



SIAPARTNERS

Inclusive Job Ads

Stefan Twigt

Associate Manager

+31 651 949 116

stefan.twigt@sia-partners.com

Studies have shown that job ads with gender-coded language have a significant impact on the application pool



Gender-coded language can be divided in **agentic or masculine-coded language** and **communal or feminine-coded language**.



If job ads contain **mainly masculine-coded words**, they are **less appealing to female applicants**



If job ads contain **mainly feminine-coded words or are gender neutral**, they are evenly appealing to female and male applicants, leading to **more gender diversity on the work floor**



The use of gender-coded words also impacts company culture and **impacts the number of cultural diverse applicants**

The difference between masculine-coded and feminine-coded language

Masculine-coded

- Associated with less diverse environment
- Aimed at personality traits
- Agentic wording focused on the individualistic mindset
- Might result in less cultural and gender diverse applicants
- An example of masculine-coded language is:
 - *Result-driven*
 - *Individualistic*
 - *Competitive*

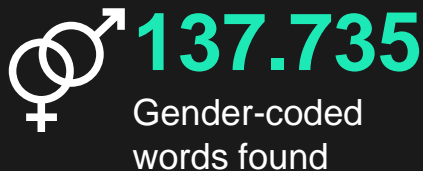
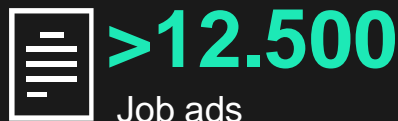
Feminine-coded

- Associated with diverse environment
- Aimed at behaviour and community
- Communal words focused on together, the community
- Leads to a more diverse applicants for the job
- Example of feminine-coded language is:
 - *Collaborate*
 - *Responsible*
 - *Trust*

Note: masculine and feminine are not the same as male and female

Sia Partners built a gender-coded language bot, and performed a study in June 2022

The bot analysed job ads based on the use of Dutch and English gender-coded language, supported by social research.



Data has been normalized and transformed to a 0 to 100 scale to ensure comparison among industries and companies

Main results June 2022 study

Top five industries with **inclusive** job ads



Retail
Food



Hotels &
Leisure



Health
Insurance



Education



Retail
Non-Food

Top 5 **feminine-coded** words
(including derived and English
words):

- *Responsible*
- *Support*
- *Together*
- *Open*
- *Enthusiast*

Top five industries with **exclusive** job ads



Energy &
Utilities



Public
Services



Accountancy



Industrial

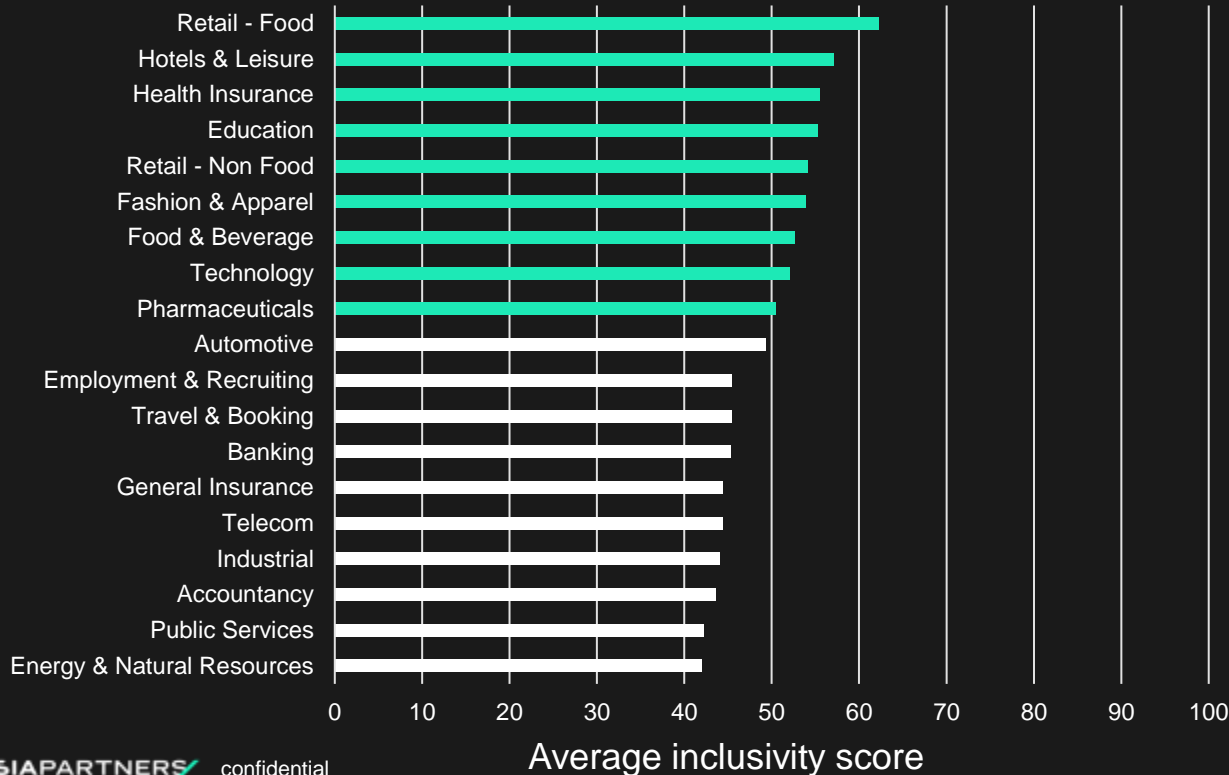


Telecom

Top 5 **masculine-coded**
words (including derived and
English words):

- *Challenging*
- *Technical*
- *Lead*
- *Active*
- *Direct*

More than half of the industries in the Netherlands use exclusive language in their job ads



Inclusivity score

The inclusivity score indicates how inclusive a job ad is. When a job ad contains more feminine-coded words overall, it is perceived as more inclusive (score ≥ 50).

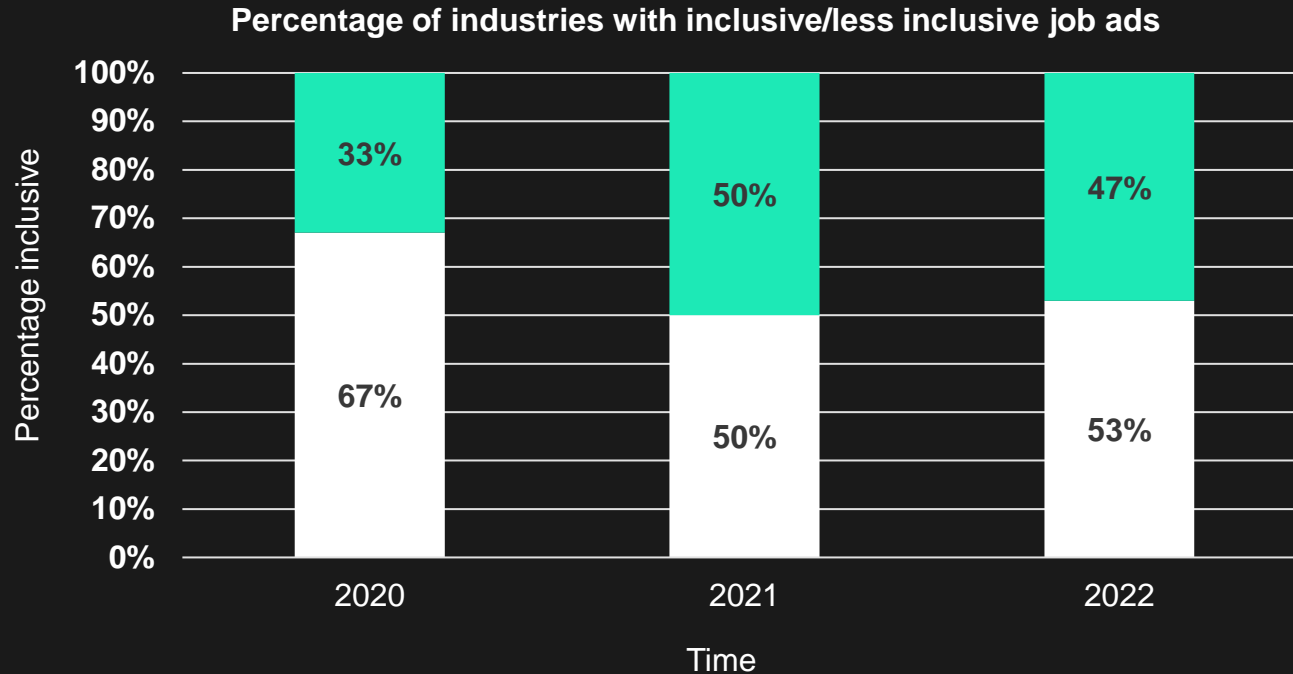
A job ad is perceived as less inclusive (score < 50) when it contains more masculine-coded words overall.

Legend

More inclusive

Less inclusive

There is no improvement compared to last year



Do you know your inclusive language? Is the word Masculine or Feminine coded?

Analytical	Masculine	Driven	Masculine
Challenging	Masculine	Responsible	Feminine
Collaborative	Feminine	Outspoken	Masculine
Confident	Masculine	Trust	Feminine

Other tips for Job ads | Job titles

Using the masculine gender as the generic description for professions

Fire**fighter**

Sales
representative

Chair**person**

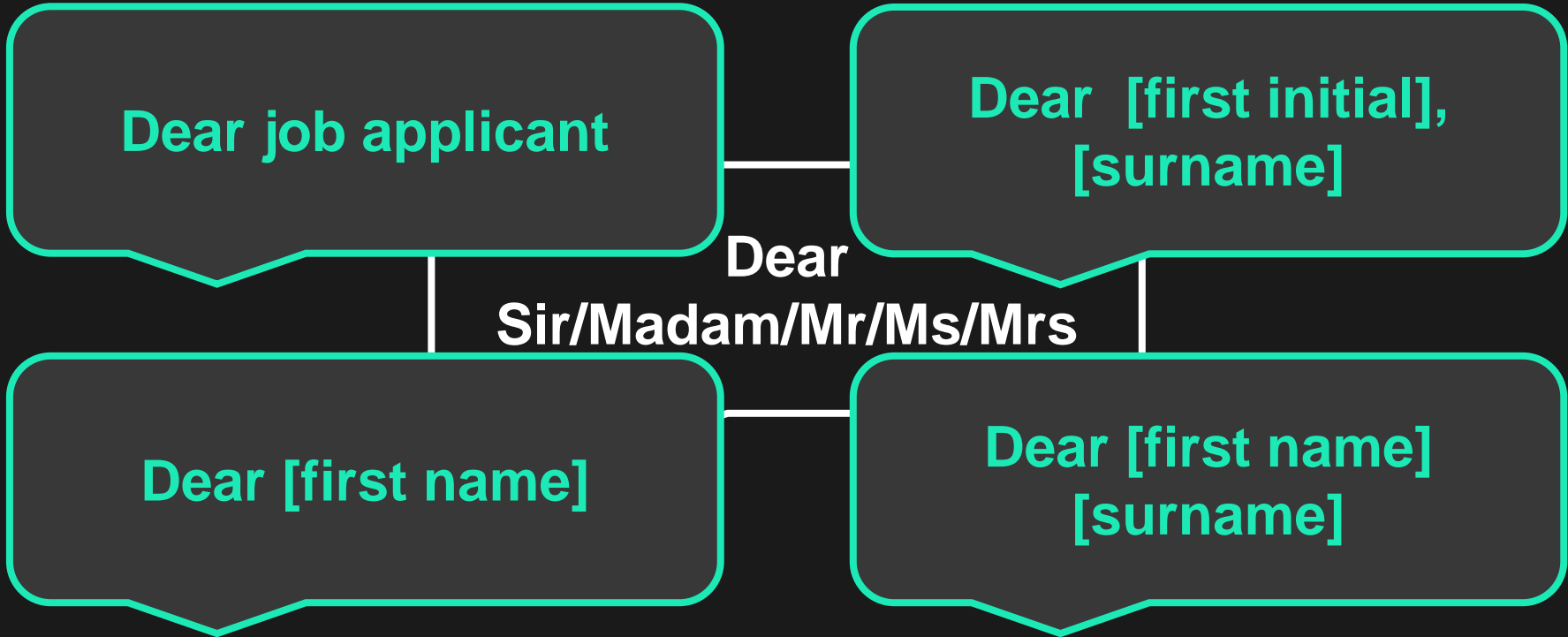
Other tips for job ads | Pronouns

Use **he, him** only when specifically addressing **men**. Or if the person **identifies as a man**

Use **she, her** only when specifically addressing **women**. Or if the person **identifies as a woman**

Use **they/them** when addressing a **non-binary person** or if you are unsure as to how someone **identifies**

Other tips for job ads | Addressing the candidate



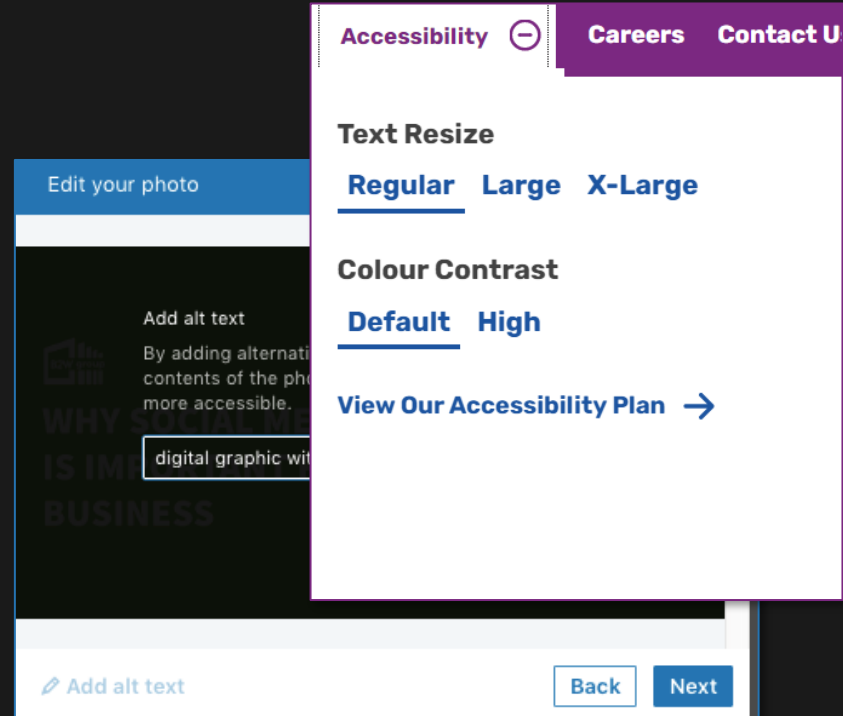
Other tips for Job Ads | Accessibility of your job posting

Offer **caption or subtitle videos** for persons with a hearing impairment.

Include **image descriptions** and/or **alt text** for images and graphics.

Select **design colors that provide sufficient contrast**, taking account of **font size**.

Use **simple language**. Avoid jargon and idioms. **Avoid metaphors** that might be interpreted literally.





There are several other factors that influence diversity in the applicant pool



Try to communicate from a ‘community perspective’, this lowers the chance of less inclusive language in your communication and use behaviours instead of attributes.



Assess if your website shows diversity in the use of visuals and states your diversity objectives clearly on your job page / website.



Subtle words such as ‘digital savvy’ and ‘young workforce’ might negatively impact the sense of belonging of older generations, and references such as “we play on Champions League level” can impact women



Use authentic diversity statements and state benefits that benefit other demographics (e.g., swap a religious holiday (diversity day), option to work 32 hours and option for Working From Home)



Talking about **fitting in instead of belonging** impacts groups who will fear they have to adjust themselves to fit in



Use different channels to distribute your job ads beyond the use usual job boards and own networks.



Make a distinction between **must have** qualifications and **nice to have** qualifications. Research showed that women tend to apply only when they met 100% of the qualifications, whereas men already apply when they meet 60% of the qualifications.



Do not focus only on external communication. The way you communicate internally also affects the sense of belonging of the current workforce and therefore retention rates



Sia Partners is a next-generation management consulting firm and **pioneer of Consulting 4.0.**

We offer a unique blend of AI and design capabilities, augmenting traditional consulting to deliver superior value to our clients. With expertise in more than 30 sectors and services, we optimize client projects worldwide. Through our *Consulting for Good* approach, we strive for next-level impact by developing innovative CSR solutions for our clients, making sustainability a lever for profitable transformation.

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter @SiaPartners](#)

sia-partners.com

