of solving both challenges.

And in this guide, we hope to aid recruiters and hiring teams in their quest to secure this double-sided win. We outline five major candidate-facing strategies that tech companies and recruitment teams can implement right away to boost their chances of getting more women and non-binary talent in the door.

About This Guide

This guide is meant to arm HR professionals and hiring stakeholders across any team of a business with knowledge and strategies they can immediately implement to appeal to more women and non-binary professionals.

We built the following insights using proprietary data sourced from candidates and employers across the country in combination with third party research. Once adopted, the approaches here are meant to be almost immediately visible to candidates during the job search. These tactics should also be reinforced by hiring stakeholders throughout the interview process.

More than ever, candidates approach their job search with an interviewer's mindset: they want to assess how a company will fit into their life and mesh with their values, just as an employer will determine a candidate's viability within the business. The tactics in this guide are meant give employers an immediate edge during their role as "interviewee" as they seek to hire more women and non-binary talent.



STRATEGY 1:

Equal Pay for Equal Work

98 percent of women and non-binary employees in tech say wage transparency and equitable pay are at least somewhat important to them in their job search.

Just over 2 out of 3 (68 percent) of these professionals prioritize wage transparency and equitable pay above all else in their search, and for good reason.

Even when a woman has the exact same qualifications, title and responsibilities as a man, they're paid \$0.02 cents (2 percent) less for no tangible reason. This gap has slowly been shrinking over time but at a snail's pace: it's closed by a whopping \$0.01 since 2015.

This issue may be linked to the fact an average of 40 percent women and non-binary professionals in tech don't feel like they have transparency around what it takes to secure better pay or roles at their employer. Similarly, they also don't feel like they have as many opportunities to advance in their career as men.

Equal pay for equal work is a key concern for women job seekers today. Before they join a business, most want to know that they'll be paid and presented with career growth opportunities at an equitable rate to men in the organization; so employers need to prove to these candidates that they will be.

“Create a meritocratic environment by providing transparency in how everyone is reviewed and build options for flexibility for everyone,” said Betsy Ziegler, CEO at 1871.

SECTION 1

There are a number of ways employers can make women and non-binary talent aware of their commitments to wage transparency and equitable pay during both the job search and the interview stages.



Put salary ranges in job postings.

Then train hiring stakeholders to be transparent about pay during interviews with candidates. Buffer is one company doing pay transparency well: they highlight salaries of many employees at the company; share a pledge to salary transparency; and offer a dedicated salary formula candidates can use to determine their pay based on their title and location.



Build a pledge for equal pay for equal work into job postings.

Add this pledge to the “About us” section of your job descriptions. If your business has a DEI manifesto that includes language around equitable pay, add that to the posting.



Perform a pay equity analysis and share the results.

Add a link to any published results within job descriptions, or encourage interviewers to share results with talent in the pipeline so candidates can assess the results.



Make it clear that there is room for growth.

Ensure that job descriptions and interviewers are armed with details that highlight what success in the role looks like and how an employee can advance to the next run in the ladder.



“

Men have to demand that their wives, daughters, mothers and sisters earn more — commensurate with their qualifications and not their gender. Equality will be achieved when men and women are granted equal pay and equal respect.”

— **BEYONCÉ KNOWLES-CARTER**
MUSICIAN AND ACTIVIST



STRATEGY 2: Perks That Matter Most

Perks and benefits have changed significantly in recent years. For example, remote work has gone from a nice-to-have perk that businesses offered incrementally to a way of life for employers and professionals alike, especially women.

81 percent of women and non-binary employees say flexible work is very important to them. So companies that do not invest in adequate flexible work options, then promote those investments, lose out on opportunities to hire more women and non-binary talent.

Parental leave is another perk that has taken on increased precedence in recent years across the workforce. It was one of the most popular perks women searched for across our eight market sites between February 2021 and 2022. This makes sense considering an average of only 20 percent of professionals in the private sector across all genders had access to paid parental leave since 2019. And since women's participation in the workforce is at a historic low due to the effects of the pandemic, this means fewer women than ever actually have access to paid parental leave.

Built In's Talent Acquisition Manager Alexa Murtagh recommends that companies implement or evolve a parental leave policy to attract and retain talent. Part of this evolution could mean not only building a robust, months-long leave program, but also requiring men to take paternity leave so women do not feel like an exception when they do. When men take parental leave, it normalizes taking time away and can encourage others across the company and gender lines — but especially women — to do the same without fear of being chastised.

SECTION 2

“I’m surprised often to find that companies that are very progressive in a lot of other ways still have really outdated policies with regard to supporting all parents in taking leave,” said Joelle Emerson, co-founder and CEO of Paradigm, in a Washington Post story.

Professional development perks are also another major area companies need to invest in if they want to hire more tech-driven women. As noted, about 80 percent of women want to work in STEM. However, 1 in 3 say they don’t know where to start. Additionally, only 19 percent of STEM graduates are women. This means that many women who have already or are planning to enter the field will come from a non-traditional STEM background. They will need to upskill their way to their ideal role and that’s not always easy to do without support.

Companies would be wise to implement initiatives like: tuition reimbursement, learning stipends, mentorship programs, conference attendance, lunch and learns, bootcamps and other professional development perks. These investments will allow women to earn the necessary experience they need to secure the STEM roles they want, all while they continue to work and contribute to the business.

Women and Non-Binary Employees That Say Flexible Work Options Are Very Important To Them



81%

These are the top seven perks and benefits women searched for across our eight market sites in no specific order:



Flexible work



Child care



Parental leave



Unlimited PTO



Generous parental leave



Relocation assistance



Tuition Reimbursement



“

With so many women considering a STEM career and 1 in 3 saying they don't know where to start, employers have both a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to help them forge a path forward.”

— **SUSAN PODLOGAR**

EXECUTIVE VP AND CHIEF HR OFFICER AT METLIFE



SECTION 3

STRATEGY 3: Writing More Inclusive Job Descriptions







An effective job description can lead to a new hire joining your business. A poorly written description can prompt a candidate to skip any further interaction with the organization.

Even the job requirements section, a place many might think is a fairly objective portion of a posting, can be rife with subtle points of exclusion. For example, men often apply to jobs if they meet at least 60 percent of the criteria while women apply only when they meet 100 percent of the requirements. Overall, job postings should be void of biases, unnecessary requirements and language that favors men over women.



SECTION 3

Check out these tips on how you can evolve and enhance your job descriptions to appeal to more women and non-binary talent:

-  **Avoid gender-specific pronouns.** Use them/they/you rather than he/she.
-  **Keep role requirements short, simple and inclusive.** Weed out unnecessary requirements and qualifications to field more applications. Experience is subjective and hard to quantify, so think about reassessing whether there are alternate ways to express that idea. Outline where transferable skills are acceptable and clearly denote skills that are needs versus nice-to-haves.
-  **Avoid words and phrases that may imply gender.** Phrases like, “go-getters,” “winners,” “CEO-mentality,” and others can subtly be more masculine. Avoid potentially gender-leaning descriptors like these and focus on the objective aspects of the ideal candidate. Use a tool like the [Gender Decoder](#) to audit your language for these implicit biases.
-  **Highlight perks.** Don’t make candidates wait until their first interview to find out if you offer paid parental leave or remote work. Letting job seekers know your perks package during this first touchpoint will encourage more initial interest if your offerings align with what’s important to them.
-  **Answer candidate questions before they ask to empower them with knowledge.** Include details in the description you think candidates might like to know, like who they will report to, how the interview process is structured, etc.
-  **Show commitment to DEI.** Expand on the pledge to include equal pay for equal work in job descriptions by stating the company’s full commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. State your company’s DEI manifesto if you have one. List some of the DEI resources the company invests in. Highlight some of the DEI-driven employee resource groups the company supports.



Creating an inclusive job posting is not just about pushing your content through gender bias AI. It's about changing techniques to provide more clarity so any candidate from any background can understand the daily responsibilities and determine if they would like to do this job every day."

— **KATRINA KIBBEN**

CEO OF THREE EARS MEDIA

STRATEGY 4: Employing ERGs

Employee resource groups can be great opportunities to build a more inclusive and supportive workplace for women and non-binary talent. They can allow professionals to connect around commonalities in their backgrounds — and not just based on their gender, but around their intersectionality if they're parents, people of color, identify as LGBTQIA+ or more.

Only 25 percent of companies invested in employee resource groups prior to 2021. Luckily, 44 percent of tech companies today are building ERGs in their organizations. This is important because ERGs are at least somewhat important to 80 percent of women and non-binary employees in tech.

When these candidates know that an employer supports a women-focused ERG, it sends the message that the company cares about and empowers them. ERGs also give new hires an immediate network of colleagues to connect with and learn from. There may even be opportunities for direct mentorship if the ERG (or the company overall) facilitates such engagement.

ERG experiences like these can improve a company's appeal with more women and non-binary applicants as they assess how a business might impact their personal and professional growth in the long term. And it's important that hiring stakeholders make candidates aware of the potential for these ERG experiences so companies can improve their chances of securing more of the diverse talent they seek.

STRATEGY 5: Greater DEI Reporting and Interviewer Diversity

Our last recommended strategy is rooted in how a company can evolve its DEI efforts to hire more women and non-binary employees. Overall, DEI initiatives are very important to 66 percent of those professionals; and 63 percent say they seek out the diversity of a company before they join.

So a major first step companies can take to address these concerns is collecting and reporting on their DEI initiatives and (especially) metrics. 40 percent of companies said they plan to invest in reporting on DEI metrics in 2022, which is double the amount that made these efforts pre-2019. The needle is moving in the right direction around this topic but it needs even more participation from businesses if they want to hire more women. **Companies that are not investing in their DEI reporting are already behind the curve.** Tech companies should also work to immediately diversify their interview panel.

Three out of four women and non-binary professionals (75 percent) say it's very important that they see diversity in the people that interview them.

A small change in the roster of candidate-facing hiring stakeholders can make a big difference in how prospective hires perceive your business and your team (aka their future colleagues.)

SECTION 5

According to research from our State of DEI in Tech 2022 report, these are the 10 DEI initiatives that women and non-binary professionals prioritize most in their job search:

- 1. Wage transparency/equitable pay (66 percent)**
- 2. Flexible work opportunities (63 percent)**
- 3. Intentionally sourcing diverse candidates (40 percent)**
- 4. Transparency around employee demographics (34 percent)**
- 5. Investing inclusion tactics (27 percent)**
- 6. Anti-harassment/anti-discrimination training (27 percent)**
- 7. Reporting on DEI Metrics (25 percent)**
- 8. Robust DEI training programs (20 percent)**
- 9. Mentorship (20 percent)**
- 10. Company diversity manifesto (20 percent)**

Conclusion

With these five strategies and their associated insights, we hope you can start appealing to more women and non-binary talent right away in your hunt for new hires. Some strategies require more heavy lifting than others but each one is worthwhile.

For too long, women — alongside many other marginalized groups — have dealt with: inequitable wages, job descriptions that inadvertently excluded them and many other unfair aspects of life as an employee. It's long overdue for tech companies to course correct and amend these flawed systems. Women *want* to enter the industry and stoke their professional aspirations in the hard-to-fill roles that companies are after today. Businesses just need to make their hiring practices and workplaces more equitable and engaging so they feel more welcoming to this talent group..





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