



DIMENSION 2

Inclusive talent attraction and selection

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This dimension is part of the
***'Guide to Promote Gender Equality in
Latin American and Caribbean Companies'***

Download the full publication [HERE](#) to explore all the dimensions.

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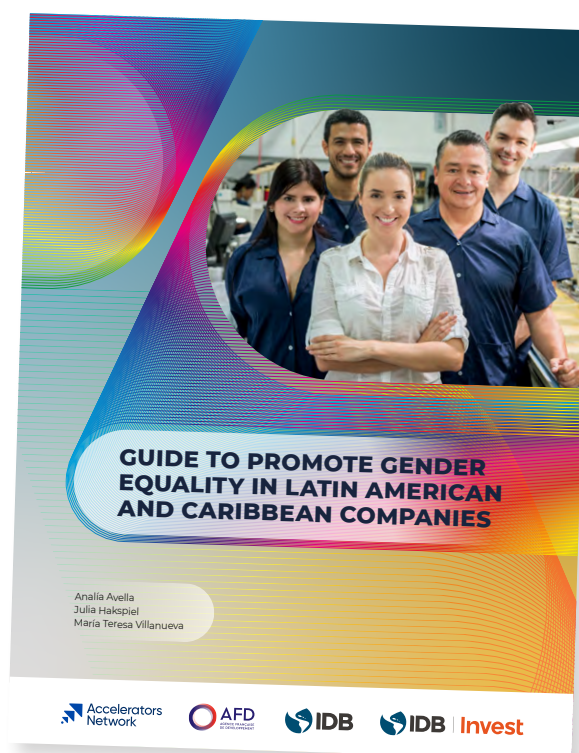
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Inclusive talent attraction and selection

Inclusive selection processes can be great assets for companies, as they contribute to creating more representative environments, leveraging the potential of available talent.

Context and evidence

To increase women's participation in the workforce, it is necessary to address the structural, cultural and organizational barriers that limit their entry and retention in employment. **Companies can expand their talent pipeline by unlocking women's unused or untapped potential.** As part of this transformation, restructuring recruitment and selection processes can be a key factor in ensuring equal opportunities at these stages and fostering a more inclusive work culture.

An inclusive selection process must ensure that people participate and are evaluated fairly, using objective criteria focused on the skills and competencies required for the position. **It is essential to avoid subjective assessments that do not relate to people's job performance, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, immigration status, religion or socioeconomic status.** To ensure that these steps promote equal opportunity, it is important to address biases or prejudices that interfere with assessment and decision making. Although these biases operate unconsciously and unintentionally, they have the potential to generate misperceptions and reinforce situations of inequality and discrimination.

Stereotypes directly and indirectly affect people's opportunities by shaping social norms, i.e., unwritten rules and expectations about how people should behave in different situations. Gender social norms include expectations about different aspects such as dress, language, social roles and behavior. **Gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained in the views of both men and women and are therefore likely to influence not only personal but also occupational decisions.**

While more research is needed to obtain specific evidence at the regional level, international studies have found that **the adoption of an inclusive culture is associated with several business benefits.** According to Deloitte (2020), companies with inclusive cultures show a higher probability of meeting or exceeding their financial targets. In addition, Harvard Business Review (2013) indicates that these companies tend to report growth in market share and/or capture new customer segments through more innovative solutions. These findings suggest a **positive relationship between a more inclusive and diverse culture and improvements in performance, innovativeness and productivity in the work environment.**



Potential actions

Keys to inclusive selection processes

The following are practical recommendations for promoting inclusive selection processes, which organizations can consider according to their particular context and objectives.

A Formulate calls for proposals in an inclusive manner

One of the first barriers to the inclusion of women in the labor market may be the way in which job offers are formulated. The use of biased language and images, such as those that only show men in certain roles and occupations, can discourage women, who do not feel identified or represented in the job advertisement. For example, the use of the generic masculine and certain expressions reinforce these biases. Using unbiased language, as well as diverse images in job descriptions, can attract female candidates and facilitate the arrival of talent to the organization.

Also, highlighting that the organization is committed to gender equality can encourage applications from women and from people who value more inclusive organizational cultures. The Piras et al. (2023) study concludes that **incorporating gender-inclusive language in job advertisements increases the likelihood of women applying by 43%, without deterring men, who also increase their application by 10%**. In addition, introducing an explicit message of commitment to equal opportunities increases the probability of application by 58% for women and 38% for men.

B Diversify recruitment sources

Companies often express difficulties in recruiting and hiring women, especially in more masculinized activities or positions. To improve the effectiveness of these processes, it is important to diversify both practices and search channels. In this regard, some of the strategies that can be considered include:

- **Diversify recruitment sources** to more effectively reach channels that connect with the target audience.
- **Search for candidates not only in the usual job portals, but also in specialized portals, technical training centers and universities.** Direct connections with these institutions, through scholarships, internships and recruitment programs, can favor the inclusion of women in traditionally male-dominated areas, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines and create a stronger channel to meet skills needs.
- **Offer ads focused on the essential qualifications and skills** required for the position. Job postings with too many requirements may lead suitable and qualified profiles to self-exclude.
- When **recruitment** is outsourced **through a search agency**, it is important to align objectives for the selection of profiles and to demand respect for equal opportunities in the process.

C Implement inclusive selection measures

Structuring selection processes to make them more inclusive can favor the incorporation of women into organizations. In this sense, strategies that can be considered include:



- **Structure the interviews by implementing a guide or guideline of predefined questions.** This will help to prevent improvisations and focus on issues relevant to the position, thus avoiding questions about the candidate's personal life that may be stereotyped or discriminatory.
- **Ensure a balanced slate of three candidates** to ensure the presence of women candidates.
- **Expand and diversify selection teams.** Ensure gender balance and representation of women on selection panels and teams.
- **For leadership roles, take into account the company's own talent pipeline and take proactive measures to promote women.** Specific strategies for these instances are explored in the following section..
- **Include blind hiring strategies or anonymized processes.** This practice seeks to increase fairness and accuracy in selection processes and evaluations, avoiding biased considerations on the information received from applicants. In this method, personal information such as name, age, gender and nationality are removed from resumes or job application forms before reviewing the person's profile or conducting interviews.

Studies show the effectiveness of these practices, but also point out that an anonymous application process may reduce discrimination at the initial hiring stage but does not guarantee that bias will not occur at a later stage. On the other hand, all attempts to completely anonymize gender, race, ethnicity and other personal characteristics may be less effective when decisions are made by artificial intelligence. Machine learning algorithms discern personal characteristics from other data and can reintroduce bias back into the model (IDB, 2022)¹. These algorithms can replicate and even exacerbate human biases from the data sets they are trained on. Therefore, it is critical to pay attention to both the design and how these technologies are interacted with (Trindel et al., 2019).

- **Consider unconscious bias training for selection personnel.** Although this practice is frequently used by companies, studies on its effectiveness suggest mixed results. While these trainings may temporarily increase awareness of one's biases, their long-term impact requires further study. Some research indicates that these trainings could generate resistance and have limited or even counterproductive effects (Dobbin and Kalev, 2018).

The study by Duryea et al. (2024), although it does not address gender bias but racial bias in public employment services in Colombia, yields relevant findings. The study identifies that although implicit bias is crucial in explaining racial gaps in employment outcomes, it finds no evidence that feedback on unconscious bias changes the behavior of people involved in selection processes.

1. Gender and Diversity Sector Framework, December 2022.



BOX 4

MAIN UNCONSCIOUS BIASES AND SUBJECTIVE PREFERENCES

All people unknowingly use mental shortcuts, so biases are often unintentional and unconscious. However, having more equitable teams can help eliminate groupthink and homogeneous decision-making.

TYPES OF BIASES

- **Non-verbal bias**

Happens when the person is evaluated based on his or her body language. This is not only a mistake because it is not judged based on the candidate's skills, but also because an interview is a stressful situation that causes body language to change.

- **First impression bias**

This is often related to nonverbal bias. It occurs when applicants are evaluated based on how they behave during the first few minutes of the interview.

- **Contrast bias**

Occurs when there are multiple back-to-back interviews and recruiters may compare applicants based on inappropriate assumptions.

- **Negative emphasis bias**

Occurs when the interviewer judges an applicant based on personal and irrelevant preferences, such as height, tone of voice or hairstyle.

- **Stereotypical bias**

Occurs when the interviewer judges an applicant based on a stereotypical opinion of the entire group to which he/she belongs.

- **Affinity bias**

It is produced by the tendency to evaluate better those who are similar (for example, for having studied at the same university, belonging to the same social group, etc.).

Source: Prepared by the authors based on articles from Harvard Business Review and organizations specialized in recruitment and selection processes.



Tools and resources

GUIDES AND INSTRUMENTS	
Checklist for Gender-Responsive Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This tool allows you to check the hiring process to ensure that it takes into account gender aspects. This document is only available to companies that are signatories to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP). Entity: ONU Women / + Explore
Guide to Gender and Intersectionality in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This guide addresses the concept of intersectionality, explains the benefits of incorporating this approach in the workplace and offers practical guidelines for its implementation. Entity: GenderLab / + Explore <i>(Available in Spanish)</i> .
A guide for inclusive hiring for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical guide for inclusive recruitment and selection processes. Entity: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) / + Explore
Implicit Association Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive assessment tool that measures unconscious biases, applying statistical criteria to the tendency of the brain to associate or dissociate two concepts received by visual stimuli (images or words) and measured by comparing the time it takes to relate them. Entity: Harvard University / + Explore

Source: own elaboration.



Case studies

Global and regional business practices.



GLOBAL

Limak

Strengthening the talent pipeline of women in STEM disciplines through partnerships with schools and universities and the generation of employment opportunities.

- **Industry:** Infrastructure and urban development.
- **Country:** Global, based in Turkey.

In 2015, Limak launched the flagship **Engineer Girls of Turkey** (EGT) project with the aim of encouraging female university students in Turkey to pursue a career in STEM with a focus on engineering. The project expanded to Kuwait in 2017. Designed and implemented in collaboration with local schools, governments and NGOs, the initiative seeks to create a strong pipeline of female talent in these disciplines to link them with job opportunities in industry through scholarships, training, mentoring and employment. 53,000 high school students and 710 university students participated in the program. Eighty-four percent of the university graduates obtained full-time employment, the majority of them in the engineering sector. Limak employed 16% of these women.

The full case study for this company is available in the World Economic Forum's [DEI Lighthouse 2023](#) report.



REGIONAL

DHL Express Ecuador

Promoting the inclusion of women in operational areas, through training and redesign of attraction and selection processes.

- **Industry:** Logistics and foreign trade services.
- **Country:** Global, the company belongs to Deutsche Post DHL Group.
- Member company of the IPG Leadership Group in Ecuador.

In June 2022, the company launched the **Women in Operations** program, when the company's senior management made a commitment to balance the operational areas and include women in core processes, with special emphasis on the OPS Ground sector. Through training and the redesign of attraction and selection processes, the company was able to increase the presence of women in operations from 7% to 12%. The target for women's participation by 2025 is 20% in operations and 40% in the total workforce.

See the complete case study of this company in Annex 5.1.



Holcim Ecuador

Supporting the training and certification of women in handling heavy vehicles for their inclusion in professional driving.

- **Industry:** Construction supplies.
- **Country:** Global, part of Holcim International Group since 2004.
- Member company of the Leadership Group at IPG of Ecuador.

In 2022, the company launched **Women at the Wheel**, the first professional driving school for women in transportation and heavy equipment. The initiative was created globally by Holcim Group International (Women on Wheels) and adapted locally by Holcim Ecuador to increase the number of women trained in heavy vehicle driving. Through alliances with different institutions and companies, they generate technical training spaces for women to acquire competencies in these areas. The program operates through scholarships that cover 90% of the cost of the training required to obtain the licenses. Fifty-two women obtained professional licenses and 86% of them found employment.

Fundación ManpowerGroup

Mejorando las condiciones de empleabilidad de grupos poblacionales vulnerables para su integración en la fuerza laboral.

- **Industry:** Human capital services and solutions.
- **Country:** Mexico.
- Member company of the IPG Leadership Group in Mexico.

The ManpowerGroup Foundation promotes programs to support the employment and training of people with employment difficulties. The **Caminemos Juntos** Program works with vulnerable groups such as women with low levels of education, young people without work experience, LGBTQ+ people, refugees, people with serious illnesses, victims of human trafficking, seniors, people with disabilities and former prisoners. This program, started 19 years ago in ManpowerGroup Mexico, has expanded globally as part of its focus on diversity. Although the program is not-for-profit for the beneficiaries, companies pay a moderate cost for the training of these individuals. The proceeds are used for corporate responsibility initiatives. Since 2004, the Foundation has been able to insert more than 14,000 people in vulnerable situations into formal employment.

See the complete case study of this company in Annex 5.1.



Komunika Latam

Formalizing tools for talent management with a gender perspective.

- **Industry:** Management consulting services specializing in strategy and communications.
- **Country:** Panama.
- IPG member company in Panama.

As a certified B company, Komunika Latam has adopted a diversity and inclusion strategy to strengthen its talent management policies. After an organizational diagnosis conducted in 2021, the company was able to identify areas for improvement in recruitment, performance evaluation and professional development, and decided to implement measures to promote equal opportunities and avoid cultural and social biases in decision-making. To document these processes, it created a ***Personnel Management Manual with a Gender Perspective*** based on the findings of the diagnosis and the review of good business practices. The manual establishes specific guidelines to avoid any form of discrimination in talent management processes.

See the complete case study of this company in Annex 5.1.

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on the DEI Lighthouse 2023 report of the World Economic Forum and information provided by the companies



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