



Serious about supporting women's careers

Diverse City Careers' story

Summary

Diverse City Careers operates Australia's only online jobs' board that selects companies to work with based on their commitment to support women's careers. The personal experiences of the company's founders of the difficulties that women face in pursuing careers, especially in industries traditionally seen as male-dominated, prompted them to set up the business, where women can find jobs with employers of choice for women.

Need for employers of choice for women

Diverse City Careers (DCC) was founded by Gemma Lloyd and Valeria Ignatieva to promote companies that support women's careers and promoting flexible workplace practices, particularly in sectors with high gender inequality rates, such as IT.

On the DCC online jobs' board, there is no place for companies with poor internal supports for women, no leadership programs, inadequate parental leave policies, and outdated management practices. DCC will only advertise jobs from companies that it has judged, through a rigorous qualification process, to have genuine initiatives in place to support women, such as leadership mentoring programs, good parental leave, flexibility, and an overall environment where women can thrive.

DCC is in a position to influence positive change in the jobs market because many of the companies they have rejected are now proactively working towards meeting DCC criteria to be reassessed as employers who genuinely support women's careers.

Personal experiences

Gemma and Valeria both worked in IT for some years, and have personally experienced the challenges women working in IT regularly face. In her first two jobs in IT, Gemma worked in 'boys club' environments where she was expected to make the tea and take notes in meetings, despite being as qualified as her male counterparts, or often she'd meet with clients who assumed she was the IT professional's assistant. Happily though, through volunteering with Females in IT and Telecommunications (FITT), Gemma and Valeria discovered IT companies that were refreshingly different. These companies realised that their business was more successful when there was a healthy balance of women and men in the workforce, and in leadership roles.

Enter Diverse City Careers

The question was how to connect women with the types of companies that would actively encourage and support them in their careers.

DCC was born because Gemma and Valeria realised that the existing job market for industries such as IT was permeated with masculine language, and images of all-male workplaces that discouraged women from even applying for jobs. And when women did apply for, or get jobs, they often faced bias which further discouraged them. A major obstacle was that women were not able to assess the culture of a company before applying for a job there.

Identifying supportive companies

DCC developed criteria for identifying supportive employers, which it now uses in its qualification process for companies to advertise on the online jobs' board. Not only do companies that advertise on the jobs' board have to qualify, but their ads must also be designed to attract women by focusing on potential, transferable skills (rather than years of experience); images of women in their workplaces; and gender-neutral language. Employers are also encouraged to share stories on the DCC website of their creative gender diversity initiatives to support women in their workplaces.

Advice for employers

Diverse City Careers suggest the following strategies for employers who want to tap into a more diverse talent pool:

- * Focus on outcomes rather than time spent in the office to enable more inclusive and happy workplaces.
- * Offer mentoring and leadership programs for women, equal pay, parent-friendly policies and leave, and other supports.
- * Flexibility is important; so always consider if a role can be offered as flexible, and actively encourage flexible work patterns.
- * Consider hiring people for their potential, rather than their years of experience.
- * Promote the business benefits of diversity.
- * Use gender-neutral language to advertise.
- * Empower people to make decisions within their area of expertise, and give them opportunities to learn and to reach their full potential.

Where to find out more about supporting women in the workplace

Workplace Gender Equality Agency <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>

Diverse City Careers <https://www.diversecitycareers.com/>

Australian Human Rights Commission, Sex discrimination web page <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination>



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