How Diverse Teams Build Better Products

STITCH FIX

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Through scaling the team with diversity top-of-mind and allowing time for creative problem solving, engineering has been able to put a greater focus on developing thoughtful products that better serve its diverse client demographics. Bright, kind, and goal oriented is the hiring rubric that Stitch Fix adheres to and has contributed to how the Stitch Fix engineering team develops new products.

BENEFITS

— Hiring a diverse team of engineers has led to developing more thoughtful products, from the launch of 'Kids' to 'Extras for Men and Women'.

— Including multiple perspectives during development results in products that better address their clients' diverse needs.

— Employing technologists with strong communication and partnership skills attracts more diverse talent and leads to a more effective team.
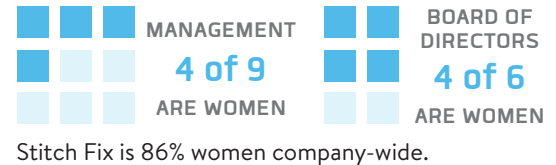
AnitaB.org is a social enterprise founded on the belief that women are essential to building technology the world needs. We envision a future where the people who imagine and build technology mirror the people and societies for whom they build it. Learn more about TEF and our latest research on organization transformation at AnitaB.org/Resources.

IMPLEMENTATION

Since joining Stitch Fix in 2016, Chief Technology Officer Cathy Polinsky successfully doubled the engineering team—exceeding the 30 percent tipping point shown by research for under-represented groups to gain momentum and reach parity. Instead of setting regimented quotas, Stitch Fix thread diversity into its workplace culture with the belief that building diverse teams helps to build better products.

Engineering managers took a bottoms-up approach to building more diverse candidate pipelines by valuing diversity within leadership. Hiring managers focus on more inclusive job descriptions, more active candidate sourcing and better candidate experiences. Candidates are evaluated on EQ (emotional quotient) related skills like empathy and cross-functional leadership abilities in addition to technical skills.

IMPACT

TECHNICAL TEAM **35%**
Engineering is 120 people, 35% women.

MANAGEMENT **4 of 9** ARE WOMEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **4 of 6** ARE WOMEN

Stitch Fix is 86% women company-wide.

ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Be proactive in starting conversations with your team about diversity. When teams feel comfortable talking about diversity in the workplace, they contribute to a broader overall movement.

Approach diversity as part of the culture for a more organic and authentic diverse workplace.

Focus on hiring for EQ instead of IQ. A higher EQ results in collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

Teach everyone how to give feedback, as learning how to give feedback changes the conversation.

Be willing to take risks. Diversity won't evolve unless the dominant culture takes risks.

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