How Job Ads Can Reinforce or Undermine the Status Quo

NCWIT Summit on Women and IT

Aaron Kay, PhD
10 worst-paying occupations

Women: 70%
Men: 30%

10 best-paying occupations

Women: 30%
Men: 70%

Source: US Department of Labor (2007)
When Diversity is lacking...

“The problem isn’t that anyone involved with this hates women. The problem is that they just don’t think about women very much. Siri’s programmers clearly imagined a straight male user as their ideal and neglected to remember the nearly half of iPhone users who are female.”

Source: Marcott, Forbes Online, 1-Dec-2011
Diverse workplaces make for creative products

- Diversity leads to more creativity
- Often companies want to diversify, yet...
  - Disjoint between people’s intentions and recruitment efforts
  - Why?
Psychological support for the status quo

• System Justification: People are psychologically motivated to believe they belong to legitimate and just social and political systems

• Even those objectively disadvantaged will sometimes support the status quo

Photo source: Jost & Major, 2001, *The Psychology of Legitimacy*
Psychological support for the status quo

Percentage of politicians who are female

Kay et al., 2009, Journal of Personality & Social Psychology
Subtle reinforcers of the status quo

1. Reminders of minority status
2. Stereotypic environments
   - Physical
   - Virtual
3. Gender-stereotypic wording in job advertisements
4. Recruiting attempts that cue a lack of diversity
Cues of Diversity or Nondiversity

Cues of Diversity or Nondiversity

Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007, *Psychological Science*
Stereotypic Physical Environments

Cheryan et al., 2009, *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*
Stereotypic Virtual Environments

Cheryan et al., 2011, *Computers & Education*
Subtle reinforcers of the status quo

1. Reminders of minority status
2. Stereotypic environments
   – Physical
   – Virtual
3. Gender-stereotypic wording in job advertisements
4. Recruiting attempts that cue a lack of diversity
Help Wanted—Male

OPTOMETRIST, top salary, professional atmosphere, congenial associates. Phone or write H. Blaine Smith, Opticians, 10 East Main St, Smithtown, New York.

OPTOMETRIST, Rockland and Westchester Counties, 3 days, 48 hours, $275, all benefits. Confidential. X6830.

ORGANIZER

Need party with supervisory capacity. Direct part of a progressive $5 billion business operation. Must furnish ability to set up a branch in your area. For personal interview send resume to: T527 Times.

P/T Auto Driving Instructor

5 weekdays, 3 p.m., 3 hrs. Will train if no exp. Wads 3-8132.

PART Time—active man—driver—deliver newspapers mornings mid-Manhattan

PL 5-1677.

P/T packaging & shipping. Apply 9-12, Ace Can, 65-12 Fresh Pond Rd, Bklyn.

PARTS MANAGER

Presently employed, 1st rate GM parts many wanting advancement may qualify. No others need apply. Mowry Buick, Forest Hills, NY 11375. Mr. Bernard.

PAWN BROKER-Counterman. Excel all types loans. Excel apply for qualified. Times 1576 Newark, N.J.


PHARMACIST—Bergen Cry N. J. Unusual opp, high salary, mostly precription top ref only, 201 OL 2-0017.

PHARMACIST—Recent grad, expd 5 days, no weekends, no nights, TE 9-6785.

Help Wanted—Male

RESTAURANT Mgr.—full chg—top salary. Flick, 1074 2 Av (57 St.)

ROOM Clerks. Experienced NCR 4200 Hotel assistant managerial experience preferred. Travelers Hotel DE 5-1200.

SAFETY Engrs. High constr exp. $10-12M ACORN Agency 140 Bway.

Sales Trainee Positions

Appear Under "Sales Help Wanted—Male"

“Sales Help Wanted—Male”

SERVICE Manager for retail furniture chain. Some knowledge of furniture helpful. Must have analytical & administrative capabilities to process customers requests for service & adjustments. Salary open. Call Mr. Siegel, 201-684-2400 Ext. 13.

SETUP MAN-MOUNTER, FOR FLEXO PRINTING, TOP SALARY. COLORPAK 516-PI 1-3520.

SEWING MACH MECHANIC

Top pay, exc co, Bronx loc, phone anytime or night WY 3-2405. Mr. White.

SHIPPING CLERK

Capable of handling own department. Experienced in gloves. Must have own transportation. L. I. location. Good salary. X3502 Times.

SPRAYERs

Experienced, with mastic material. Must have own equipment. Plenty of jobs. Excellent pay (516) CH 8-7210.
Biased Job Advertisements

**Telephone Frameman:**

The telephone frameman plays a vital role in telephone communications. This skilled craftsman connects cables and wires with equipment in our central office in order to provide telephone service. He also works with other craftsmen to correct troubles in wiring.

A frameman should have mechanical aptitude, a liking for technical study, and an interest in electrical circuitry.

Receive full pay during your full-time classroom training.

Pacific Telephone

Biased Job Advertisements

Telephone Operator:

WHO SAYS IT'S A MAN'S WORLD?

Behind every man's telephone call, there is a woman. She's a smart woman. She's efficient. She has to be. She places the complex long distance calls people cannot place themselves or helps them locate telephone numbers.

Hers is a demanding job. But we make it worth her while. We can make it worth your while too. Not only do we pay a good salary to start, but also offer group life insurance, group medical coverage, good vacations with pay and free pensions.

A stepping stone to management positions.

Pacific Telephone
Sex-Segregated Columns

NOTICE TO JOB SEEKERS

“Jobs are arranged under Male and Female classifications for the convenience of our readers. This is done because most jobs generally appeal more to persons of one sex than the other.

“Various laws and ordinances—local, state and federal, prohibit discrimination in employment because of sex unless sex is a bona fide occupational requirement. Unless the advertisement itself specifies one sex or the other, job seekers should assume that the advertiser will consider applicants of either sex in compliance with the laws against discrimination.”
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An Equal Opportunity Employer m/f
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PL 5-5677

P/T-reporting & shipping. Apply 9-12, Ace Can., 65-12 Fresh Pond Rd., Bklyn.

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Presently employed. 1st rate GM parts many wanting advancement may qualify. No others need apply. Mowry Buick, Forest Hills, TW 6-5000. Mr. Bernard

PAWN BROKER—Counterman. Exp. all loans. Excel. offer for qual. Times 1576 Newark, N.J.


PHARMACIST—Bergen City N. J. Unusual oppy, high salary, mostly prescribe top refs only. 201 OL 2-0017.

PHARMACIST—Recent grad. exp. 5 days, no week-ends, no-nights. TE 8-6748.

HELP WANTED: MALE

RESTAURANT Mgt. — full chg — top salary. Flick, 1074 2 Av. (57 St.)

ROOM Clerks, Experienced NCR 4200
Hotel assistant managerial experience preferred. Travelers Hotel DE 5-1200

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SAT.

Sales Help Wanted—Male

SOLICITOR—Dry Cig. Sales, $450 salary + commission. TRAFFIC sales rep needed. Local motor carrier. Bklyn & NYC req. starting sal. $350. TW 7-5286.

SALESMA N

American Laundry Machinery Industries, the world’s largest laundry machinery manufacturer, is seeking several salesmen to assume territorial responsibilities in the East Coast area. Our salesmen offer the most complete line of laundry and dry-cleaning equipment in the industry. These positions offer excellent salaries, commissions and fringe benefits. We want men who are above average in intelligence, between the ages of 24 and 32, and who possess a college degree. Sales experience is not an essential prerequisite. Our sales staff will provide a complete orientation program to assure success.

Qualified applicants are asked to send a copy of their resume to:

Industrial Relations
AMERICAN LAUNDRY MACHINERY, INDUSTRIES
Div. of McGraw-Edison
Ross and Section Avenues
Cincinnati, Ohio 45212
An Equal Opportunity Employer

SALESMAN

National manufacturer of writing instruments is seeking a young, aggressive, full-time salaried salesman to call on the stationary, drug & variety trade.
“Gendered Wording”

• Phrasing and vocabulary that subtly conveys gender stereotypes, both masculine and feminine
  – **Masculine** and **feminine** wording
## “Masculine” Wording

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Decisive</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>Outspoken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>Greedy</td>
<td>Persist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Headstrong</td>
<td>Principled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boastful</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Reckless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>Stubborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Self-confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Self-sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Self-reliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Second Adjective</td>
<td>Third Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>Honest</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerful</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Submissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Sympathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Tender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td>Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Modest</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Nag</td>
<td>Warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Nurturing</td>
<td>Whiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>Yielding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Polite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flatterable</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Feminine” Wording
Outline of Wording Research

• Does gendered wording exist in real ads?
• Does masculine wording occur more in male-dominated areas?
• If so, what effect does gendered wording have on job applicants?
Source: US Department of Labor (2007)
Example: Masculine Wording

• ...Responsibilities include financial analysis, data modelling, reporting and data mart development in addition to ongoing production automation and maintenance. The individual must be a self-starter, who can work with minimal supervision, an 'out of the box thinker' and has a strong technical aptitude. The individual must have solid statistical, programming and business sense in order to analyze the performances...
Example: Feminine Wording

• Provide second-tier user support and serve as a primary contact for clients who experience service interruptions. Able to independently research and resolve the majority of requests for assistance. Excellent customer service and follow-up skills... A solid understanding of TCP/IP connectivity... Must have excellent oral and written communication skills, solid problem solving and technical diagnostic skills...
Online advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Send in your Waterloo experience photos!**

The University is looking for photos to represent the Waterloo experience. Selected photos will appear on the new homepage and are not limited to images on campus - work term locations or student exchange trips are fine! Submit your high resolution images to: [http://redesign.uwaterloo.ca/flickr/index.php](http://redesign.uwaterloo.ca/flickr/index.php). Prizes will be awarded for the launch page winners.

JobMine Help Desk  
Co-operative Education & Career Services  
University of Waterloo  
Telephone: (519) 888-4026  
E-Mail: jobmine@uwaterloo.ca  
Monday to Friday | 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM EST/EDT
# University Coop Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotypically male areas</th>
<th>Stereotypically female areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Applied Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math/Computer science</td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Economics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting &amp; Financial Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University Coop Advertisements

% of words in ad

Masculine wording  Feminine wording

Stereotypically male areas
Stereotypically female areas
Do these wording differences matter?

- Lab studies
- Created “masculinely” and “femininely” worded advertisements
- Assessed the appeal of the ads
## University Coop Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male-dominated areas</th>
<th>Female-dominated areas</th>
<th>Gender neutral areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>Real Estate Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Retail Sales Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Experimental Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More “Feminine” Ad</th>
<th>More “Masculine” Ad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are a community of engineers who have effective relationships with many satisfied clients.</td>
<td>We are a dominant engineering firm that boasts many leading clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are committed to understanding the engineering sector intimately.</td>
<td>We are determined to stand apart from the competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates well, in a team environment.</td>
<td>Ability to perform individually in a competitive environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive to clients’ needs, can develop warm client relationships.</td>
<td>Superior ability to satisfy customers and manage company’s association with them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job Appeal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This job is appealing
2. I think I could enjoy this job
3. This is not a job I would want
4. This company would be a good employer
5. This job looks interesting
6. This company seems like a great place to work
Anticipated Belongingness

1. I could fit in well at this company
2. I’m similar to the people who work in this career
3. My values and this company’s values are similar
4. The type of people who would apply for this job are very different from me
Job appeal

Female participants

Male participants

Scale: 1-7

Masculinely-worded advertisements
Femininely-worded advertisements
Anticipated belongingness

Scale: 1-7

- Female participants
- Male participants

Masculinely-worded advertisements
Femininely-worded advertisements
Psychological Model

Less belongingness in masculinely-worded jobs

Being a female participant

Masculinely-worded jobs less appealing
Replication
(female participants only)

Scale: 1-7, female participants only, \(N = 117\)
Psychological Model

- Masculine wording
- Less anticipated belongingness
- Personal skills
- Less job appeal

X

X
Summary so far...

- Environmental cues such as demographics, the makeup of a room, and gendered wording can subtly cue that one does not belong.
Subtle reinforcers of the status quo

1. Reminders of minority status
2. Stereotypic environments
   – Physical
   – Virtual
3. Gender-stereotypic wording in job advertisements
4. Recruiting attempts that cue a lack of diversity
Affirmative Action/Employment Equity Notices

• “Our company is committed to employing members of underrepresented groups, and so encourages qualified applications from women, members of visible minorities, and persons with disabilities.”
Job appeal

Female participants
- Notice absent: 5
- Notice present: 4

Male participants
- Notice absent: 4.5
- Notice present: 5
Anticipated Belongingness

- Female participants
  - Notice absent: 4.5
  - Notice present: 3.5

- Male participants
  - Notice absent: 5
  - Notice present: 5.5

1-7 Scale
Equity Notices

• Our company is an equal opportunity employer and has an affirmative action employment policy. We are committed to broadening the overall talent pool by actively seeking female and minority employees. In all cases, the company gives primary consideration to hiring women and members of minority groups.

• In support of achieving a diversified workforce and our employment equity goals, selection may be limited to candidates self-identifying as belonging to one of the following Employment Equity groups: Aboriginal peoples, Persons with a Disability, Visible Minorities and Women.
Job ratings

Notice absent
Primary consideration to women
Selection limited to women

Belongingness
Job appeal

1-7 Scale
Female participants
Male participants
Factors Reinforcing the Status Quo

- Stereotypic environments
- Masculine wording
- Cues of possible diversity problems

Less anticipated belongingness in job

Less job appeal
Implications

• Why is gendered wording a problem?
  – Gendered wording prevents a level playing field
• Careless language use might cause organizations and companies to miss out on well-qualified applicants
• Can we write better ads?
Collaborators & Funding

Danielle Gaucher
University of Winnipeg

Justin Friesen
University of Waterloo