



**Diversity &
Inclusion**

Boston Tech 2018

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BACKGROUND

As a Boston-based company who works with many tech companies locally, we were curious to see how the burgeoning Boston tech industry fares when it comes to its thoughts on diversity and inclusion. We asked those who identify as part of the tech community in the greater Boston area to participate in a survey to provide their thoughts on diversity and inclusion, how they believe their company is responding to the current wave of interest on the topic, and if they feel as though they're being treated fairly and feel included at their company. All results were recorded anonymously unless they provided their email addresses for follow-up. Approximately 200 people participated in the survey. We learned quite a lot from this first survey, and are looking forward to revamping and releasing our next survey this fall.

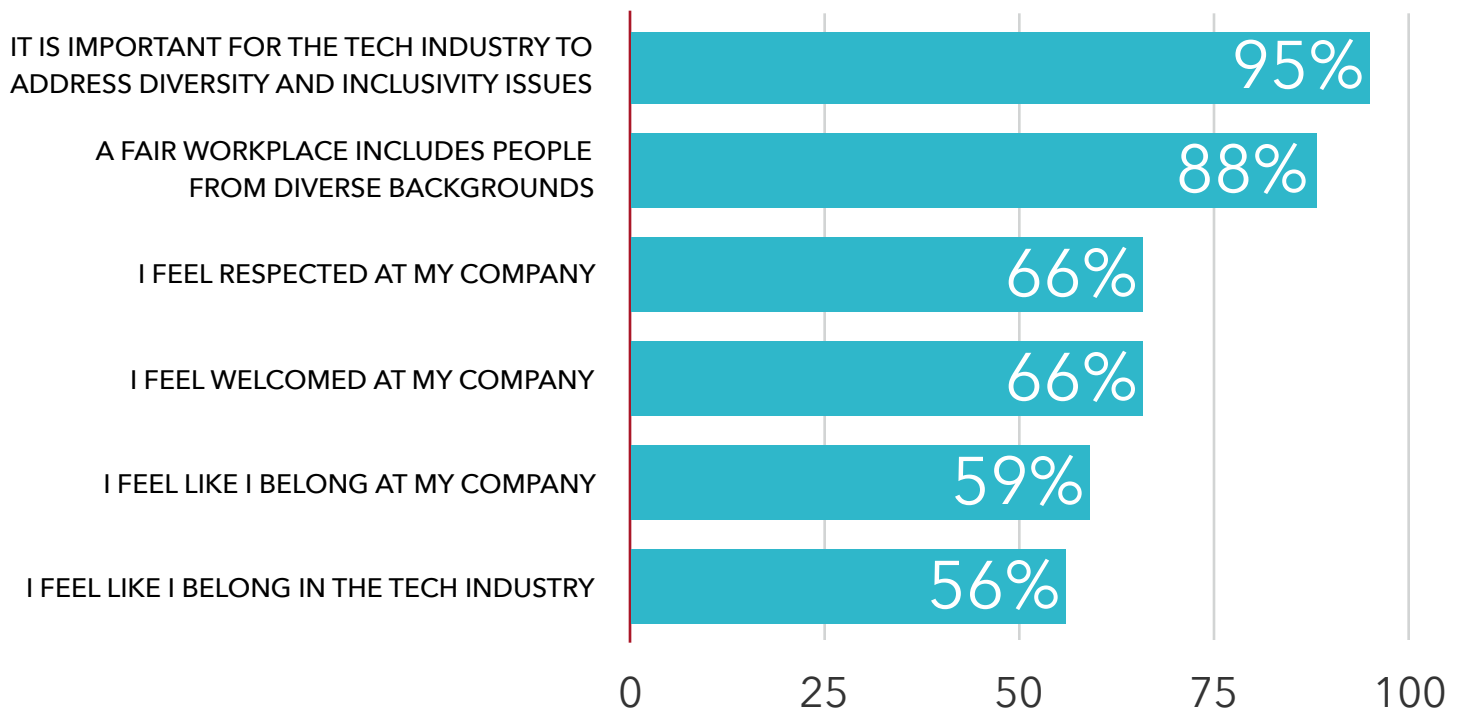
Note that we asked companies to complete a different diversity and inclusion survey, but our numbers were too low to provide any insights that would be significantly relevant. We will be providing those companies that participated and provided their contact information with their own report, but will be unable to share data with the general public. We will be revamping our survey and widening our scope so that we can provide the general public with those results on the company-level next year.

KEY INSIGHTS

WHAT DO THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS FEEL, THINK, OR BELIEVE ABOUT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

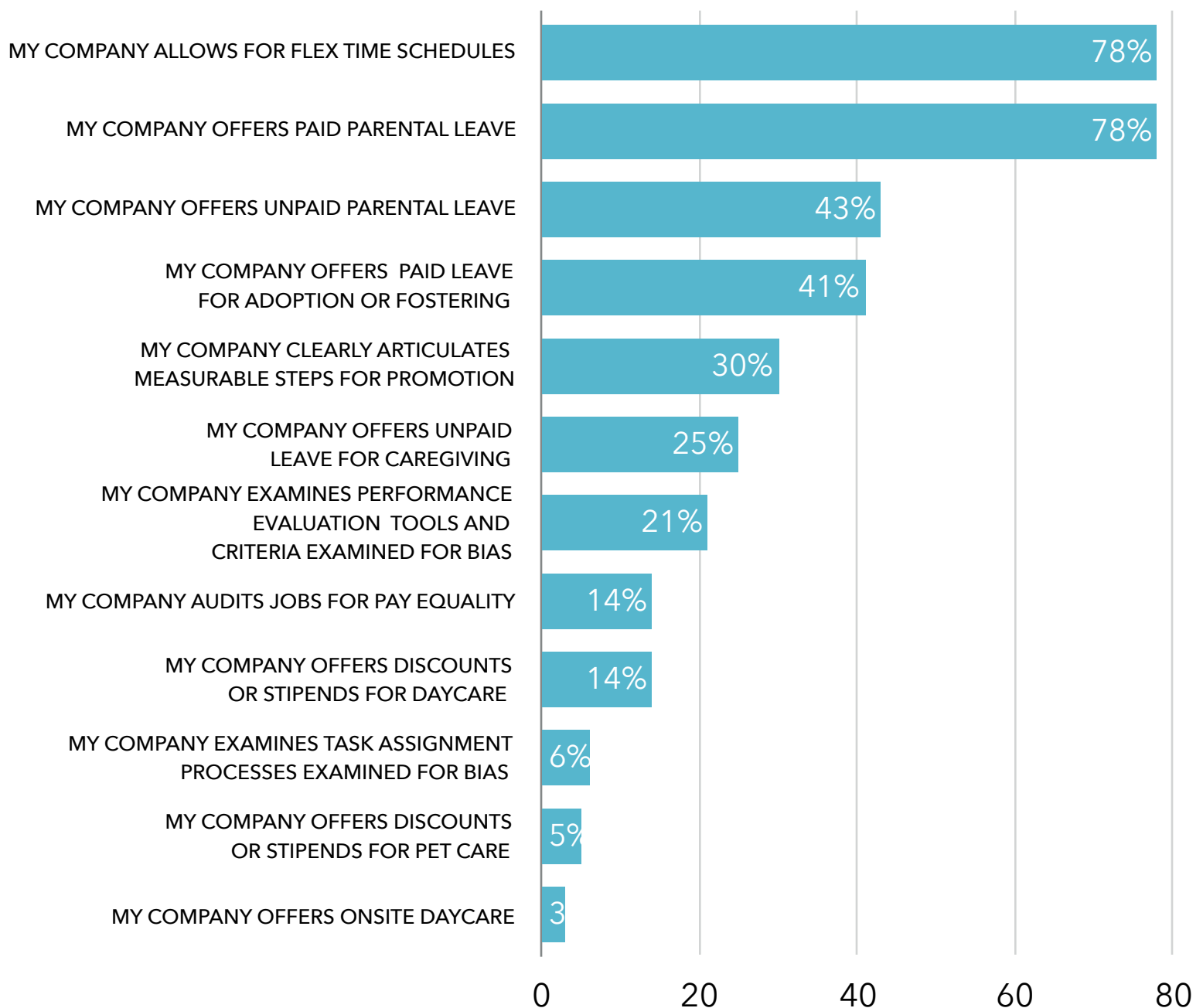
An overwhelming amount of survey respondents believe the following:

- 95% believe it is important for the tech industry to address diversity and inclusivity issues
- 88% believe a fair workplace includes people from diverse backgrounds



And yet, companies currently do not appear to have established extensive policies reflecting a commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and employee empowerment:

78% of respondents say their company allows for flexible time schedules and paid parental leave. But numbers drop below 50% when taking such steps as clearly articulating measurable steps for promotion, examining existing tools and criteria to mitigate bias, auditing jobs for pay equality, or offering benefits around child care.



DISCREPANCIES IN ATTITUDE BY GENDER

The largest demographic discrepancies were found between men and women's attitudes toward diversity and inclusion.

Men appear more inclined to believe that diversity and inclusion issues are being addressed; all in all, they seem more likely to agree that the current state of things are satisfactory. Men believe significantly more than women that diversity and inclusion do not affect the tech industry and that the industry is welcoming of people from diverse backgrounds. Men feel more welcomed in the tech industry and are largely satisfied with the decision-making process at their company. ***Please see the end of this report to learn what indexing means.***

MEN OVERINDEX ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS	INDEXED SCORES	
	MEN	WOMEN
Diversity and inclusivity do not affect the tech industry	131*	92
The tech industry is welcoming of people from diverse backgrounds	119	95
I feel welcomed in the tech industry	117	95
I feel satisfied with the decision-making process at my company	113	95
I feel like I belong in the tech industry	112	96
I feel like I belong at my company	110	96
I feel respected at my company	109	97
The tech industry is becoming more diverse	108	97
I feel welcomed at my company	107	98

Women, on the other hand, feel much more so that they have been the victim of discrimination at their company and feel like an outsider working in the tech industry. Many more have also seriously considered leaving the field.

WOMEN OVERINDEX ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

INDEXED SCORES

	MEN	WOMEN
I have been the victim of discrimination at my company	69	109
I feel like an outsider working in the tech industry	67	109
I have personally witnessed discrimination at my company	76	108
Since I started in tech I have seriously considered leaving the field	88	104
I don't have much in common with other people working in tech	87	104
I feel like an outsider at my company	85	103
I feel different from most people working in the tech industry	85	103
I have been the perpetrator of discrimination at my company	86	103
A fair workplace includes people from diverse backgrounds	89	103
It's important for the tech industry to address diversity and inclusivity issues	92	102

The most significant discrepancies by gender are that men largely feel their company is addressing diversity and inclusion sufficiently. They believe that their company will take appropriate action in response to discrimination incidents. Men more so than women also believe that employees of different backgrounds are encouraged to apply for higher positions and that their company respects individual and values their differences.

MEN OVERINDEX ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

INDEXED SCORES

	MEN	WOMEN
Management of my company demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities	120	96
I believe my company will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination	117	96
Employees of different backgrounds are encouraged to apply for higher positions	115	96
My company respects individuals and values their differences	114	96
Employees who are different from most others are treated fairly at my company	113	96
My company provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs	112	96
Getting to know people with racial/ethnic backgrounds different than my own has been very easy at my company	112	95
Employees of different ages are valued equally by my organization	112	95
There is a career development path for all employees at my company	112	95
Management shows that diversity is important through its actions	111	97

MEN OVERINDEX ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS**INDEXED SCORES**

	MEN	WOMEN
My company's policies or procedures discourage discrimination	110	97
My experiences since coming to my company have led me to become more understanding of racial/ethnic differences	110	97
Employees of different backgrounds interact well at my company	110	97
My company has done a good job providing training programs that promote multicultural understanding	109	97
At my company, employees appreciate others whose race/ethnicity is different from their own	108	98
Racial, ethnic, and gender-based jokes are not tolerated at my organization	103	99
My supervisor handles diversity matters satisfactorily	103	99
My company is making progress with diversity initiatives	102	99
There is cultural diversity among the people a job candidate will meet/see on his/her first visit to the company	102	98

DISCREPANCIES BY AGE

Younger respondents (<35 yrs old) reflect a seemingly inconsistent perspective about diversity and inclusion at the workplace. While they seem more likely to believe that the tech industry is becoming more diverse, they are also more likely to say that diversity and inclusion do NOT affect the industry. And while they are notably more inclined to admit being a perpetrator of discrimination, they also appear to feel more like an outsider compared to colleagues >35 yrs old. In spite of a seeming nonchalance towards diversity and inclusion, <35 yr old respondents appear more inclined to initiate actions that support these issues since the 2016 election.

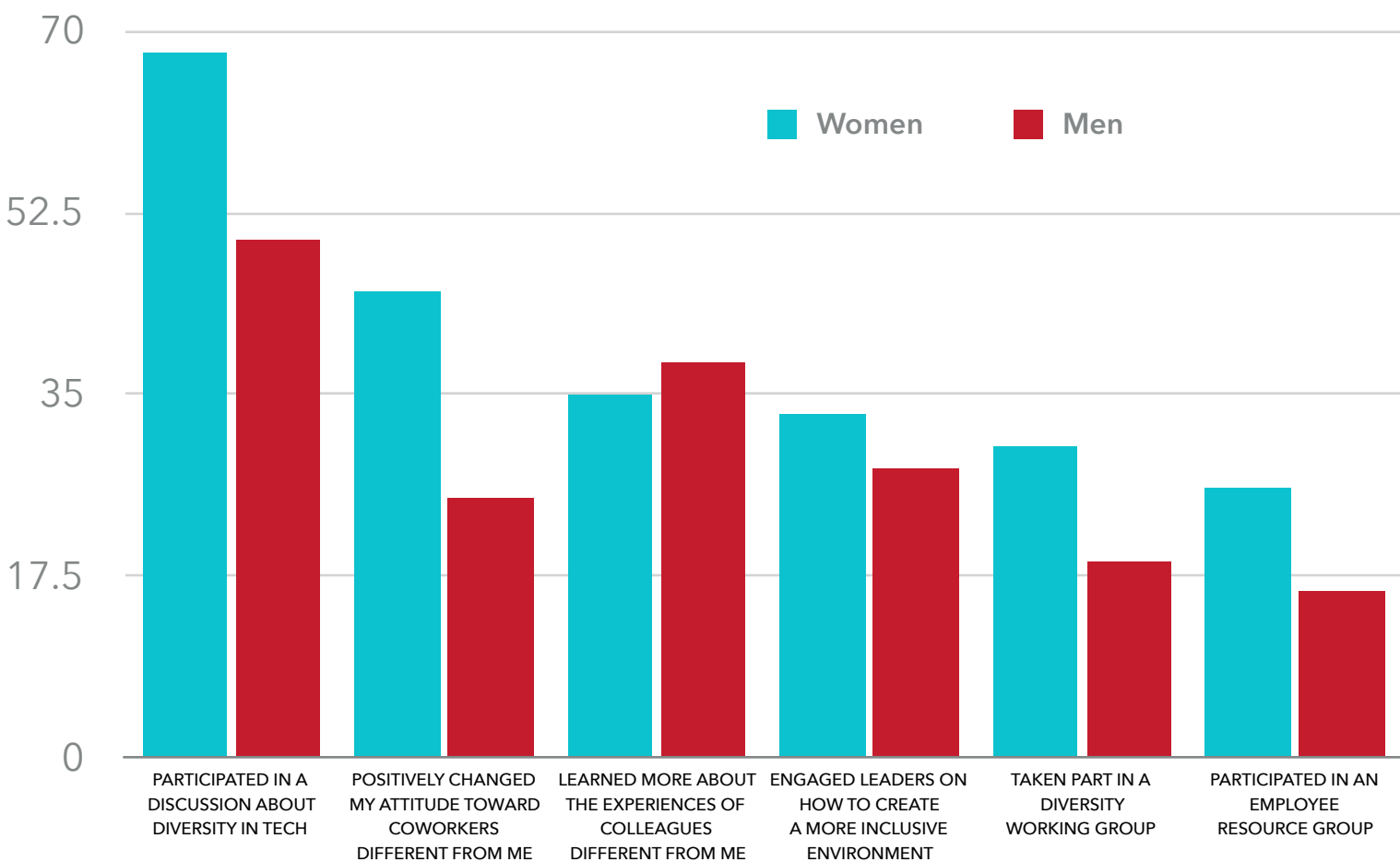
<35 OVERINDEX ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

INDEXED SCORES

	<35 YRS	>35 YR
I feel different from most people working in the tech industry	105	91
I have been the perpetrator of discrimination at my company	105	90
Diversity and inclusivity do not affect the tech industry	104	89
I feel like an outsider working in the tech industry	103	93
The tech industry is becoming more diverse	103	93
I feel different from most people at my company	103	93

CHANGES SINCE THE 2016 ELECTION

We also asked if their or their companies' attitudes and actions have changed since the 2016 election. Many more people are having conversations and women appear to be more driven than men to initiate actions that reflect interest in diversity and inclusion since 2016.



OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

We asked the open-ended question **“What improvements, if any, can be made to improve the level of diversity at your company?”** Below are some quotes we’d like to highlight, broken down by theme:

RECRUITING

I think the real struggle right now is hiring. I feel the environment is in a good space for it, but it is hard to find candidates.

Nothing we do is overt--certainly no one is screening resumes for Michaels vs. Mohammeds. However, the term 'cultural fit' is wildly abused to mean 'applicants must have the same cultural norms as the existing team, or else they'll be difficult to work with.'

Part time opportunities in engineering do not exist, forcing mothers to choose between full time work or nothing.

I feel very fortunate that my company is relatively diverse for the tech industry, but it is still very white. Also, there is no formal diversity program in place yet. We are currently working with the company recruiters to figure out how to best make diversity a priority. They are super down to help and get started, but it is hard to get the ball rolling because it is hard to find a place to start. It would be great if there was a way to connect tech companies with minority tech groups in their community.

INCLUSION/RETENTION

We have a diverse workforce, but there is no attempt made to have the workforce understand cultural differences (which in a meeting setting, can be quite dramatic).

I think implementing processes to check for bias would help provide a more quantitative measure.

Training to reduce subtle biases, such as ignoring women's contributions to meetings or forgetting to invite us to meetings.

Better maternity leave policies.

I think more Employee Resource Groups would be a step in the right direction.

Open and clear process for promotion and reviews (it's all done behind closed doors, so if you don't have an advocate at the table, you are passed by and you will not know it happened until you see the job you've been working toward given to someone else)

Right now diversity decreases the further up the org structure you go. This isn't encouraging for current or prospective employees who are wondering if they can do well and be promoted here, and they sometimes choose not to apply or to leave based partly on this. Initiatives to increase the diversity at higher levels would certainly be one way to improve.

Not sure (what higher-ups can do or what I can do). The only concerning thing is one particular director who makes me slightly uncomfortable sometimes. He tries to "talk black" to black employees (sometimes). Is this the worst thing in the world? No. What to do? As I said, not sure.

LEADERSHIP

The company is over 78% white and has no female leadership in the c-suite. A leadership development program to build diversity in race, gender, age, etc. over time could be one great way to start the ball rolling and allow for sustainable, scalable, long term solutions to these challenges. C-suite leadership also needs to be educated and have buy in for any of these things to move forward, even conversations about these topics.

Leadership "encourages" diversity in speech as a good thing we should strive towards, but we don't see that translated into action / numbers at the highest level. Which is confusing - we talk the talk, but somehow our feet don't walk the walk. Would be nice to see leadership "encouraging" diversity by example.

A stronger commitment from leadership and a willingness to make this a priority rather than something we're talking about doing "someday".

In upper management, it's still mostly white males. Also it would be nice to have slightly more blind initial screens when hiring candidates. Most managers I know have no conscious bias, but everyone has unconscious bias.

From a female perspective, we need more women in leadership. We have a lot of women of different races in various mid-level management positions but none on high executive positions.

1) There's no official support for flex time, more of an unwritten "if your manager doesn't mind" rule, and this leaves some folks in the dust. 2) We hire diverse candidates at the entry level, but I see almost no diversity in our leadership. This says a lot about what the company values. 3) Strict PTO policies leave folks with difficult family situations (or family abroad) in a tough spot.

Our CEO talks about the importance of diversity, but we are still a pretty homogenous bunch. Lots of white millennials from liberal arts colleges. I think we should be recruiting from different types of programs (not just schools or through employee referrals). We are also horrible to young mothers and people dealing with mental illness!

The leadership team could practice what they preach. They could hire leadership with values that are necessary to bring us to the next step. Leadership is lacking diversity, they mostly come from the same company, and majority are white men who have a lot to say but don't do much.

Improving diversity in the senior leadership team. The senior leadership team is entirely white/male.

SKEPTICAL COMMENTS

We only received three open-ended responses that were skeptical of the issue or of it being a problem and they were written by those who identified as men:

They should be hiring the best candidates.. in tech you can't just give someone a job they can't do because of who they are. That puts them in a position of resentment from coworkers not for who they are but by creating more work for others or taking away from their work by constantly having to show the person how to do said job. As long as someone can do their job and isn't a jerk I've never seen any problems with any diverse groups.. problems only occur when it's clear the person isn't qualified for the job and just got it because of some diversity incentive program.

None, tech is about your value add, not the color of your skin or creed.

It's never been an issue, so i think we're good.

Moving Forward

While we see that there is clearly an understanding that diversity and inclusion is important, the perceptions of real change are significantly different based along broad gender lines.

We can surmise that these differing opinions are because men are more likely to believe we live in a meritocracy and question the idea of unconscious bias than their less privileged colleagues. The [utopian ideal of meritocracy has been questioned](#) and [unconscious bias continues to be proven](#) as reality through numerous research studies. There is a clear frustration by many who aren't in a position of power. Many have provided tangible solutions, largely starting with leadership. So how do we move forward? How do companies start to implement some of the changes that are suggested here? How do we work with those in positions of power to provide guidance on creating and retaining a diverse workforce?

We believe that the suggestions provided by respondents are excellent, but many are not easy or free, which requires a true commitment and investment by companies to make change. We [wrote a post on this last year](#), and believe these are still great ways to move the needle.

What Indexing means:

Indexed scores depict a comparison of the weighted agreement score of a persona sub-segment against the total population. A value > 100 means the sub-segment is more inclined to agree with the statement compared to the population. A value < 100 means the sub-segment is less inclined to agree on the statement compared to population.

* Sample Interpretation: Men are 31% more likely than the entire population to affirm the statement.