

# BIG IDEAS

Behavioural  
Insights:  
Gender,  
Inclusivity,  
Diversity,  
Equality and  
Access

## Toolkit for Improving Diversity in the Workplace



“ The BIG IDEAs initiative is working on the immensely important issue of workplace inequality. It is making a real difference by implementing cutting edge research insights into workplaces. ”

**Professor Iris Bohnet** is on our advisory board. She is the Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government and the co-director of the Women and Public

Policy Program at Harvard Kennedy School. She is the author of the award-winning book *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*.



To find out more and get involved, please email lead researcher **Professor Oliver Hauser** [o.hauser@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:o.hauser@exeter.ac.uk) or visit [www.big-ideas-initiative.co.uk](http://www.big-ideas-initiative.co.uk)



University  
of Exeter



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The **BIG IDEAs** (**B**ehavioural **I**nsights: **G**ender, **I**nclusivity, **D**iversity, **E**quality and **A**ccess) Initiative is a team of leading academic researchers at Exeter and Harvard working with business leaders, such as BIT and Unilever. We work closely with organisations to create tailored, evidence-based interventions designed to improve equality in their workplace.



We leverage learnings from across economics, psychology, and management to design and test these interventions (see the next page for examples). These interventions lead to a better working knowledge of how we create more fairness in the workplace

through observing actual hiring, promotion, and retention outcomes of disadvantaged groups.

We are funded by the UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship and hosted at the University of Exeter Business School.

**Below are three of our latest published research insights into how to become an equality championing employer:**

### **1** Gender Proportionality Principle (GPP)

The GPP states that any given level in an organization should aim to reflect the gender composition of the level immediately below it. This is a useful tool for managers to reflect on their hiring and promotion data. Following similar initiatives, Unilever reported that they've seen more thoughtful decision-making by management, contributing to Unilever reaching its goal of gender parity in managerial roles ahead of schedule in early 2020.

**ADD TO THE WORKPLACE:**  
Provide managers with data on their hiring and promotion decisions.

*This research was published in the Harvard Business Review and written by Siri Chilazi, Iris Bohnet, and Oliver Hauser.*

### **2** Resumes: Years, not Dates

Those who have taken a career break can face discrimination when re-entering the workplace. A prime example of this is mothers applying for jobs after spending some years raising their children. This study showed that writing job experience in terms of years, not dates, on a CV was enough to increase call-backs from real employers to applicants by 15%.

**ADD TO THE WORKPLACE:**  
Request that employment history is recorded as 'years experience' rather than 'date started/date ended'.

*This research was published in the journal Nature and written by Ariella S. Kristal, Leonie Nicks, Jamie L. Gloor and Oliver Hauser.*

### **3** Women and Men are Equally Generous

This study showed that women and men both think that women are more generous and equality-oriented, however there is little to no evidence that women are more generous in reality. This presents a situation where a "benevolent" belief could harm women in the workplace: results show that being perceived as too generous and equality-oriented with all employees means high-performing employees prefer to work for a male leader rather than a female leader.

**ADD TO THE WORKPLACE:**  
Instead of framing job ads for leadership roles as "competitive", consider using more inclusive qualities in candidates, such as "supportive" and "equal-oriented".

*This research is based on a University of Exeter economics working paper written by Christine L. Exley, Oliver P. Hauser, Molly Moore, and John-Henry Pezzuto.*