



Beyond Gender: How we build truly Diverse Tech Teams



- Co-Founder & CEO @ hackajob
- Product suite across Direct Sourcing, Employer Branding & Assessments
- Community of ~200k Tech Talent
- Actively working with ~100 of the largest and fastest growing companies in the UK
- Processing over 5,000 Successful Matches / mo

Agenda

- Why D&I Matters
- The Current State of the UK Tech Market
- Beyond Gender
- Developing a Sustainable D&I Strategy
- Tactical Tips

Why Diversity and Inclusion Matters in Tech

Dear Inclusion At Work,

*In your previous column, ([Obligated to D&I](#)), you told a female engineer “you might be the one who can point out why a proposed new feature might affect women and non-binary people in a negative way.” *This is me.**

I’m one of only 3 women on the engineering team at my startup. Recently, we released a new feature with copy that made some assumptions about users’ gender. This was a pretty bad mistake, inexcusable in this day and age, and a lot of people were upset with us.

I wasn’t even on the team that worked on the feature, but I still feel a bit responsible. Maybe if I’d been given a heads up about the problem first, I would have raised a flag. But at the same time, I don’t know how my concerns would have been received by the team. I’m also not sure how I feel about being one of the few women possibly having look out for things like this.

It was a pretty bad mistake, but no one on the team is directly addressing it. We’ve been kind of talking around it. How do I bring up these issues without necessarily being expected to do that going forward?

-Feeling Responsible

Morally & Financially Critical

- Diversity and inclusion is **not just a 'nice to have'**
- Numerous studies show an undeniable **link between diversity and financial success**
- Ultimately, D&I needs to be seen as a **critical business driver** for your organisation



The key to successfully implementing diversity is to have employees from **different backgrounds**, with **different experiences** to enable true **growth and innovation**

The Current State of the UK Tech Market

Gender Diversity

- **12%** of Software Engineers in the UK are female
- Gender Diversity gets worse the more senior the roles are:
 - Entry/Junior: **26.6% female talent**
 - Mid: **17.4% female talent**
 - Senior: **10.4% female talent**
 - Lead: **6.3% female talent**

Beyond Gender...

- Around 14-15% of the UK tech workforce are from BAME backgrounds (**source:** [Inclusive Tech Alliance](#))
- In the UK tech sector, only 19% of technologists are from a working-class background (**source:** [Tech UK](#))
- Around 16% of autistic people are in full-time paid work in the UK, and many are in jobs below their skill level (**source:** [National Autistic Society](#))
- Whilst 90% of companies prioritise diversity, only 4% include disability as part of their diversity definition (**source:** [The Valuable 500](#))

Beyond Gender



D&I ≠ Gender

Gender is incredibly important

- It is shocking that women only make up 13% of the software engineering talent pool in the UK
- If only one gender is being represented, it can lead to bias being created in the systems we use and products that are being created
- Issues that other genders identify with can end up being ignored/not represented

Going Beyond Gender

But, what about...

- Neurodiversity
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Disability
- LGBTQ+
- Social Mobility

What are we trying to achieve?

- The goal should be **diversity of thought**
- This means building technology teams that represent our wider society across all pillars of diversity
- Truly diverse teams will produce better products, which will lead to better financial performance, but most importantly, will produce a much better culture and environment

Developing a Sustainable D&I Strategy

A common situation...

Client: “Mark, we’re looking to hire a Senior Software Engineer that knows Java, Microservices and Spring Boot, has worked in a TDD environment...”

Me: “Ok, very competitive market but we can absolutely support this...”

Client: “Oh yeah, and they need to be female”

Me: “... ok... looking at the data, only 6% of Senior Software Engineers are female, why are they going to join your business?”

Client: “...”

Me: “...”

We cannot create candidates where they don't exist

- If every company takes the approach from the previous slide, all we will achieve is a revolving door of senior female engineers between companies
- We need to take a holistic approach if we want to create a sustainable D&I strategy vs a reactive approach on specific roles
- Legally, we're allowed to take positive action to get more underrepresented candidates into the recruitment process, but it is still illegal in the UK to use positive discrimination

What can we do?

- For Experienced Hires, can you look at **complimentary skills** or a **wider geographical reach** in order to increase the candidates at the top of the funnel?
- In order to really move the needle, we need to be open to more **junior** and **associate** positions, with a goal of **upskilling them** and helping them to move up within the wider business
- We need to **start at the very top of the funnel** with schools and dedicated career pathways

Tactical Tips

Our recommendations

- ❑ Make sure to include diverse interview panels as part of your hiring process
- ❑ Ask everyone you'd like to interview if they require any adjustments or additional support - this should be mandatory from your side
- ❑ Ensure that your interviews are sustainable for different people across the board and you have different processes in place

Our recommendations

- ❑ Train your wider colleagues on how to interview different types of people, for example, just because someone is unable to make eye contact, doesn't mean they wouldn't be a good fit
- ❑ Share stories from a wide range of your colleagues on your careers page and social media - role models are crucial for inspiring the next generation of technologists
- ❑ Partner with grass-roots organisations that are investing in the next generation of technologists in the UK

Where do we go from here?

- I love discussing this topic so please feel free to reach out directly at **mark@hackajob.co**
- We're also working on our latest D&I Masterclass and are looking for contributions from companies if you'd like to get involved
- Thank you!



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