appcast™

The Impact of Gendered Wording on Candidate Attraction

appcast.io

Table of Contents

Introduction

In Q2 2020, Appcast became familiar with [research conducted by the University of Waterloo and Duke University](), which examined the use of gendered wording in job ads and the impact of the language on female and male candidates. The academic study found that women were less likely to apply for jobs when job ads include male-coded words. However, men were just as likely to apply for jobs when female-coded words were used in job ads.

Intrigued by the study, Appcast decided to conduct its own analysis, with a focus on gendered wording as it relates to **cost per application (CPA), apply rate (AR), and average number of applications per job**. We chose to view this data through the lens of job functions.

This Appcast study uses the gendered wording originally identified within the academic study, job ads from Appcast's extensive jobs database, as well as data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and other sources in order to provide gender context for job functions.

The objective of this report is to give hiring organizations insight into how job ad wording choices impact recruitment advertising outcomes.

Appcast Research finds that the impact of word choices on recruitment outcomes varies based on job function. In addition, our findings don't always align with those from the academic study. This is likely attributable to a number of factors, including that Appcast looked at nearly 473,742 job ads, while the academic study sampling was far smaller. Appcast findings are also based on actual applications, as opposed to a controlled study. This said, we acknowledge the important work of the University of Waterloo and Duke University researchers, and thank them for leading us down this path.

We would also like to acknowledge that while this study looks at two genders, we recognize there is a full spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine.

We hope hiring organizations and the recruitment advertising community will find this report useful.

Terminology

Gendered wording: The use of "masculine- and feminine-themed words, such as those associated with gender stereotypes."*

Sample List of Masculine-Coded Words: Active, Adventurous, Aggressive, Ambitious, Assertive, Autonomy, Challenge, Competitive, Decisive, etc.

Sample List of Feminine-Coded Words: Affectionate, Cheerful, Committed, Compassionate, Connected, Considerate, Cooperative, Empathetic, etc..

(Additional information regarding the study can be found on page 5.)

*Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., & Key, A. C. (2011). *Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality.* Journal of Personalityand Social Psychology, 101(1), 109-128.

JOB AD CATEGORIES

Male-coded job ads: Job ads that use words from the "masculine-coded" list

Female-coded job ads: Job ads that use words from the "feminine-coded" list

Gender-neutral job ads: Job ads that do not contain masculine- or feminine-coded words

Both / gender-balanced job ads: Job ads that contain BOTH feminine and masculine-coded words (at least one of each)

JOB FUNCTION CATEGORIES

Predominantly-female job functions: Job functions with at least 60% female workers

Predominantly-male job functions: Job functions with at least 60% male workers

Gender-balanced job functions: Job functions with between 40-60% female/male workers

JOB FUNCTION CATEGORIES

Cost per application (CPA): Cost to acquire an application

Apply rate: The conversion rate from a click on a job posting to the completion of an application

Applications per job: Average number of applications for each given job

Scope & Methodology

Appcast looked at 473,742 jobs advertised from August 1, 2020 through August 31, 2020; we excluded Gig Economy and Online Marketplace job ads from our analysis.

We then used lists of gender-coded words from the University of Waterloo and Duke University study.

It's worth explaining the origin of the gender-coded words initially used in the academic research, since these words were also used by Appcast. University of Waterloo and Duke University researchers relied on a variety of sources to create lists of female- and male-coded words, which formed the basis of their study.

The academic research paper notes: "As a measure of gendered wording, lists of masculine and feminine words were created with published lists of agentic and communal words (e.g., individualistic, competitive, committed, supportive; Bartz & Lydon, 2004; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000) and masculine and feminine trait words (e.g., ambitious, assertive, compassionate, understanding; Bem, 1974; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990; Schullo & Alperson, 1984; see Appendix A for a complete list of the words that were coded)."

Appcast used the words in Appendix A of the academic research paper for its analysis.The complete academic research paper, Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality, as published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in 2011, is available here.

Scope & Methodology, cont.

From the original lists, we removed words that were either pervasive across all job ads (responsible, support, self-sufficient, objective) or overwhelmingly skewed in a category (principal, child, analysis). Additionally, we looked at each of the root words and considered derivatives (for example, logic/logical).

For this study, Appcast only considered words in the job description; title and location fields were ignored.
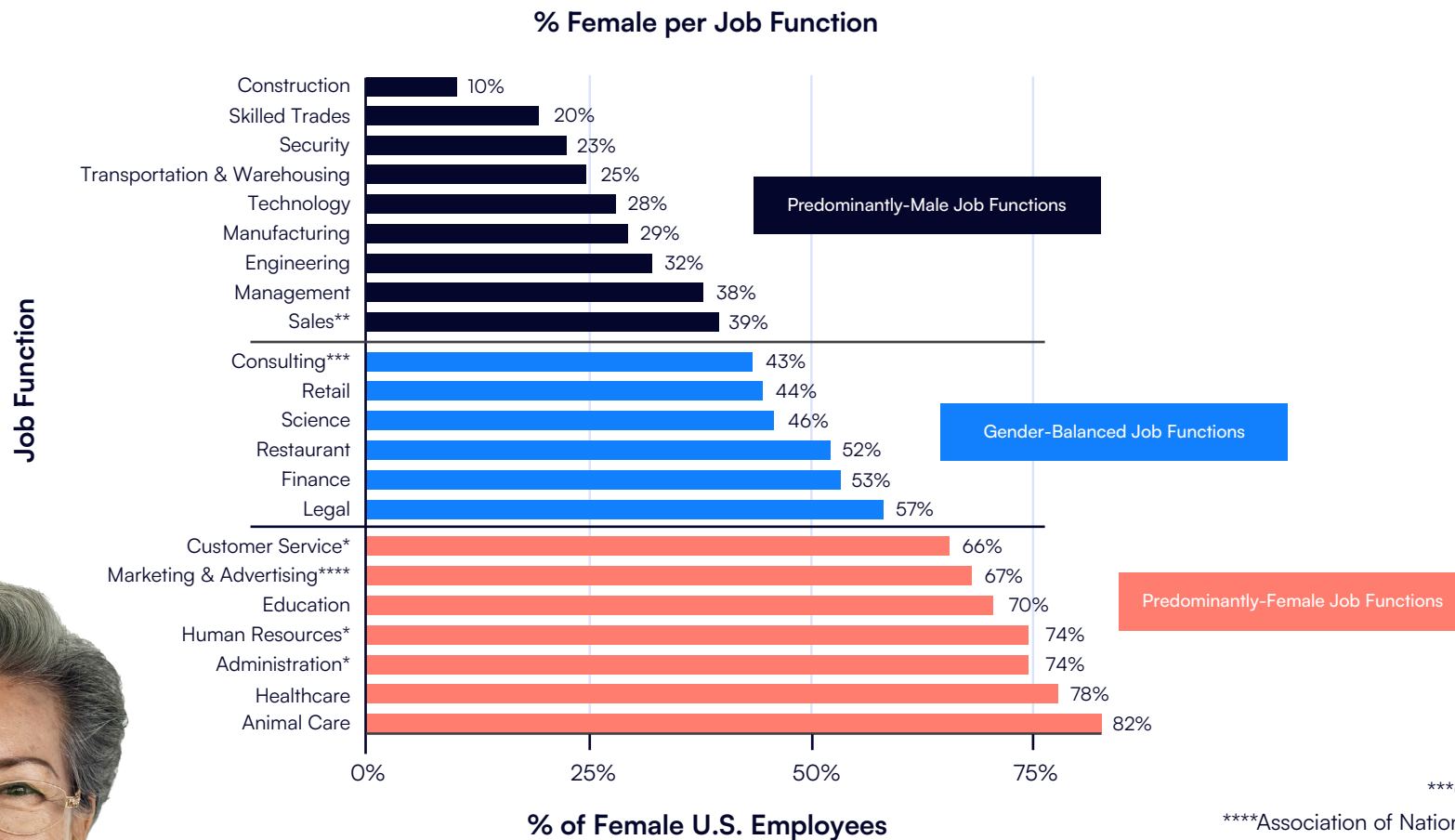
To arrive at results, we compared job ads that contained no gender-coded words (gender-neutral) to job ads that included gender-coded words from both the female- and male-coded words lists. We also analyzed job ads with female-coded words and job ads with male-coded words.

Appcast then calculated the percentage of the total number of job ads in each of these groups, along with the cost per application (CPA), apply rate (AR), and average number of applications per job.

To understand findings in context, Appcast calculated the data for each of 22 job functions and then again in roll-ups within three job function categories: predominantly-male, gender-balanced, and predominantly-female.

As part of the analysis, Appcast also identified the most frequently used female- and male-coded words in job ads for each job function and category, and then determined which among these were used the most. The words that were used at least three times more than any other in the job function or category have been highlighted in this report.

Scope & Methodology

% Female per Job Function

Job Function (y-axis) vs **% of Female U.S. Employees** (x-axis)

Predominantly-Male Job Functions:
- Construction: 10%
- Skilled Trades: 20%
- Security: 23%
- Transportation & Warehousing: 25%
- Technology: 28%
- Manufacturing: 29%
- Engineering: 32%
- Management: 38%
- Sales**: 39%

Gender-Balanced Job Functions:
- Consulting***: 43%
- Retail: 44%
- Science: 46%
- Restaurant: 52%
- Finance: 53%
- Legal: 57%

Predominantly-Female Job Functions:
- Customer Service*: 66%
- Marketing & Advertising****: 67%
- Education: 70%
- Human Resources*: 74%
- Administration*: 74%
- Healthcare: 78%
- Animal Care: 82%

Source: BLS, 2019
*O*NET, 2018
**Forbes, 2018
***Consulting.us, 2020
****Association of National Advertisers, 2018

Overall, men and women are fairly evenly represented in the U.S. workforce.

However, this representation does not necessarily translate to job functions or individual jobs within those functions. To provide further insight, we looked at 22 job functions with attention to three classifications: Predominantly-Male Job Functions, Gender-Balanced Job Functions, and Predominantly-Female Job Functions. It is through this lens that Appcast provides recommendations on how to best leverage language in your job ads for candidate attraction.

Executive Summary

The words you use in your job ads matter.

The impact of gendered wording on recruitment outcomes varies by job function.

That said, job ads with gender-neutral language (i.e., language that does not contain "masculine-" or "feminine-" coded words) overwhelmingly perform best **across all measures**.

The impact of gendered wording on job ads varies for professional vs blue-collar roles.

▶ Job ads for professional roles consistently perform better (i.e., higher apply rate, lower cost per application) when gender-neutral language is used.

▶ Job ads for blue-collar or hourly roles perform better when both masculine- and feminine-coded words are present.

Among the 22 job functions considered for this study there are a number of patterns.

▶ For **more than 50% of job functions**, job ads with female-coded words are the most pervasive.

▶ For **nearly 75% of professional job functions**, job ads with female-coded words are most pervasive.

▶ For **nearly 60% of blue-collar or hourly job functions**, gender-neutral language is most pervasive.

A 2011 academic study suggested that female-coded words in job ads have no impact on candidate application rates, while male-coded words do. Appcast Research finds that both female- and male-coded words impact application rates, as does the presence of *both* female- and male-coded words, as well as the absence of those words.

appcast™

How to Use This Report

It is most helpful to consider the data in this report within the context of the job functions themselves. Some job functions are fairly balanced from a gender standpoint, while others skew toward more men or more women. With this in mind, the data has been organized into categories, based on how job functions currently lean: predominantly-male, gender-balanced, or predominantly-female.

It's important to recognize that although a particular job function may be gender-balanced or lean more heavily a certain way, it doesn't mean the categorization applies to all jobs within the job function.

As you review report findings by job functions, you will find some high-level data around cost per application (CPA), apply rate (AR), and applications per job.

For each job function, there is also a highlighted box with recommendations for that function. Keep in mind there are sometimes tradeoffs; for example, you may have to choose between a lower CPA or more applications.

Lastly, while words matter, it is essential to understand your specific recruitment advertising goals and make decisions accordingly by using the most appropriate language for your business.
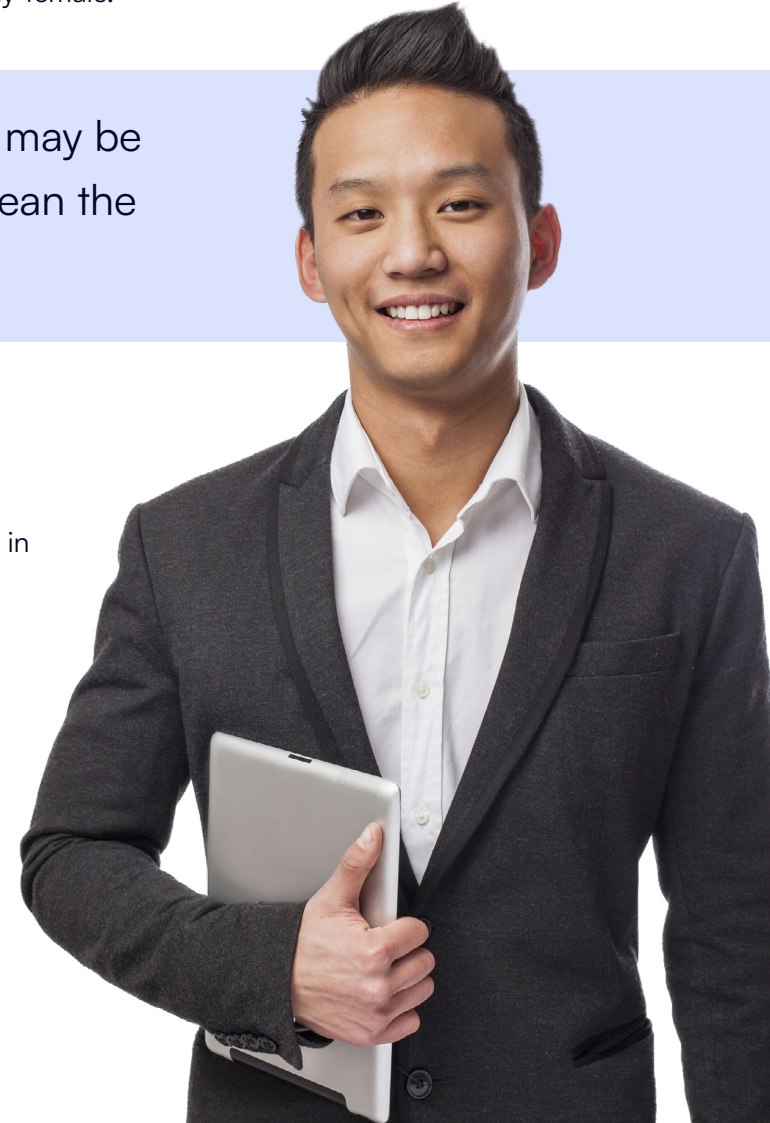
Overall Results

Job ads with gender-neutral language (i.e., without male- or female- coded words) result in more applications and lower cost per applications (CPAs).

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words   *Ambitious*   *Confident*   *Decision*   *Logic(al)*   *Superior*

Female-Coded Words   *Compassionate*   *Emotion(al)*   *Interpersonal*   *Sensitive*   *Warm*

Gender-neutral ads (i.e., ads without male- or female-coded words) result in:

41%	29%	24%	44%	20%
lower CPA compared to ads with both male- and female-coded words	more applications per job compared to ads with both male and female-coded	better apply rate compared to ads with both male- and female-coded words	more applications per job compared to ads with female-coded words	better apply rate compared to job ads with male-coded words

Source: Appcast Research

appcast™

Overall Results

Remove gendered wording from your job ads for the best results.

Job ads with gender-neutral language (i.e., language without male- and female-coded words) drive the highest apply rate and lowest cost. **As compared to gender-neutral job ads:**

▶ Female-coded words increase CPA by 26% and decrease applications per job by 10%

▶ Male-coded words increase CPA by 47% and decrease applications per job by 11%

▶ Job ads with both female- and male-coded words increase CPA by 70% and decrease applications per job by 22%

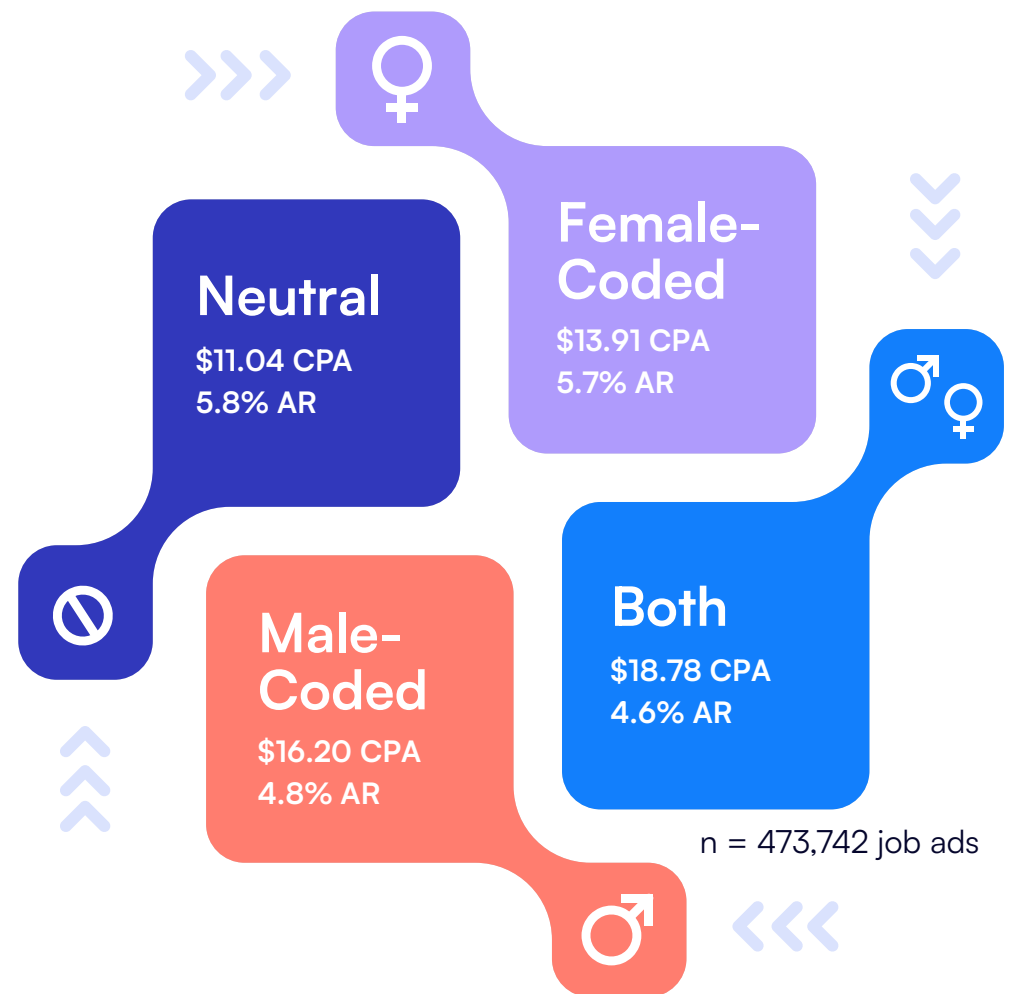**53%*** of U.S. workers are male

42% of job ads **include** female-coded words

37% of job ads use gender-neutral language

25% of job ads **include** male-coded words

15% of job ads use both

Neutral
$11.04 CPA
5.8% AR

Female-Coded
$13.91 CPA
5.7% AR

Male-Coded
$16.20 CPA
4.8% AR

Both
$18.78 CPA
4.6% AR

n = 473,742 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Predominantly-Male Job Functions
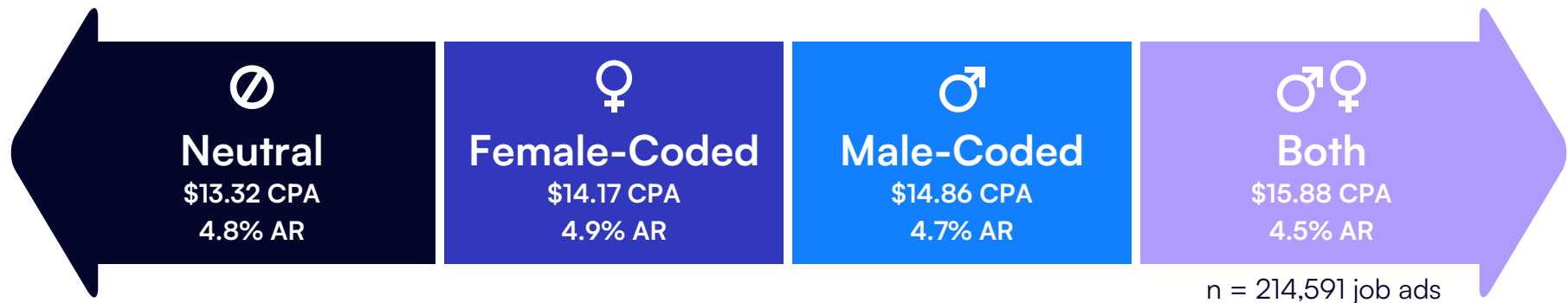
Predominantly-Male Job Functions Summary

▶ Predominantly-male job functions split almost evenly between traditional blue-collar or hourly roles (Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation & Warehousing) and professional roles (Sales, Technology, and Engineering).

▶ Job ads with both masculine- and feminine-coded words perform best for predominantly-male blue collar or hourly job functions.

▶ Job ads with gender-neutral language perform best for predominantly-male professional job functions.

▶ Management and Security are the two outliers in this group. In Management, job ads with both masculine- and feminine-coded words perform best, while in Security, job ads with gender-neutral language perform best.

▶ Decision and Superior are the male-coded words most frequently used in job ads for predominantly-male job functions.

On average, job ads with gender-neutral language perform better. But job ads with **both** female- and male-coded words perform best for blue-collar or hourly roles.

::: appcast™

Overall Results: Predominantly-Male Job Functions

To attract more candidates, start by removing any male- or female-coded words from your job ads.

⊘ **Neutral** $13.32 CPA 4.8% AR	♀ **Female-Coded** $14.17 CPA 4.9% AR	♂ **Male-Coded** $14.86 CPA 4.7% AR	♂♀ **Both** $15.88 CPA 4.5% AR

n = 214,591 job ads

Job ads with gender-neutral language get 145% more applications per job at a 16% lower CPA than job ads with both female- and male-coded words.

Job ads with gender-neutral language get more applications at the lowest CPA, yet job ads with female-coded words have the highest apply rate.

47% of job ads are for predominantly-male job functions

40% of job ads are gender-neutral

25% of job ads have male-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Confident/(ce)	Decision	Superior
Female-Coded Words	Interpersonal	Sensitive	Warm
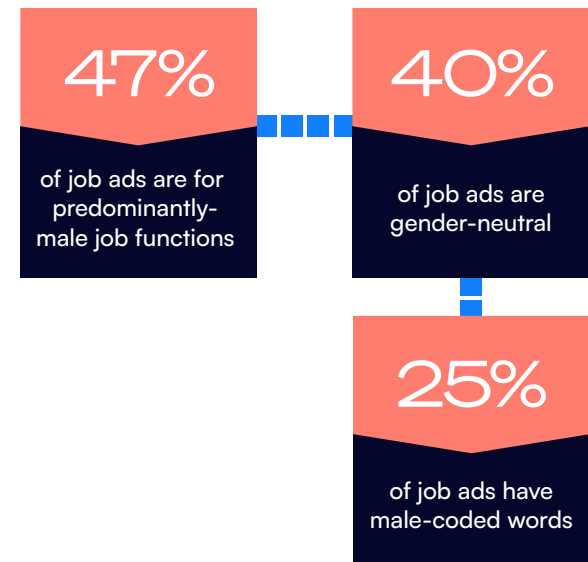
Source: Appcast Research

Construction

Include female- and male-coded words to optimize for the best results.

17% of job ads have both female- and male-coded words which results in the lowest CPA and gets 90% more applications per job than gender-neutral language.

90%* of Construction workers are male

50% of job ads have male-coded words

37% of job ads use gender-neutral language

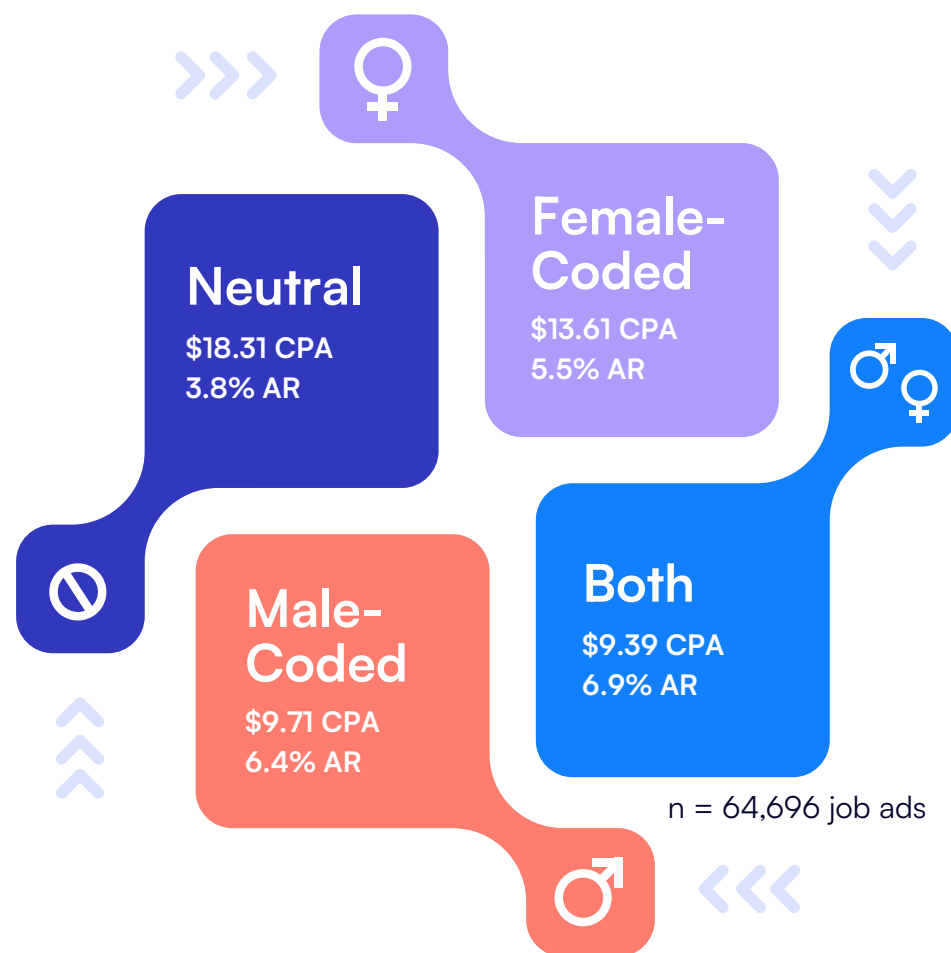### Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Interpersonal*
Decision	*Kind*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

Neutral
$18.31 CPA
3.8% AR

Female-Coded
$13.61 CPA
5.5% AR

Male-Coded
$9.71 CPA
6.4% AR

Both
$9.39 CPA
6.9% AR

n = 64,696 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

appcast™

Engineering

While job ads with masculine-coded language net more candidates with a lower CPA, if you are prioritizing gender diversity, remove masculine- and feminine-coded language.

68%* of Engineering workers are male

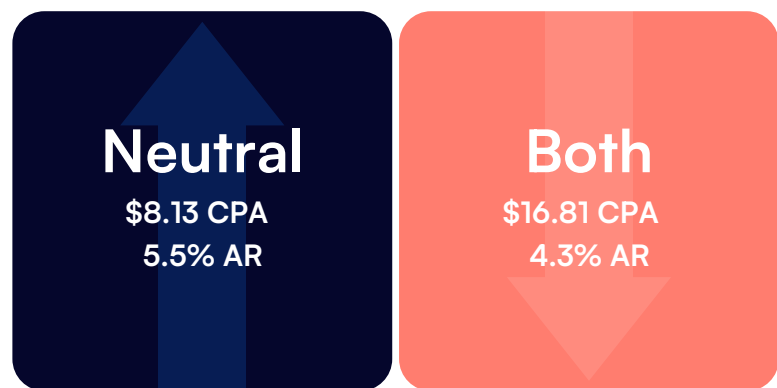**58%** of job ads use gender-neutral language

Job ads **without** masculine- or feminine-coded language return 19% more applications at a 52% lower CPA, compared to job ads that use **both** female- and male-coded words.

Job Ads with Male-Coded Words

25% of job ads

87% more candidates than gender-neutral

18% lower CPA than gender-neutral

Neutral
$8.13 CPA
5.5% AR

Both
$16.81 CPA
4.3% AR

n = 5,963 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

Management

Remove male- and female-coded words from these job ads; gender-neutral job ads perform best.

♂♀ **Both** $13.12 CPA 5.1% AR	♂ **Male-Coded** $11.24 CPA 5.5% AR	♀ **Female-Coded** $11.92 CPA 5.5% AR	⊘ **Neutral** $8.09 CPA 5.6% AR

n = 18,975 job ads
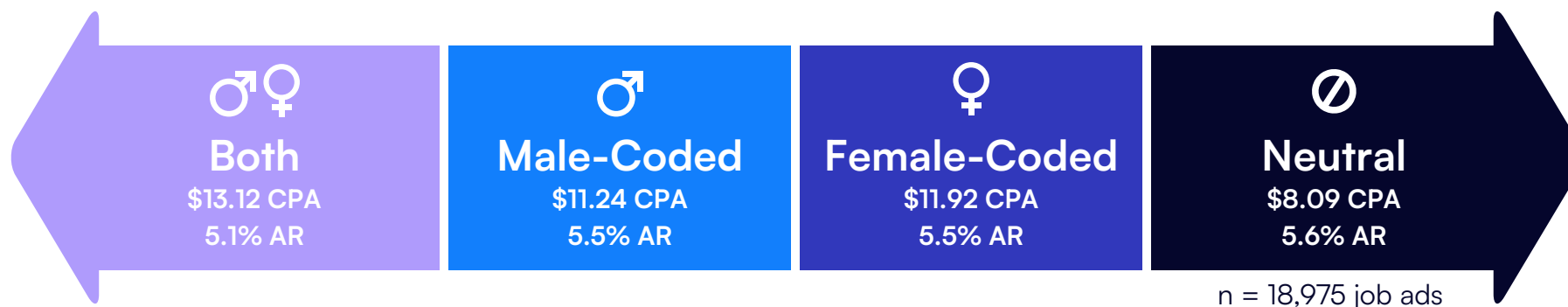
37% of these job ads are gender neutral. These job ads have the lowest CPA and an apply rate 10% higher than job ads with both gendered terms.

Job ads with male-coded words get 8% more applications per job than job ads with both female- and male-coded words.

62%*
of Management workers are male

37%
of job ads are gender-neutral

28%
of job ads have male-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	Interpersonal
Decision	Kind
Superior	Warm

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

:::appcast™

Manufacturing

Use both female- and male-coded words in your job ads to attract the greatest number of candidates.

Job ads with **both** female- and male-coded words get more applications at the lowest CPA, and the most applications per job.
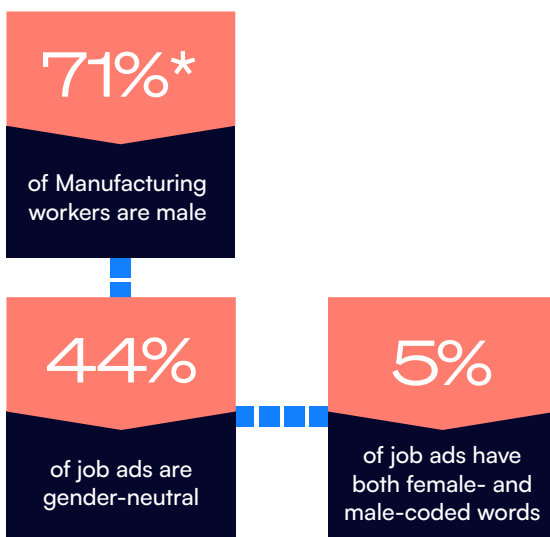
Job ads with both female- and male-coded words, in comparison to gender-neutral job ads, result in:

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Ambitious/(tion)	*Interpersonal*
Decision	*Kind*
Superior	***Warm***

71%*
of Manufacturing workers are male

44%
of job ads are gender-neutral

5%
of job ads have both female- and male-coded words

♂♀

115%
more applications per job

30%
better apply rate

27%
lower CPA

Neutral
$12.02 CPA
5.7% AR

Both
$8.76 CPA
7.4% AR

n = 10,043 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

:::appcast™

Sales

Make sure your job ads do not use gender-coded words. Removing gender-coded words, male or female, from job ads will result in lower CPAs and far more candidates.

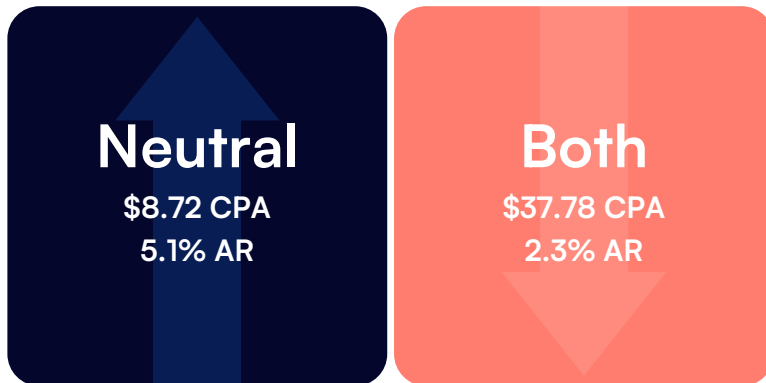## 61%* of Sales workers are male

10% of job ads are gender-neutral

48% of job ads have both female- and male-coded words

Job Ads with Male-Coded Words

60% of job ads

71% fewer applications than gender-neutral

165% higher CPA than gender-neutral

Neutral
$8.72 CPA
5.1% AR

Both
$37.78 CPA
2.3% AR

n = 44,539 job ads

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Interpersonal*
Decision	*Loyal(ty)*
Superior	*Nurture*

Source: Appcast Research
*Forbes

Security

To attract more candidates, start by removing any gender-coded words from your job ads.

Gender-neutral language gets more applications at the lowest CPA, where female-coded words lower the overall application count and increase CPA.

Gender-neutral job ads, in comparison to job ads with both female- and male-coded words, result in:

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Polite*
Superior	*Sensitive*

77%*
of Security workers are male

17%
of job ads are gender-neutral

81%
of job ads have female-coded words

♂♀

185%
more applications per job

107%
better apply rate

58%
lower CPA

Neutral
$7.12 CPA
6.0% AR

Both
$16.83 CPA
2.9% AR

n = 17,695 job ads
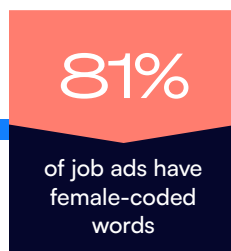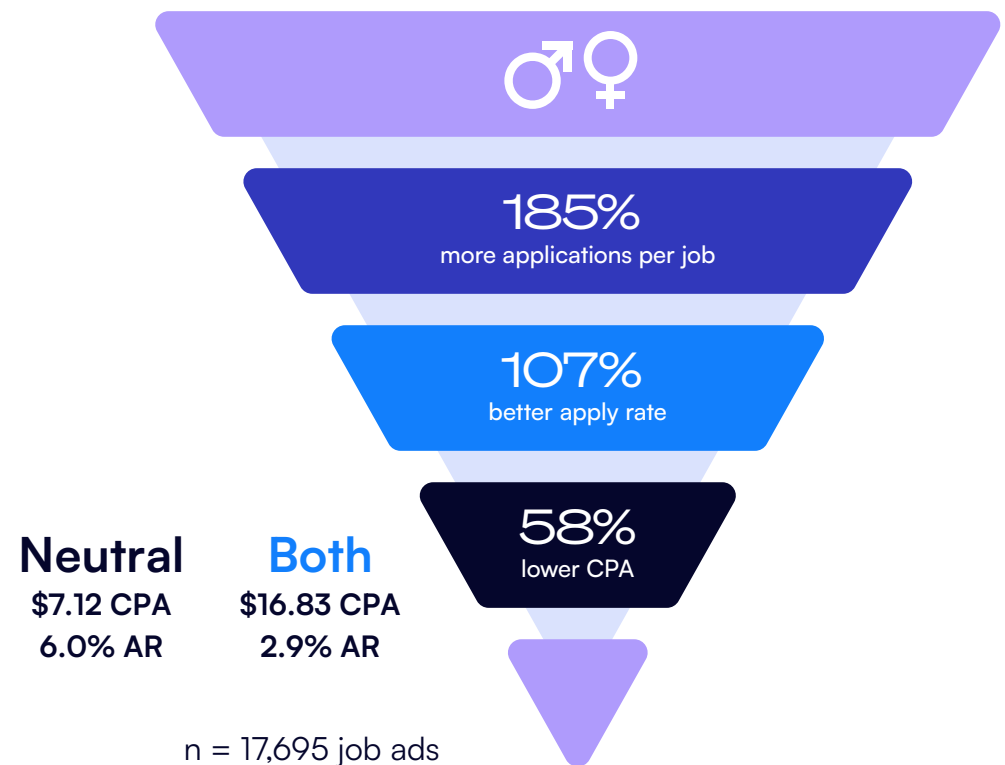
Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Skilled Trades

Include female-coded words in your job ads.

Female-Coded
$9.60 CPA
6.2% AR

Male-Coded
$11.17 CPA
4.8% AR

Both
$11.76 CPA
4.5% AR

Neutral
$13.17 CPA
5.3% AR

n = 15,634 job ads
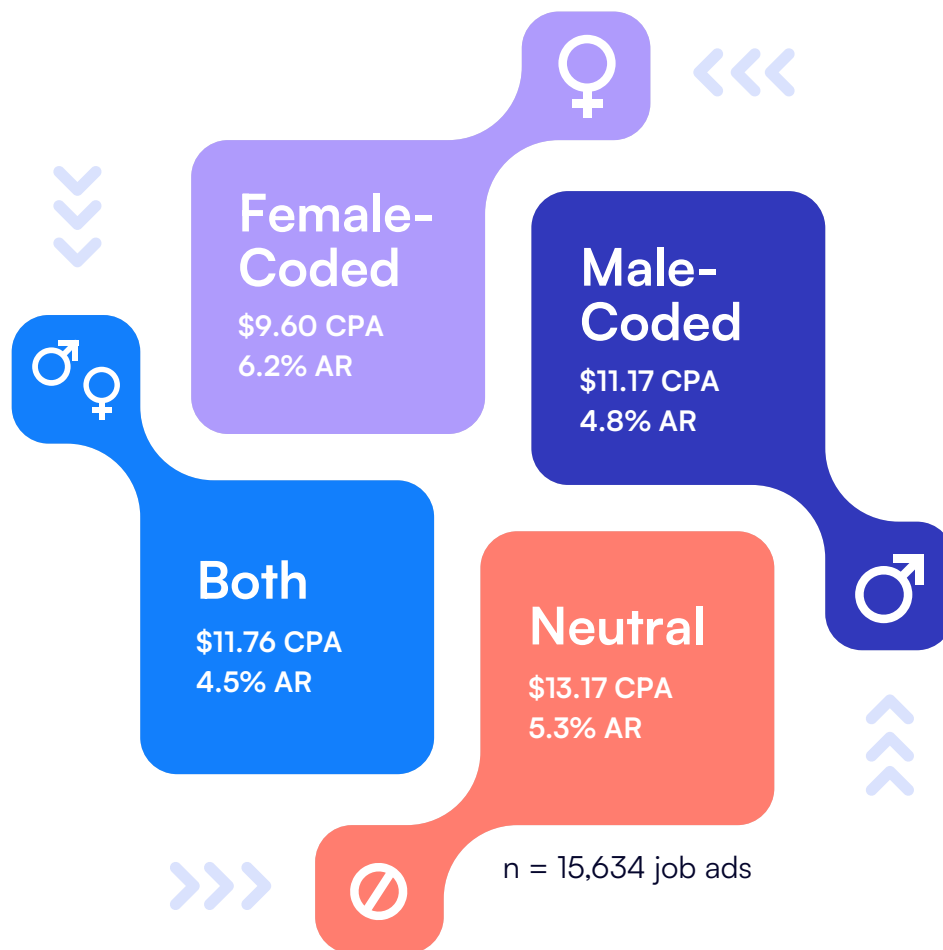
Job ads with female-coded words have the lowest CPA and highest apply rate. Regardless of word choice, all job ads generate similar number of applications per job.

80%* of Skilled Trades workers are male

73% of job ads are gender-neutral

16% of job ads have female-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

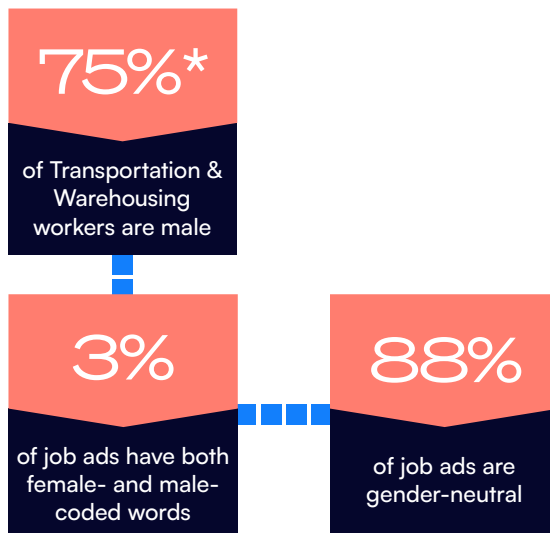| Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Logic(al)	*Honest(y)*
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Confident/(ce)	*Warm*

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

appcast™

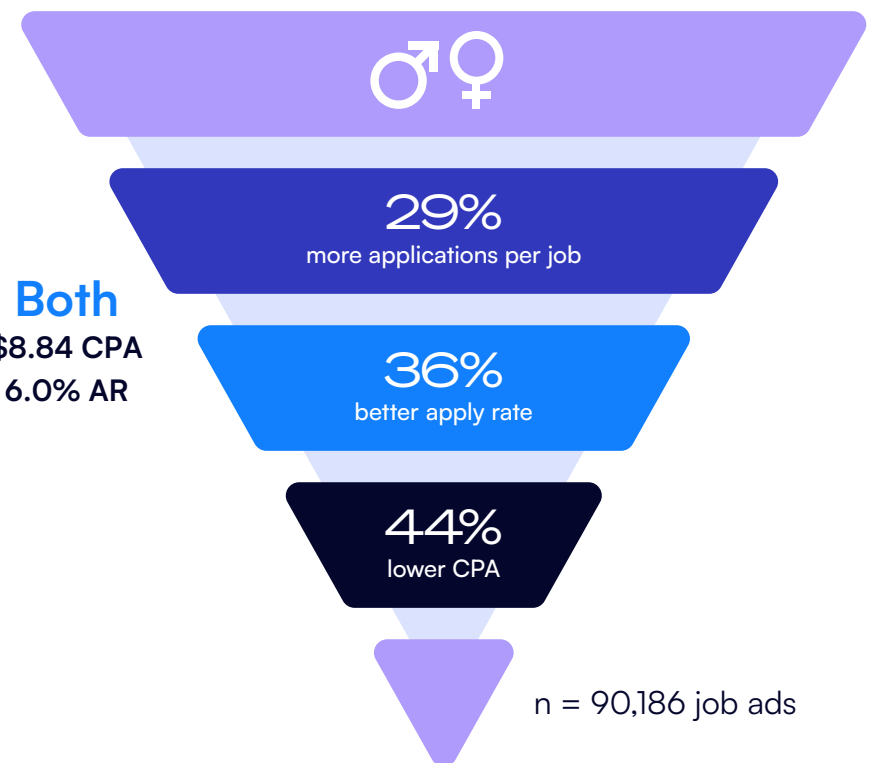# Transportation & Warehousing

Use both female- and male-coded words in your job ads to attract the greatest number of candidates.

Job ads with both female- and male-coded words have the highest apply rate and the lowest CPA, while job ads with male-coded words get 32% more applications but at 95% higher cost.

Gender-neutral job ads, in comparison to job ads with both female- and male-coded words, result in:

75%*
of Transportation & Warehousing workers are male

3%
of job ads have both female- and male-coded words

88%
of job ads are gender-neutral

Neutral
$15.71 CPA
4.4% AR

Both
$8.84 CPA
6.0% AR

♂♀

29%
more applications per job

36%
better apply rate

44%
lower CPA

n = 90,186 job ads

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Ambitious/(n)	Kind
Decision	Polite
Superior	Warm

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

appcast™

Technology

Add female-coded words to your job ads; in fact, job ads with both female- AND male-coded job ads perform best.

Female-Coded
$10.27 CPA
6.9% AR

Neutral
$11.60 CPA
5.4% AR

Both
$11.64 CPA
6.8% AR

Male-Coded
$12.80 CPA
5.7% AR

n = 10,976 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS
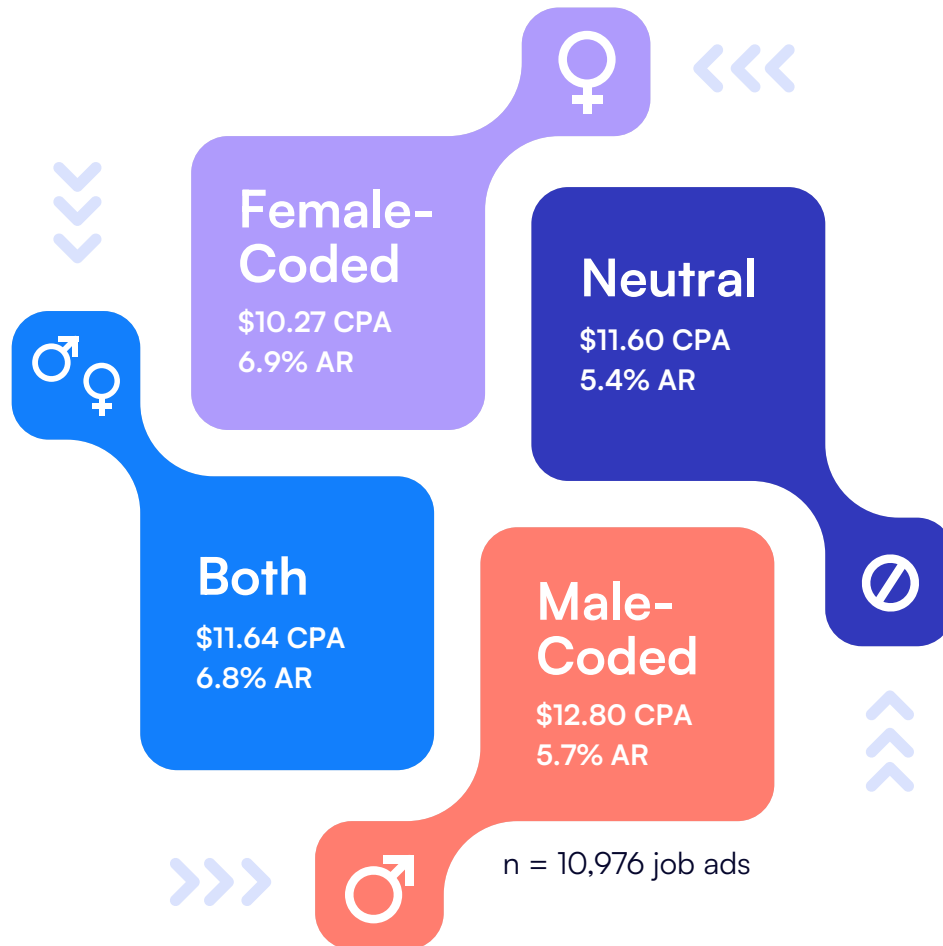
Job ads that include female-coded words have the lowest CPA (20% lower than job ads with male-coded words) and the highest apply rate.

Job ads with both female- and male-coded words get 44% more applications than job ads with only male-coded words. and 50% more applications than gender-neutral ads without male- or female-coded words.

72%* of Technology workers are male

48% of job ads have male-coded words

23% of job ads have female-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

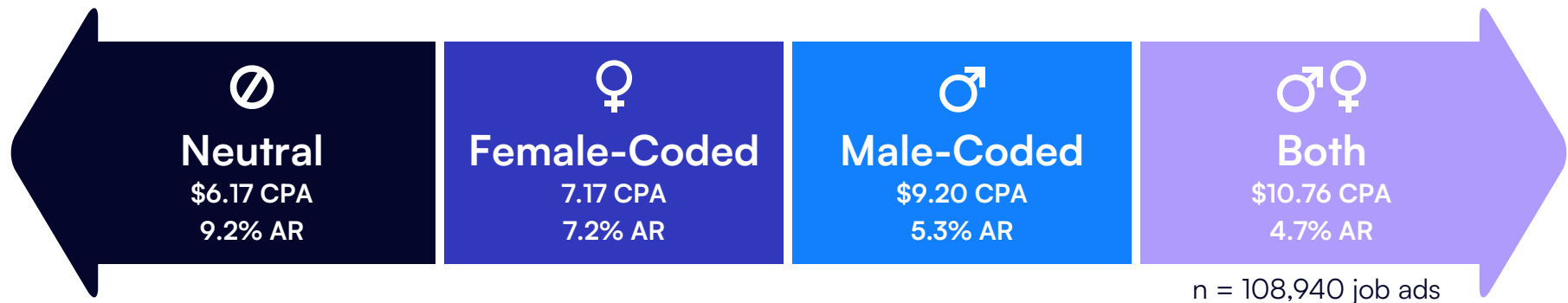# Gender-Balanced Job Functions

Gender-Balanced Job Functions Summary

▶ Findings for this group are less clear-cut, because some job functions that traditionally have been predominantly-male have become more gender-balanced.

▶ Additionally, Appcast did not explore the breakdown within job functions, such as lawyers vs. paralegals in the Legal job function category.

▶ 50% of job ads for these job functions include female-coded words.

▶ Recommendations by job function are also inconsistent; job ads with gender-neutral language perform better for some job functions, while others perform better with both female- and male-coded words. Nevertheless, for three of the four professional roles, the use of gender-neutral language in job ads is recommended.

▶ Decision and Confident/(ce) are the male-coded words most frequently used in job ads for gender-balanced job functions.

▶ Interpersonal and Compassion(ate) are the female-coded words most frequently used in job ads for gender-balanced job functions.

Even though 50% of job ads within this group have female- coded words, job ads with gender-neutral language still perform best across all measures.
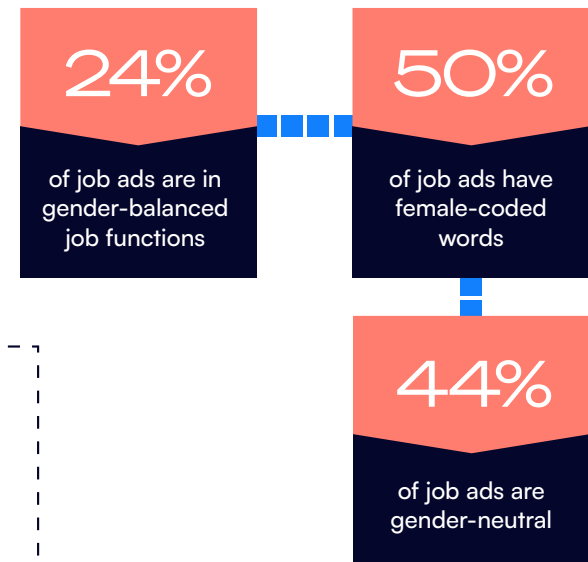
::: appcast™

Overall Results: Gender-Balanced Job Functions

Gender-neutral job ads are best, and job ads with male-coded words should be avoided.

⊘ **Neutral** $6.17 CPA 9.2% AR	♀ **Female-Coded** 7.17 CPA 7.2% AR	♂ **Male-Coded** $9.20 CPA 5.3% AR	♂♀ **Both** $10.76 CPA 4.7% AR

n = 108,940 job ads

Job ads with gender-neutral language get the highest apply rate, lowest CPA, and most applications per job. Compared to job ads with gender-neutral language, job ads with female-coded words get 46% fewer candidates at a 16% higher CPA and job ads with male-coded words get 25% fewer applications per job at a 49% higher CPA.

24% of job ads are in gender-balanced job functions

50% of job ads have female-coded words

44% of job ads are gender-neutral

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

| Male-Coded Words | *Confident/(ce)* | *Decision* | *Logic(al)* |
| Female-Coded Words | *Compassion(ate)* | *Interpersonal* | *Sensitive* |

*Source: Appcast Research*

Consulting

While job ads with masculine-coded language net more candidates, if you are prioritizing gender diversity, remove masculine-coded language; gender-neutral language improves CPAs as well.

57%* of Consulting workers are male

46% of job ads are gender-neutral

12% of job ads have both female- and male-coded words

Gender-neutral language has a 49% lower CPA but 16% fewer applications.

Neutral
$8.22 CPA
6.0% AR

Both
$16.02 CPA
3.5% AR
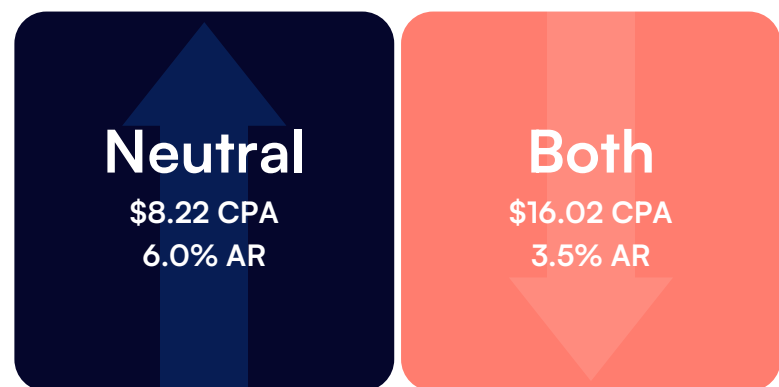
n = 4,272 job ads

Job Ads with Male-Coded Words

34% of job ads

103% more applications per job than gender-neutral

7% higher CPA than gender-neutral

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

Source: Appcast Research
*Consulting.us

Finance

Job ads with female-coded words perform best.

Female-Coded
$6.98 CPA
8.4% AR

Neutral
$6.99 CPA
6.4% AR

Male-Coded
$7.41 CPA
8.1% AR

Both
$7.94 CPA
8.7% AR

n = 5,643 job ads
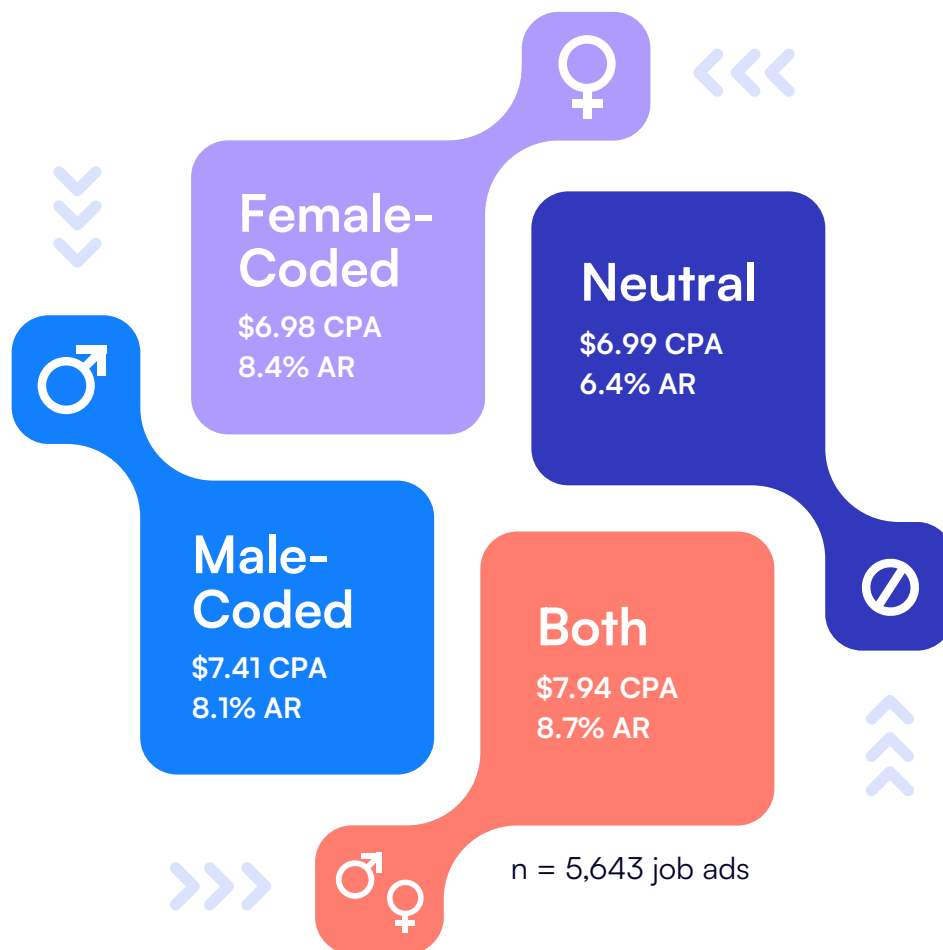
The 19% of job ads with female-coded words get the highest apply rate and lowest CPA, while job ads with male-coded words get slightly more applications per job but at a higher CPA.

47%* of Finance workers are male

64% of job ads are gender-neutral

12% of job ads have female- and male-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Interpersonal*
Decision	*Loyal(ty)*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

appcast™

Legal

The best course of action is to use both female- and male-coded words in your job ads.

Job ads with both female- and male-coded words get more applications at the lowest cost.

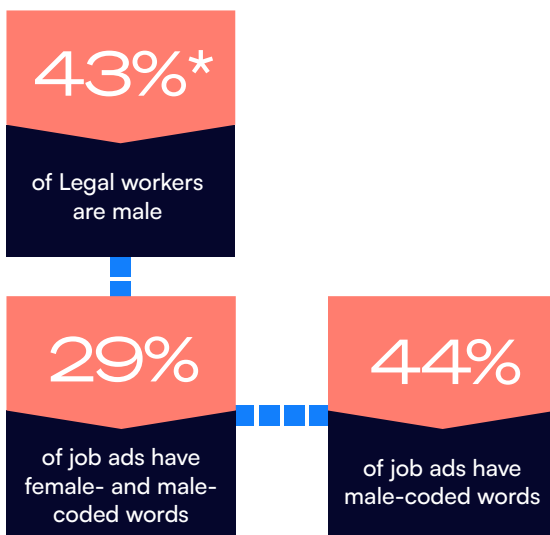### Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

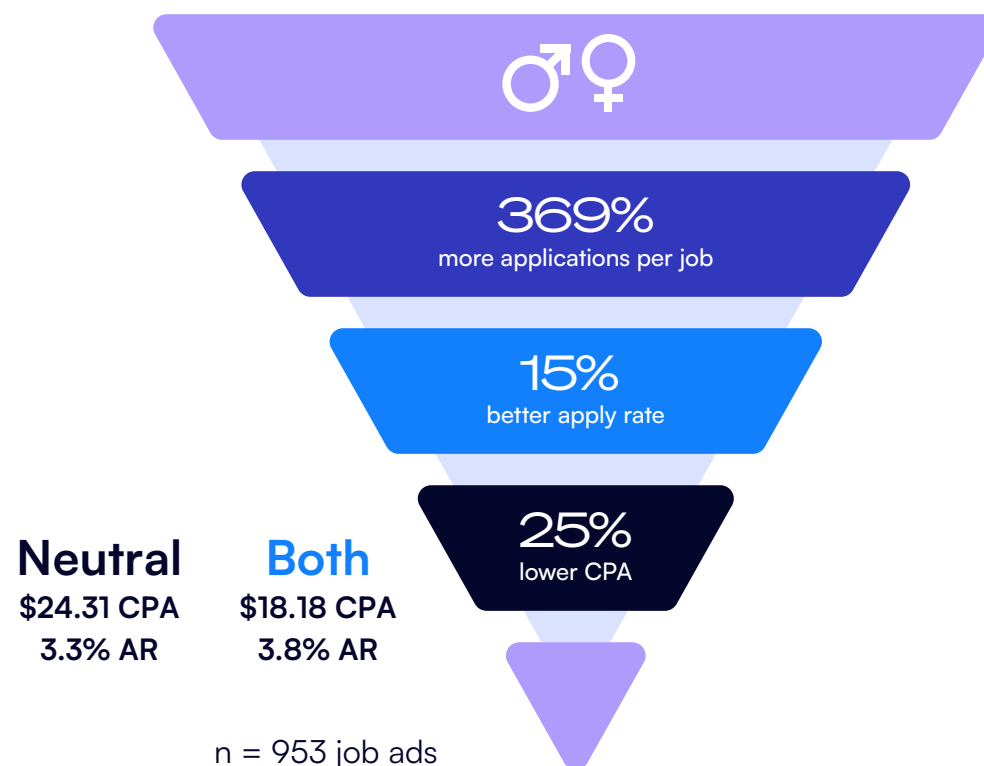| Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Empathy/(ic)*
Logic(al)	*Interpersonal*

43%*
of Legal workers are male

29%
of job ads have female- and male-coded words

44%
of job ads have male-coded words

Job ads with both female- and male-coded words, in comparison to gender-neutral job ads, result in:

369%
more applications per job

15%
better apply rate

25%
lower CPA

Neutral
$24.31 CPA
3.3% AR

Both
$18.18 CPA
3.8% AR

n = 953 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Restaurant

Gender-neutral job ads are best, and job ads with male-coded words should be avoided.

⊘ **Neutral** $5.43 CPA 10.7% AR	♀ **Female-Coded** $5.79 CPA 9.0% AR	♂ **Male-Coded** $6.76 CPA 5.2% AR	♂♀ **Both** $8.43 CPA 7.9% AR

n = 64,696 job ads
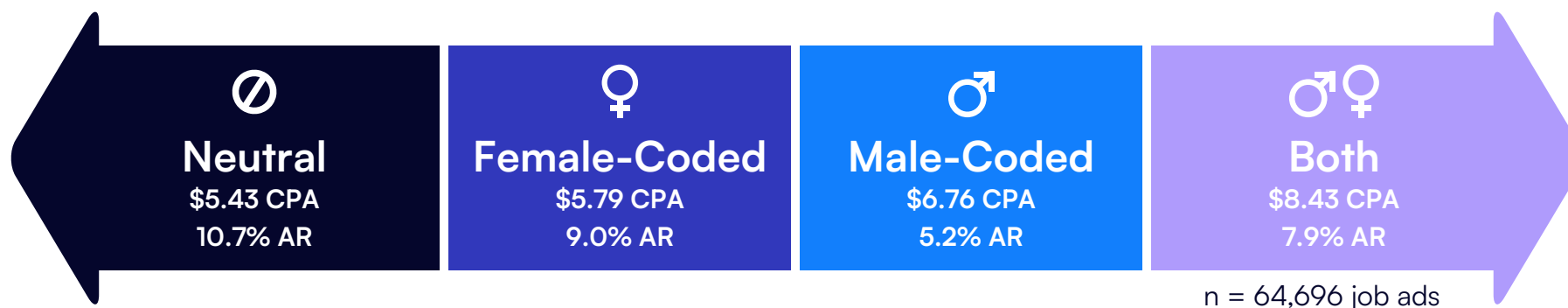
Gender-neutral language gets the highest apply rate and lowest CPA.

Job ads with female-coded words get 55% less candidates at a 7% higher CPA than gender-neutral job ads.

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	Honest
Decision	Interpersonal
Superior	*Warm*

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

48%* of Restaurant workers are male

53% of job ads are gender-neutral
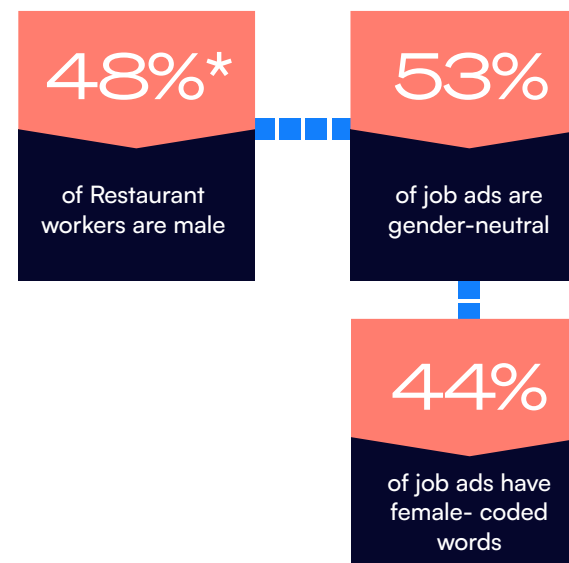
44% of job ads have female-coded words

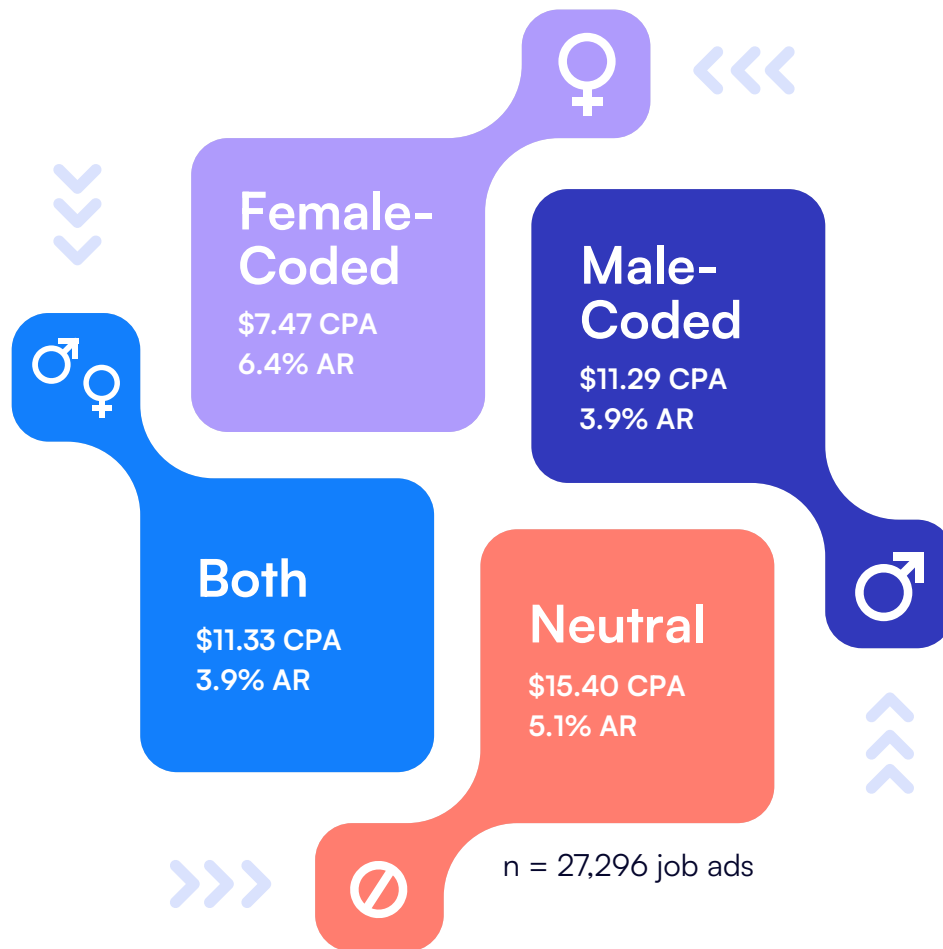:::appcast™

Retail

Job ads with female-coded words get the most applications at the lowest CPA. Job ads with both female- and male-coded words have a lower CPA than gender-neutral, but gender-neutral gets more candidates.

Female-Coded
$7.47 CPA
6.4% AR

Male-Coded
$11.29 CPA
3.9% AR

Both
$11.33 CPA
3.9% AR

Neutral
$15.40 CPA
5.1% AR

n = 27,296 job ads

Job ads with female-coded words have the highest apply rate and lowest CPA. Adding any male-coded words increases cost by 51%, while eliminating all gender-coded words increases costs by 206%.

56%* of Retail workers are male

40% of job ads have both female- and male-coded words

77% of job ads have female-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Superior	*Interpersonal*
Decision	Cooperative/(on)
Confident/(ce)	Warm

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Science

The best course of action is to use gender-neutral language in your job ads.

Gender-neutral language drives more applications at the lowest cost.

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

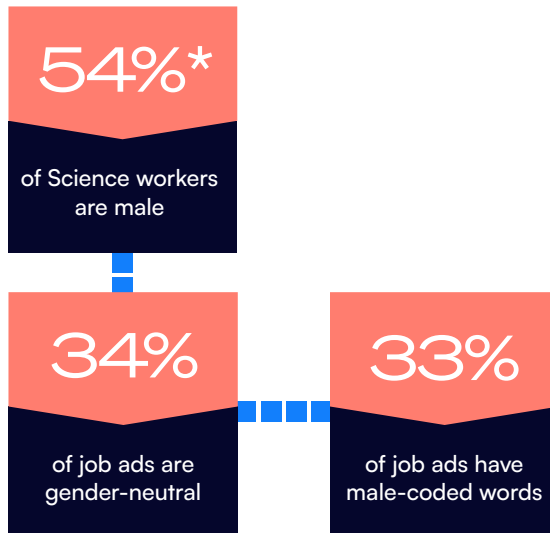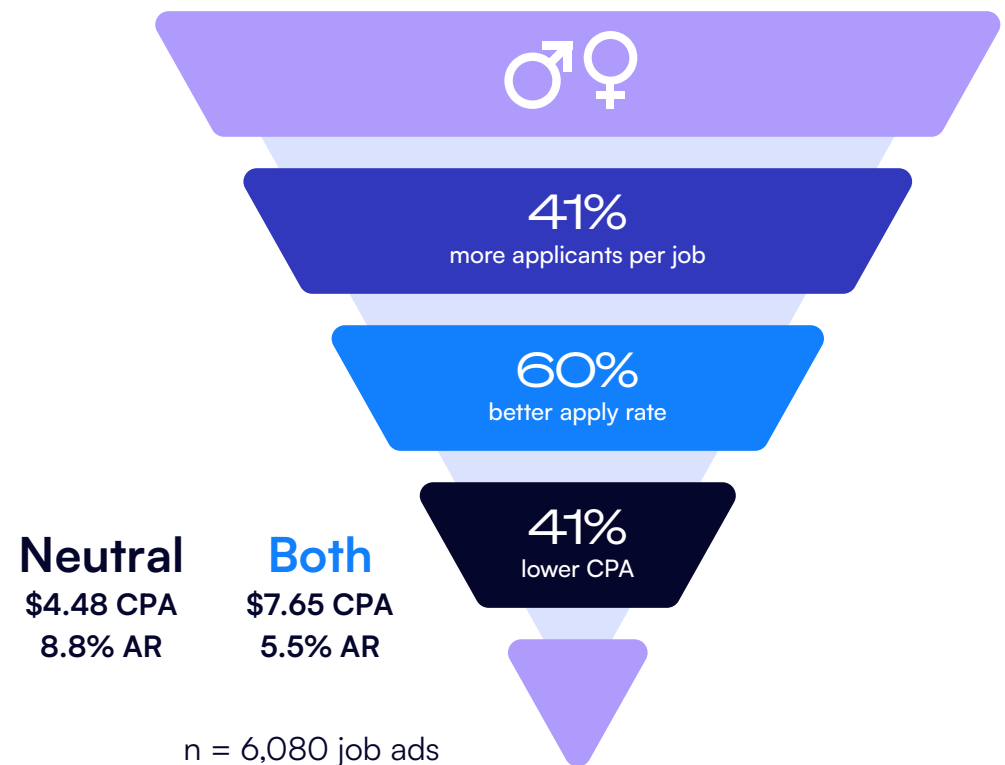| Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Decision	*Compassion(ate)*
Confident/(ce)	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

54%*
of Science workers are male

34%
of job ads are gender-neutral

33%
of job ads have male-coded words

Gender-neutral job ads, in comparison to job ads with both female- and male-coded words, result in:

♂♀

41%
more applicants per job

60%
better apply rate

41%
lower CPA

Neutral
$4.48 CPA
8.8% AR

Both
$7.65 CPA
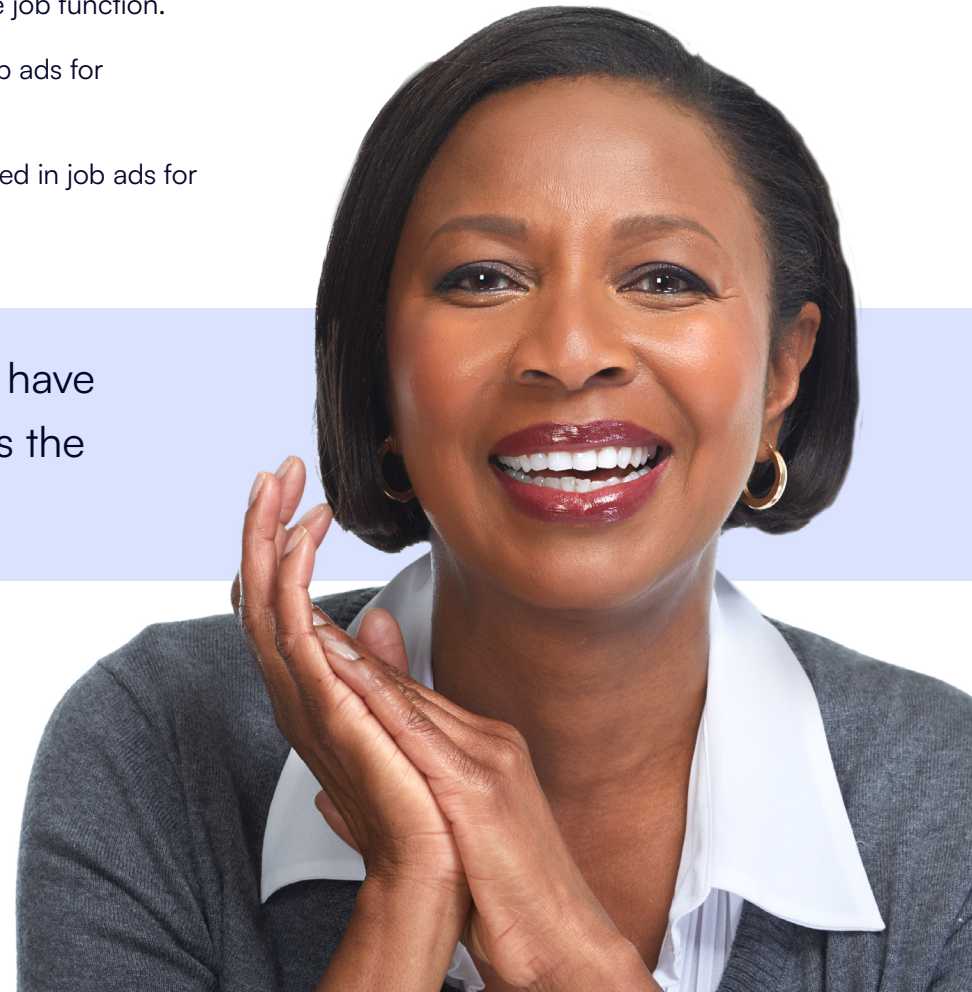5.5% AR

n = 6,080 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Predominantly-Female Job Functions
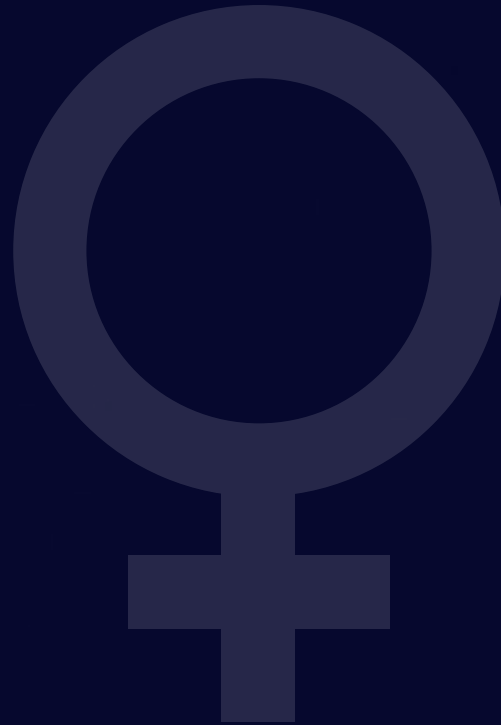
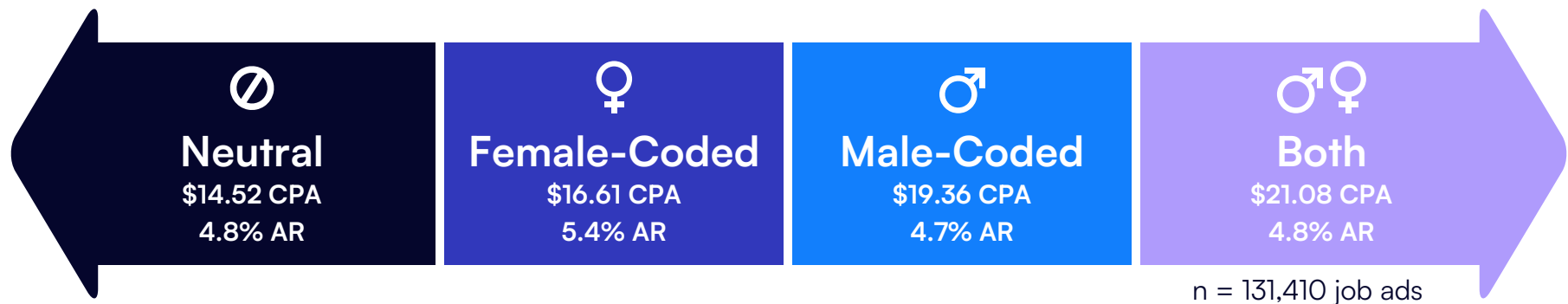# Predominantly-Female Job Functions Summary

▶ In general, job ads for predominantly-female job functions job ads include female-coded words.

▶ Job ads with female-coded words perform best in four of seven job functions; however, the recommendation is to use gender-neutral language in job ads for all but one job function.

▶ Decision and Logic(al) are the male-coded words most frequently used in job ads for predominantly-female job functions.

▶ Compassion(ate) and Warm are the female-coded words most frequently used in job ads for predominantly-female job functions.

53% of job ads in predominantly-female job functions have female-coded words, but gender-neutral language has the lowest CPA.

Overall Results: Predominantly-Female Job Functions

While job ads with female-coded words generate the most applications, gender-neutral job ads have the lowest CPA.

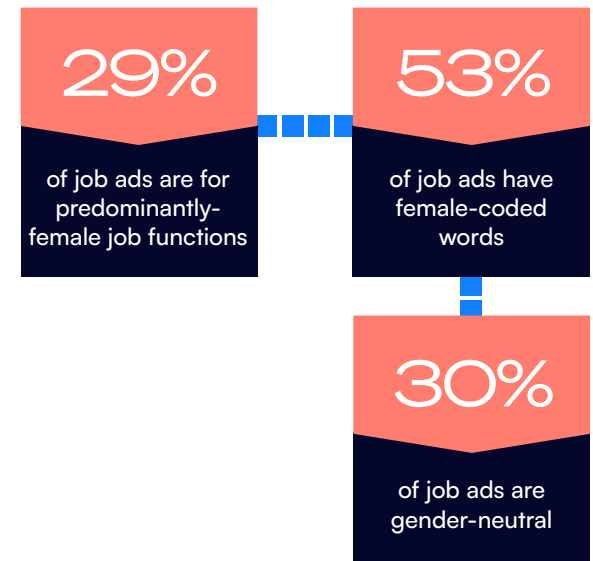| ⊘ **Neutral** $14.52 CPA 4.8% AR | ♀ **Female-Coded** $16.61 CPA 5.4% AR | ♂ **Male-Coded** $19.36 CPA 4.7% AR | ♂♀ **Both** $21.08 CPA 4.8% AR |

n = 131,410 job ads

Job ads with gender-neutral language have the lowest CPA but also the least number of applicants per job.

Job ads with female-coded words get 62% more applicants per job at a 14% higher CPA than gender-neutral job ads.

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words   *Confident/(ce)*   *Decision*   *Logic(al)*

Female-Coded Words   *Compassion(ate)*   *Interpersonal*   *Warm*

Source: Appcast Research

29% of job ads are for predominantly-female job functions

53% of job ads have female-coded words

30% of job ads are gender-neutral

Administration

While job ads with female-coded words or no male-coded words perform best, this approach may not align with your goal of a gender-balanced slate of candidates, and therefore gender-neutral job ads may be preferable.

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	Compassion(ate)
Decision	Honest(y)
Superior	Interpersonal

74%*

of Administration workers are female

54%

of job ads have female-coded words

33%

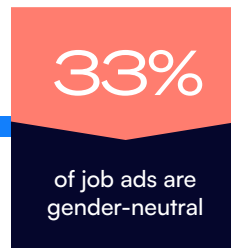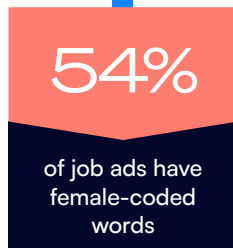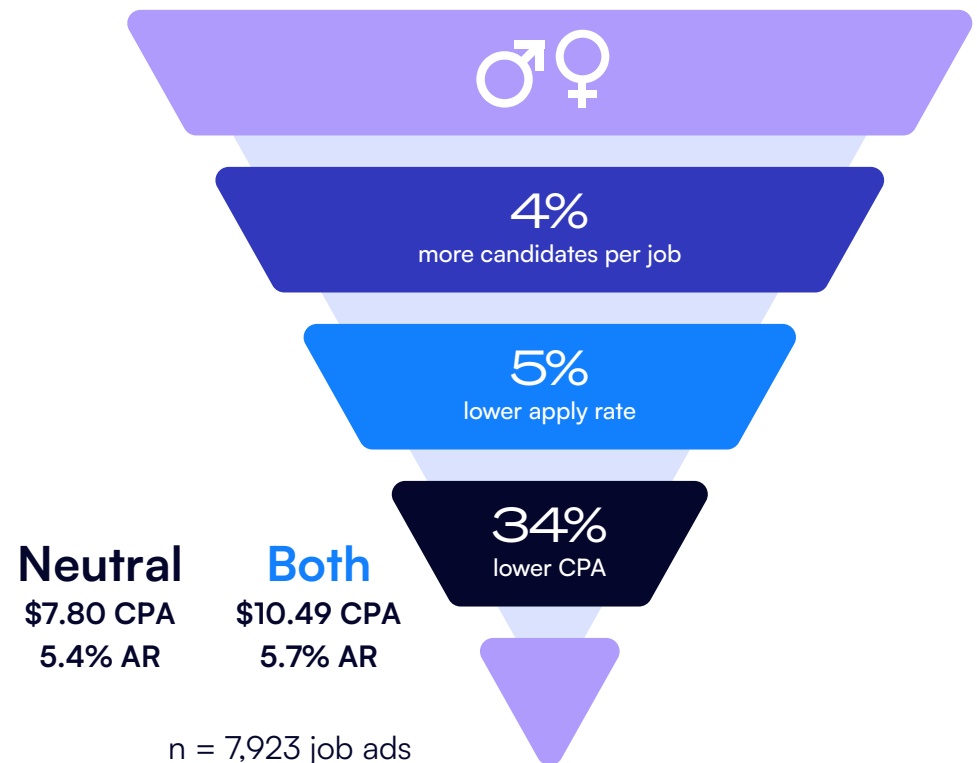of job ads are gender-neutral

Job ads with female-coded words get 108% more candidates at a 47% lower CPA than gender- neutral job ads. But gender-neutral job ads have a 24% lower CPA than job ads with male-coded words.

Gender-neutral job ads, in comparison to job ads with both female- and male-coded words, result in:

♂♀

4%
more candidates per job

5%
lower apply rate

34%
lower CPA

Neutral
$7.80 CPA
5.4% AR

Both
$10.49 CPA
5.7% AR

n = 7,923 job ads

Source: Appcast Research
*O*NET

Animal Care

While job ads with female-coded words get the most engagement at the lowest cost, writing gender-neutral job ads will net more candidates.

Female-Coded
$9.31 CPA
3.6% AR

Both
$13.77 CPA
2.2% AR

Male-Coded
$15.10 CPA
2.2% AR

Neutral
$18.14 CPA
2.5% AR

n = 10,976 job ads
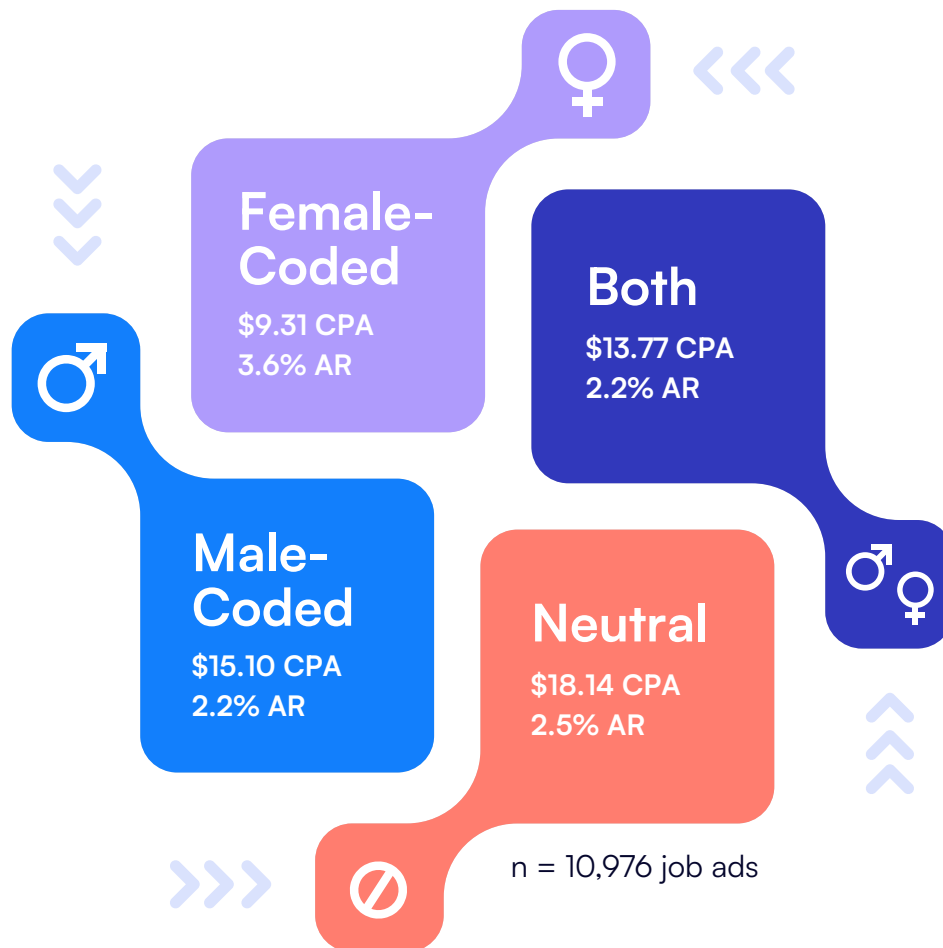
Job ads with female-coded words get the highest apply rate and lowest CPA, while gender-neutral language drives 70% more applications per job than job ads with female-coded words.

18%* of Animal Care workers are male

98% of job ads use female-coded words

1% of job ads are gender-neutral

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

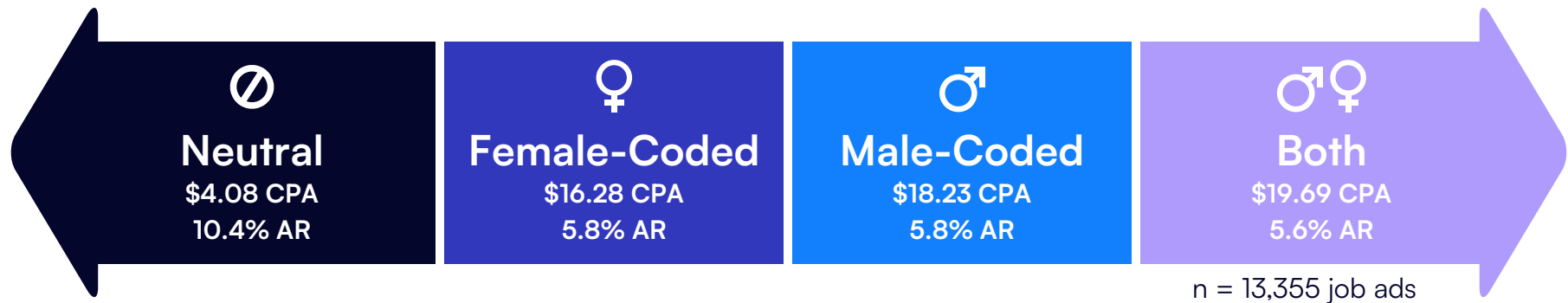| Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Superior	Compassion(ate)
Decision	Emotion(al)
Confident/(ce)	Warm

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

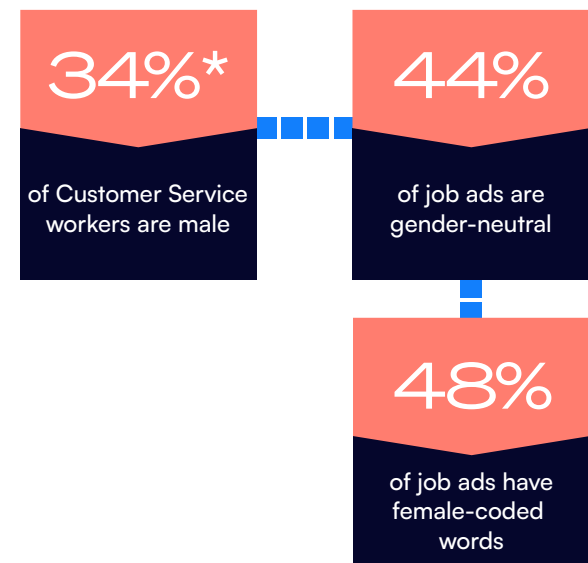# Customer Service

Job ads with gender-neutral language have the lowest CPA and the highest apply rates.

⊘ Neutral $4.08 CPA 10.4% AR	♀ Female-Coded $16.28 CPA 5.8% AR	♂ Male-Coded $18.23 CPA 5.8% AR	♂♀ Both $19.69 CPA 5.6% AR

n = 13,355 job ads

Job ads with gender-neutral language have the highest apply rate and lowest CPA, but get fewer applications per job.

Jobs with gender-coded words, including jobs ads with both female- and male coded words, get up to 389% more applications per job, but at up to a 4x higher CPA.

34%*
of Customer Service workers are male

44%
of job ads are gender-neutral

48%
of job ads have female-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Empathy/(ic)*
Logic(al)	*Interpersonal*

Source: Appcast Research

Education

Remove gender-coded words to drive the best outcomes, as gender-neutral job ads perform best across all measures.
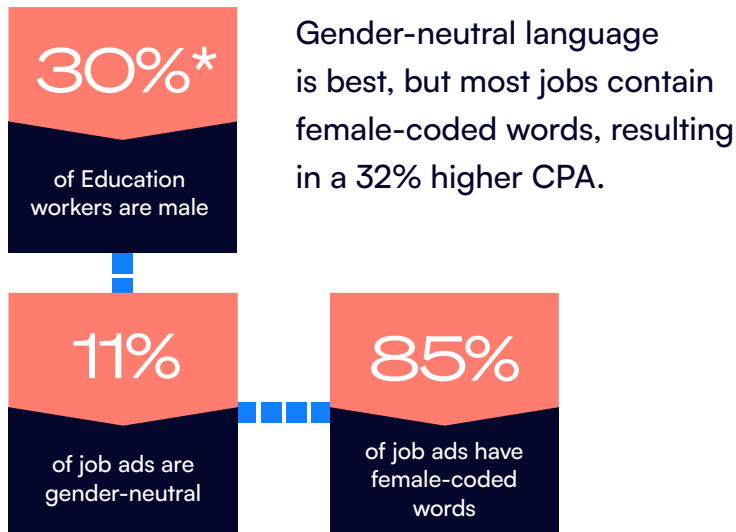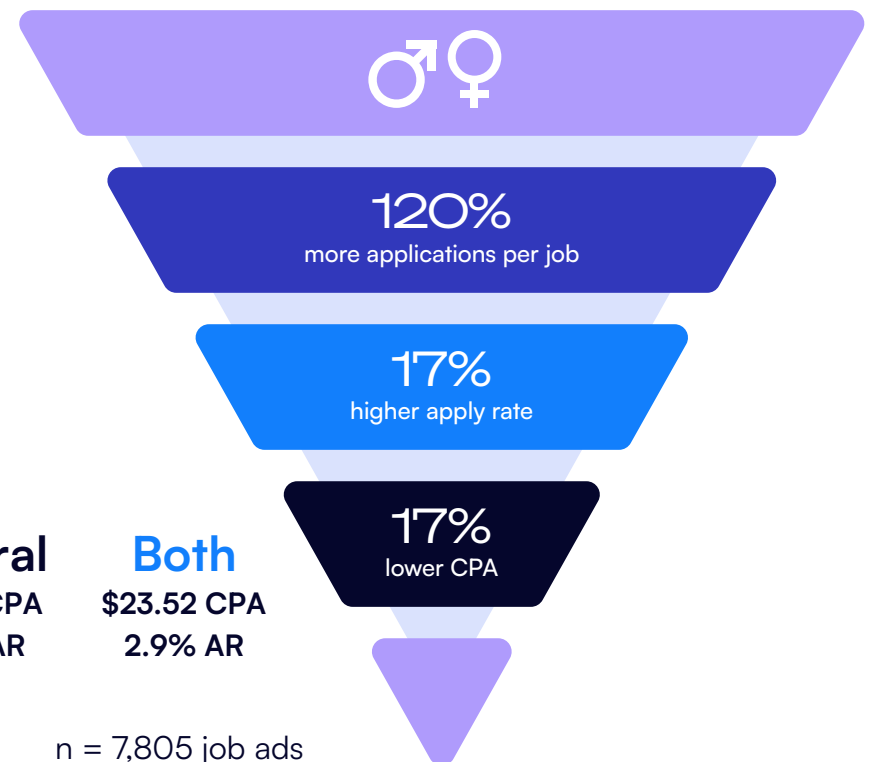
Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Kind*
Decision	*Nurture/(ing)*
Logic(al)	*Warm*

30%*
of Education workers are male

11%
of job ads are gender-neutral

85%
of job ads have female-coded words

Gender-neutral language is best, but most jobs contain female-coded words, resulting in a 32% higher CPA.

Gender-neutral job ads, in comparison to job ads with both female- and male-coded words, result in:

♂♀

120%
more applications per job

17%
higher apply rate

17%
lower CPA

Neutral
$19.51 CPA
3.4% AR

Both
$23.52 CPA
2.9% AR

n = 7,805 job ads

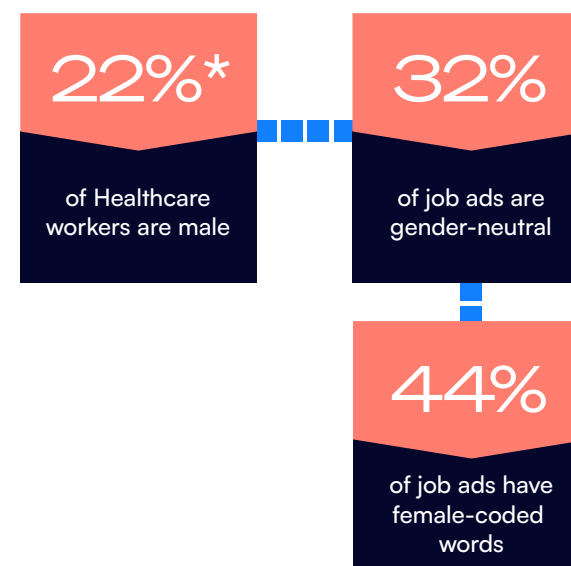*Source: Appcast Research*
*BLS

appcast™

Healthcare

Consider each role and the current gender makeup before determining your approach, which may lead to using gender-neutral language or adding some male-coded words.

⊘ **Neutral** $20.58 CPA 3.9% AR	♂ **Male-Coded** $22.86 CPA 4.0% AR	♀ **Female-Coded** $23.52 CPA 4.5% AR	♂♀ **Both** $25.17 CPA 3.8% AR

n = 85,838 job ads
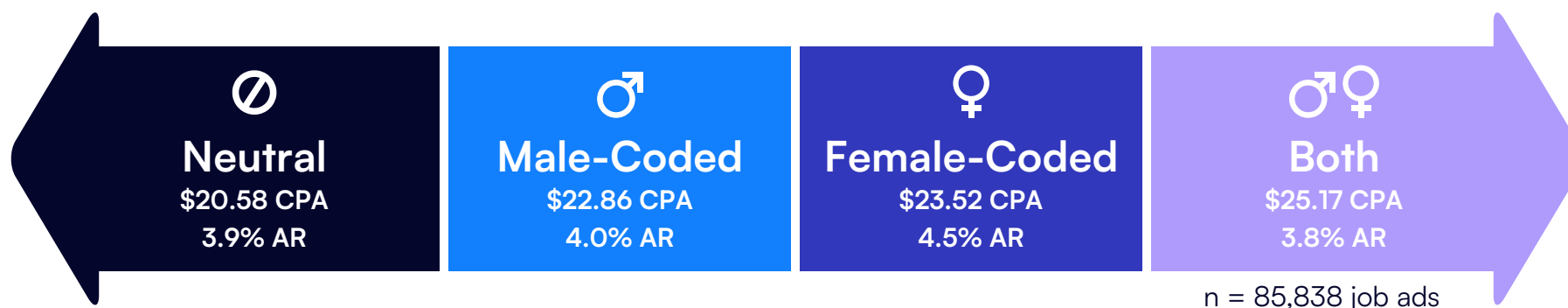
Gender-neutral language has the lowest CPA but also the lowest number of applicants per job.

Job ads with female-coded words get 65% more candidates per job, but at a 14% increase in CPA.

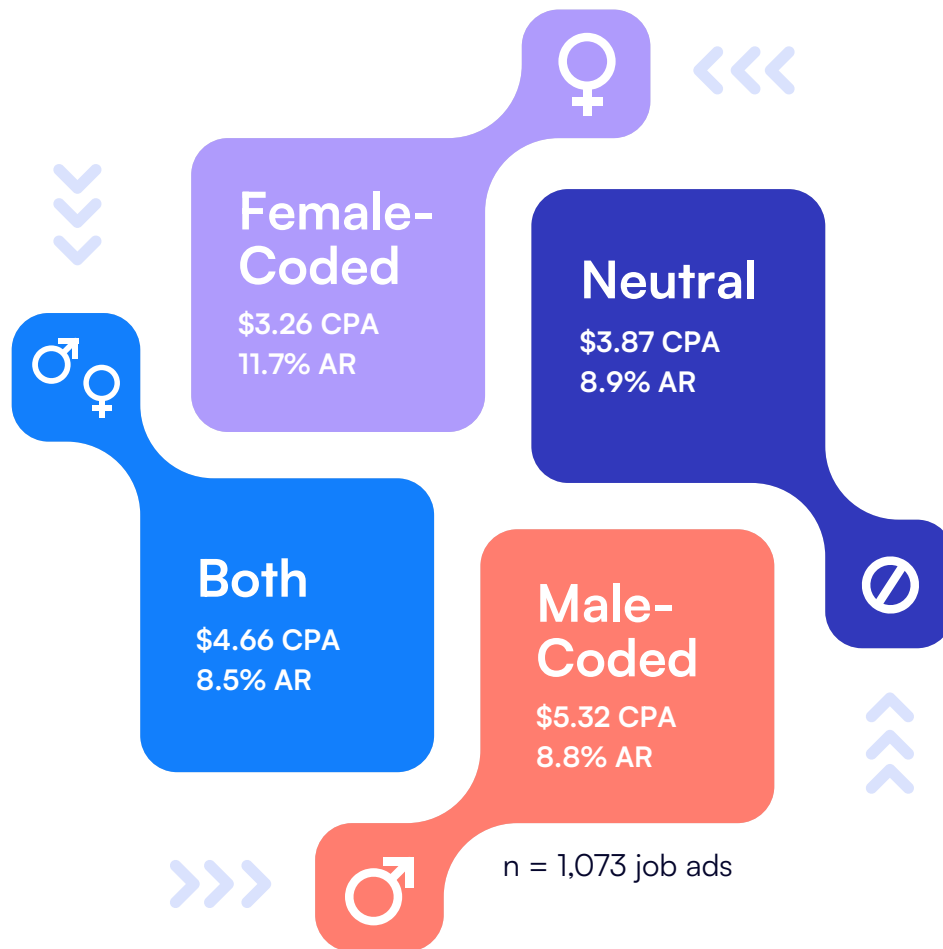### Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Ambitious/(n)	*Compassion(ate)*
Decision	*Emotion(al)*
Logic(al)	*Sensitive*

22%*
of Healthcare workers are male

32%
of job ads are gender-neutral

44%
of job ads have female-coded words

Source: Appcast Research
*BLS

Human Resources

To increase applications, add male-coded words to your job ads. Or, for the lowest cost, use gender-neutral language in your job ads.

Female-Coded
$3.26 CPA
11.7% AR

Neutral
$3.87 CPA
8.9% AR

Both
$4.66 CPA
8.5% AR

Male-Coded
$5.32 CPA
8.8% AR

n = 1,073 job ads

Job ads with male-coded words have the highest CPA, but get 143% more candidates per job than gender-neutral job ads.

26%* of Human Resources workers are male

45% of job ads are gender-neutral

33% of job ads have female-coded words

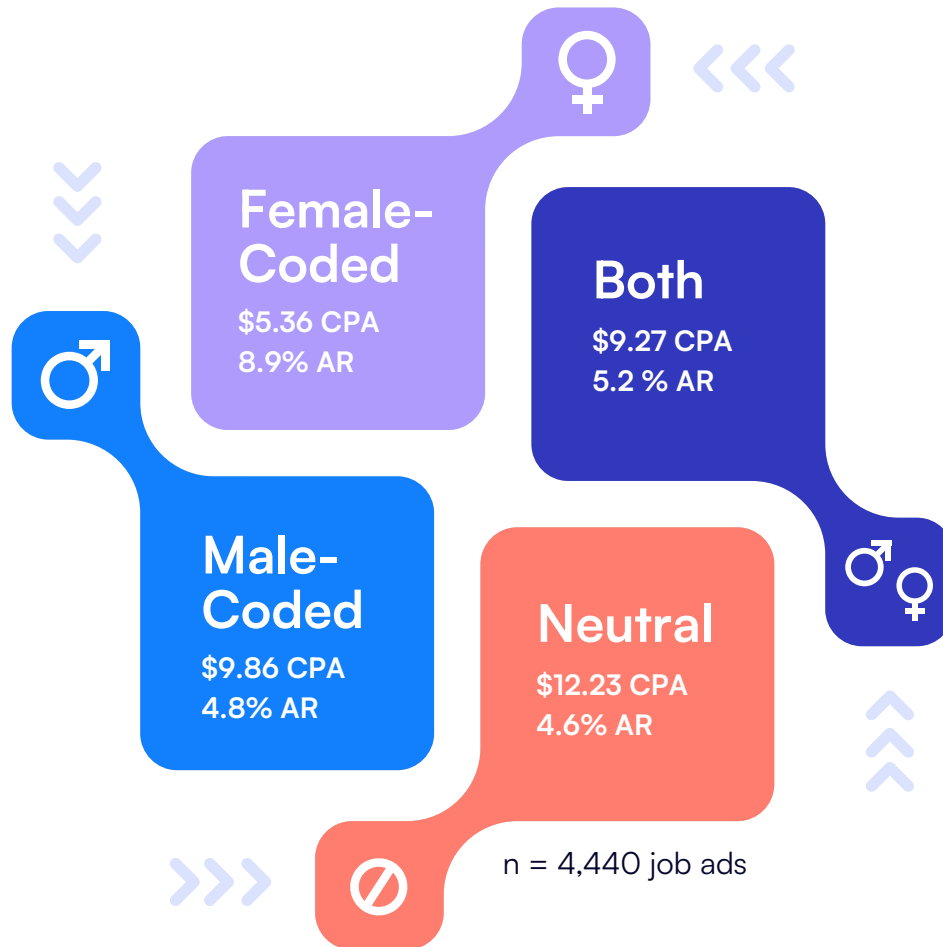### Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Logic(al)	Compassion(ate)
Decision	Interpersonal
Confident/(ce)	Sensitive

Source: Appcast Research

appcast™

Marketing & Advertising

While female-coded words drive the most engagement at the lowest CPA, adding male-coded words can help attract a more diverse candidate audience.

Female-Coded
$5.36 CPA
8.9% AR

Both
$9.27 CPA
5.2 % AR

Male-Coded
$9.86 CPA
4.8% AR

Neutral
$12.23 CPA
4.6% AR

n = 4,440 job ads

Female-coded words drive the highest apply rate and lowest CPA, while male-coded words drive slightly more applications per job.

37%* of Marketing workers are male

57% of job ads use female-coded words

15% of job ads use both female-coded and male-coded words

Most Commonly Used Gender-Coded Words

Male-Coded Words	Female-Coded Words
Confident/(ce)	*Honest*
Decision	*Interpersonal*
Logic(al)	*Warm*

Source: Association of National Advertisers

appcast™

About Appcast

Appcast Xcelerate

Appcast Xcelerate leverages data and algorithms to determine where — among the 10,000+ job sites in our network — your job ads will reach the best candidates. Xcelerate's programmatic rules ensure that budget is only spent on jobs that need more candidates and prevents overspending on jobs that don't. The best part: you only pay when candidates apply.

Appcast Premium

Appcast Premium is a comprehensive enterprise managed service that optimizes your entire online job advertising program, combining our award-winning programmatic technology with world-class recruitment advertising experts. It provides complete coverage across all leading job sites to maximize reach and attract the right mix of qualified candidates while dramatically simplifying vendor management.

Appcast Global Hiring

Appcast, in partnership with The Network, provides an easier way to find global candidates through a combination of job ads, resume databases, employer branding ads, and job distribution by e-mail. There's just one point of contact, one currency, and one invoice.

appcast™

Appcast is the global leader in recruitment marketing technology and services. Leveraging advanced technology, unmatched market data, and a team of top-tier recruitment marketing experts, Appcast revolutionizes how leading employers attract and hire the right talent.

Discover how Appcast can transform your recruitment marketing strategy to ensure you get the candidates you need. Sign up for a demo of our solutions today!