

**Leadership Gender and Social Claims Affect the Gender Composition of the
Applicant Pool: Field Experimental Evidence**

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To uncover the antecedents of gender segregation, scholars have largely focused on how employers' evaluations of job candidates and employees directly contribute to men and women being sorted into different jobs and organizations. A key precursor to the gender composition of who is hired, however, is the extent to which men and women are differentially represented in the pool of candidates who apply to jobs. We contend that the gender composition of an organization's leadership team and the organization's social claims of commitment are of particular importance in shaping the gender composition of the applicant pool. Addressing this research question poses a key empirical challenge: it is necessary to observe not only those who do apply to a job, but also the risk pool of those who *could* have applied. We address this challenge using a unique field experimental design and find that congruence between firm leadership gender composition and social claims is a key predictor of whether prospective applicants apply for an otherwise identical job vacancy. Furthermore, these organizational characteristics differentially affect male and female job seeker interest in jobs in systematic ways.

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1. Introduction

Gender inequality in the workplace remains widespread, such that women earn lower wages, have less power, and hold lower-ranking positions than their male counterparts. The tendency for working men and women to hold different types of jobs, or gender segregation, is one critical barrier to achieving equity because women are often in jobs and occupations that are less prestigious and with lower compensation on average (Cohen and Huffman 2003, Cotter et al. 1997, England et al. 1994, Petersen and Morgan 1995, Reskin and Roos 1990). This form of segregation is so pronounced that scholars have posited it would take more than 50 percent of all employed women in the United States switching occupations to achieve gender balance (Blau and Kahn 2007, Levanon et al. 2009). Thus, an extensive body of research has focused on explaining how gender segregation is perpetuated, largely pointing to the ways that employers directly contribute to this pattern through their evaluations and decisions (Fernandez-Mateo 2009, Heilman 2001, Joshi 2014, Leung and Koppman 2018). Because employers either explicitly or implicitly advantage men, particularly in male-typed jobs or contexts, men are more likely to be hired, promoted, and generally favored across various types of evaluations and career stages (Botelho and Abraham 2017, Reskin 1993).

Beyond exhibiting gender bias in evaluations of job candidates, employers may also affect gender segregation more indirectly and at earlier stages of the hiring process by shaping the pool of candidates who *apply* to job openings. There is some evidence that employers “steer” job seekers in a manner that guides men and women toward applying for different jobs (Fernandez and Mors 2008, for a similar process examining race see also Pager et al. 2009). Rejections may also shape the applicant pool in gendered ways since women, but not men, have been found to be

less likely to pursue a job opportunity presented to them by a firm from which they were previously rejected (Brands and Fernandez-Mateo 2016). Importantly, the gender composition of the applicant pool is a critical factor in understanding gender segregation, since women are often equally likely to be hired conditional on having applied (Fernandez et al. 2000, Fernandez and Sosa 2005), even in male-typed industries (Fernandez-Mateo and Fernandez 2016, Petersen et al. 2000). This is not to say that gender bias in hiring and promotion decisions ceases to exist, but rather that even the most unbiased evaluation processes will result in gender segregation when the pool of applicants is itself gender skewed. Whereas any given equally qualified male or female candidate evaluated solely on objective indicators of quality have the same likelihood of being hired, if the pool of applicants is 80 percent male, this same evaluation process will lead to more male candidates being selected. Thus, beyond uncovering the direct sources of bias in hiring and promotion, it is critically important to isolate the precise ways that organizations may also indirectly contribute to gender segregation through gender-skewed applicant pools.

We argue that the gender composition of an organization's leadership team and the organization's claims of commitment are of particular importance in shaping the gender composition of the applicant pool. We specifically posit that the representation of women in leadership positions and the extent to which an organization claims to be committed to social issues conveys information about an employer that may differentially affect men's and women's propensity to apply for jobs. Existing research focused on how men and women self-sort into different jobs has demonstrated that women's anticipations of being primarily responsible for family care, concerns about facing bias, and perceptions of being less competent or successful in certain jobs contribute to their decisions about which career paths to pursue (Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013, Cech et al. 2011, Correll 2001). Following this logic, we theorize that men and

women will make different inferences about their likely experience and chances for success with a potential employer based on whether women are among the senior ranks and whether the employer states commitment to social issues, such as diversity or the broader community.

In this study, we advance theories of demand- and supply-side sources of gender segregation by examining the interaction of these two sets of labor market processes. Specifically, we isolate the effect of two key organizational characteristics on male and female job seekers' propensity to apply for a job using a field experiment on a popular job search platform.¹ This research design allowed us to overcome the significant empirical challenges of examining supply-side processes. First, similar to the need to observe those who applied to a job, rather than just those who were hired, for understanding demand-side processes related to hiring outcomes (e.g., Fernandez and Mors 2008), advancing our understanding of supply-side factors requires an examination of an even earlier, oft unobservable, stage of the hiring process. Specifically, it is critical to capture not only those who apply to a job, but also the risk pool of those who *could* have applied but did not. Second, it is challenging to establish a causal relationship between organizational characteristics and employee behavior more broadly as it requires a comparison of employees in equivalent organizational contexts with variance only in the focal characteristics of interest.

Employment search engines offer a well-suited platform for identifying a representative sample of U.S. job seekers at risk of applying to a given job opening because online resources have become a prominent way that Americans search for employment.² We identified job seekers who

¹ The study was pre-registered on Open Science Framework. IRB approval was obtained for this field experiment. The experiment took place in February 2018.

² <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/11/19/searching-for-work-in-the-digital-era/>

had relevant skills and experience for a fictitious job vacancy and who were actively seeking employment on one of the highest traffic job search platforms. These job seekers were then randomly assigned to see a job vacancy at hiring companies that varied only in terms of the gender composition of their leadership team and their claims, allowing us to isolate the causal relationship between these organizational characteristics and the likelihood male versus female job seekers applied for the job.³

We find that job seekers are less interested in female- than male-led companies on average, and that this difference is driven by male job seekers. When comparing job seeker interest for companies also making social claims, we find that adding social, specifically community- or diversity-focused, claims increases job-seeker interest for female-led companies but has the opposite effect for male-led companies. Specifically, the lower level of job-seeker interest for male-led companies making social claims is driven by male job seekers. Our findings have important implications for gender segregation because the applicant pool is only gender skewed, such that there is an overrepresentation of male applicants, for job vacancies in male-led companies not making social claims.

2. Theory and Hypotheses

2a. Women in Leadership and Gender Composition of Applicant Pool

³ With respect to the gender composition of the hiring company founders and employees, we varied whether the founders and team were all female, all male, or mixed gender. We varied social responsibility claims by including a statement of the company's commitment to the community and the environment, including a statement of the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, or not including a socially responsible claim. We thus employed a 3x3 randomization design.

Though organizations across industries are far from gender balanced in terms of the representation of men and women in senior managerial and executive positions, over the past few decades women have successfully gained access to high-ranking positions, including increasing their presence among CEOs and founders (Eagly et al. 2007, Helfat et al. 2006, Zhu et al. 2014). The observed reaction to having women at the helm of organizations, however, remains largely negative. Research examining the response to female CEO appointments, for example, suggests that external stakeholders, including equity investors and fellow corporate leaders, generally have a less favorable response to the appointment of female, as compared to male, CEOs (Dixon-Fowler et al. 2013, Lee and James 2007, Park and Westphal 2013).

This is not entirely surprising if we consider that men have historically dominated these high-ranking organizational positions, resulting in the widespread belief that leaders are, and should be, men. More generally, this process of gender typing occurs when a given task or role becomes associated with stereotypically male or female traits (Perry et al. 1994). Whereas feminine stereotypes focus on communal characteristics including warmth, helpfulness, and cooperativeness, masculine stereotypes center on agentic characteristics such as assertiveness, competence, and decisiveness (Abele 2003, Fiske and Stevens 1993). In male-typed roles and contexts, stereotypically male as opposed to female traits are considered important for success (Perry et al. 1994). Thus, gender-typing leads evaluators to perceive men as better-suited for male-typed roles (Gorman 2005, Heilman 1983, Perry et al. 1994) and to evaluate them more favorably as a result (Davison and Burke 2000, Eagly and Karau 2002, Turco 2010).

As the adage “think manager, think male” suggests, leadership positions are male-typed (Cejka and Eagly 1999, Schein 1973). Female leaders are thus viewed less favorably because of the perceived mismatch between the communal characteristics associated with the female

stereotype and the agentic traits ascribed to the archetypal leader (Eagly and Karau 2002, Heilman 2001). Though extant research has not examined job seeker evaluations of female leaders, or of organizations led by women, job seekers may similarly prefer male-led organizations such that:

H1a: Job seekers will be less interested in jobs in female-, as compared to male-, led companies.

Though gender stereotypes are widespread, societal-level beliefs that are generally held by most people (Correll and Ridgeway 2003), existing research suggests that job seeker assessments of female- versus male-led organizations may be heterogeneous with respect to job-seeker gender. More generally, choice homophily refers to the tendency for socially similar people to connect at a higher rate than would occur by chance (Ibarra 1992, 1995, 1997, Lincoln and Miller 1979, see McPherson et al. 2001 for a review). In an examination of employees, research in the relational demography tradition suggests that subordinates are more likely to support initiatives set forth by managers who are similar to themselves in terms of functional expertise, age and gender (Goldberg et al. 2010, Tsui et al. 2002). Men and women have also been found to see same-gender others as their career referents—the people whose careers they see as most like their own—which has implications for their respective career aspirations (Gibson and Lawrence 2010, Sumner and Brown 1996).

There is some extant evidence that suggests men favor male over female superiors, both at the point of recruitment and post-hire. For example, in an examination of on-campus recruiting, men were more attracted to a job opportunity when their interviewer was male as opposed to female (Turban and Dougherty 1992). Consistent with this, one recent study found that white male managers have negatively biased perceptions of female CEOs (McDonald et al. 2018).

Furthermore, men feel greater threat when working with female superiors than do women, which leads them to demonstrate more assertive behavior toward female leaders (Netchaeva et al. 2015). Taken together, this line of theory suggests that male job seekers may gravitate toward job opportunities in organizations led by men.

Beyond a direct preference for same-gender leaders, leadership gender may convey additional information that influences how job seekers, particularly female job seekers, assess the attractiveness of a prospective job opportunity. Supply-side labor market research comparing men's and women's interest in stereotypically male fields such as STEM and finance reveal clear gender differences. For example, women continue to be underrepresented in male-typed fields, such as computer science, earning fewer than 20 percent of bachelor's degrees⁴ and in the applicant pools for male-typed job vacancies (Fernandez and Friedrich 2011, Fernandez and Sosa 2005). Women are less likely to enter or remain in these careers because they base career decisions on a distinct set of considerations, often related to competing family obligations or concerns about their ability to succeed (Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013, Cech et al. 2011, Correll 2001, Correll and Benard 2006). For example, in a study of MBA job-search behavior, women were less likely to apply to jobs in finance and consulting because of work-life balance concerns, lower expectations of success, and lower identification with those stereotypically male fields (Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013). Importantly these unique considerations are not simply a function of women's preferences. First, women have been historically disadvantaged, making them particularly sensitized to the potential of bias or discrimination. Second, women continue to be responsible for a disproportionate share of family and childcare responsibilities (Shelton and John 1996). As a result, women's career choices are more likely to be influenced by factors that facilitate balancing

⁴ <https://www.computerscience.org/resources/women-in-computer-science/>

work and family responsibilities, such as a shorter commute and more flexible work hours (Kalleberg 2000, Konrad et al. 2000).

We argue that because of these gender differences in the factors that contribute to women's career choices, female job seekers will use different criteria for assessing the desirability of, and make different inferences about working for, female leaders than will their male counterparts. Given that organizations are shaped by members of their upper management, and in the case of new ventures, by their founders (Hambrick 2007, Marquis and Tilcsik 2013), a growing body of work has focused on uncovering whether male and female leaders impact organizations and organizational practices differently. While we still lack a comprehensive understanding of these gender differences, studies have shown that having women in leadership positions is associated with more equitable outcomes, such as greater pay equity (Abraham 2017, Cohen and Huffman 2007), lower rates of sexual harassment (Dobbin and Kalev 2017) and higher rates of promotion for women (Cohen et al. 1998). The presence of female leaders is also associated with an organization's initiatives related to facilitating work-family balance, including flexible work arrangements (Dobbin 2011, Dobbin et al. 2011, Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). Relatedly, female managers have been posited to create future opportunities for other women to enter management, such that a greater share of new management positions are filled by women when there are more women already in management (Cohen and Broschak 2013). The presence of women in leadership has also been associated with perceptions among current female employees that they too can survive and succeed in that organization (McGinn and Milkman 2012).

To the extent that female leaders are at least perceived to create a workplace that allows greater work-family balance and that is more gender equitable, we argue that for female job seekers these perceptions will serve to temper the general preference for male leaders such that:

H1b: The decrease in job-seeker interest for jobs in female-, as compared to male-, led companies will be less pronounced among female than among male job seekers.

2b. Heterogeneous Effects of Organizational Social Claims by Job-seeker Gender

In addition to their claims of commitment to clients, excellent service, and overall business success, organizations increasingly make claims of commitment to social issues, such as diversity or the community. Generally these social claims, commonly referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR), are posited to send positive signals to key stakeholders (Godfrey et al. 2009). Focusing on one critical stakeholder – the employee – scholars have demonstrated that social claims positively influence employees’ orientations toward, and perceptions of, the firm (Grant 2012, Turban and Greening 1997). These positive perceptions can in turn result in employee behavior which benefits the firm, such as increased effort and productivity (Tonin and Vlassopoulos 2014). However, these positive effects may not be ubiquitous, as other research points to important contingencies (Burbano et al. 2018, Carnahan et al. 2016). In one study focused on prospective employees, for example, a preference for socially responsible firms was limited to high performing individuals (Burbano 2016).

Given the well-established notion that organizational claims are often symbolic (Meyer and Rowan 1977), it is not entirely surprising that positive perceptions or responses to social claims are not ubiquitous. We argue that the extent to which social claims affect job seeker interest will be a function of whether these claims are perceived to be more than “myth and ceremony.” In

particular, the gender composition of leadership provides important insights into whether an organization is taking actions consistent with their social claims, suggesting that social claims from female leaders are likely more believable. First, having women in management has been associated with a greater focus on diversity initiatives and programs aimed at resolving work-family needs, including dependent care assistance, flexible work arrangements, and parental leaves (Dobbin 2011, Dobbin et al. 2011, Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). A greater proportion of females in leadership has also been associated with greater levels of philanthropy and charitable giving directed at the community and the environment (Marquis and Lee 2013, Williams 2003).

Second, social claims have been labeled as female-typed, such that they are associated with female stereotypes of warmth and communality (Shea and Hawn 2018), which suggests that social claims made by female-led organizations are gender congruent and thus expected. In organizations focusing only on business initiatives that contribute to the bottom line, which are arguably more male-typed, gender incongruence is likely exacerbated for female leaders. Thus, the addition of social claims may lead to more positive perceptions of organizations led by women. Consistent with this, a recent study in the entrepreneurial context revealed that female-founded ventures with a social impact framing are more likely to access funding, yet there was no advantage to male-led ventures for adding a social framing (Lee and Huang 2018). For male leaders, on the other hand, making social claims may be seen as gender incongruent and violating gender role expectations. Though there is less evidence that gender-incongruence penalties emerge for men, with men sometimes even benefiting in female-typed workplaces (Kmec 2008, Williams 1992), in the context of social claims male employees have been posited to face penalties for participating in corporate social initiatives (Bode et al. 2015). Thus, adding social claims may lead to more favorable evaluations from job seekers for female-led than for male-led companies.

Furthermore, similar to the posited gender differences among job seekers in preferences for working in male- versus female-led firms, male and female job seekers are likely to differ in their preferences for organizations making social claims. The prevailing view on heterogeneous responses to organizational social claims is consistent with this logic, suggesting that women will be more sensitive to, and respond most favorably to, such claims (Kesner 1988, Williams 2003). Community-focused social claims have been shown to be interpreted as a signal that employees will be treated fairly (Burbano 2016), thus to the extent that women have greater concerns about equity in the workplace such claims would be more highly valued by women than men. Existing supply-side labor market research similarly suggests that employers who adopt diversity and equity policies attract members of historically disadvantaged groups, including women (Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013, Kang et al. 2016). For dominant group members such as men, it seems the effect of social claims is generally less pronounced, though here is even some evidence that men may respond negatively, particularly when claims are focused on diversity (Dover et al. 2016, Martin and Phillips 2019).

Taken together, the effect of social claims on job seeker interest is likely heterogeneous by leadership and job-seeker gender. Existing theory suggests that social claims are expected and gender congruent for female leaders, but not necessarily for male leaders. The addition of social claims may therefore have divergent effects on job seeker interest based on the gender composition of the leadership team. Furthermore, female job seekers more highly value the signal or promise of social claims than men, commonly inferring that that these workplaces will be fair, more egalitarian, and better facilitate work-family balance. Thus, female job seekers may especially prefer female-led companies making social claims, since they would interpret the claims as more believable and likely to be implemented in practice. Alternatively, male job seekers, who are less

interested and possibly even have a distaste for social claims, may respond especially negatively to the incongruence posed when male-led companies make social claims. Thus, job seeker interest will be a function of both the gender composition of leadership and whether the organization makes social claims, such that:

H2a: For female-led companies, the addition of social claims will lead to greater job seeker interest, particularly from female job seekers.

H2b: For male-led companies, the addition of social claims will lead to lower job seeker interest, particularly from male job seekers.

3. Field Experiment Design

3.1. Overview of Process for Contacting Job Seekers and Observing Interest

To understand the extent to which organizations may contribute to gender segregation in the ways we theorize, we implement a field experiment on one of the highest traffic online employment search engines (“JobSeeker.com”).^{5 6} This search engine aggregates job listings from websites; allows employers to post jobs directly; enables employers to find active job seekers, using various search criteria; and facilitates contact with these job seekers directly through the site. Online employment search engines are increasingly being used by job seekers to identify prospective full-time, as well as part-time, jobs. According to a Pew Research Center study, Americans looking for a new job utilize online resources, including employment search engines,

⁵ The study was pre-registered on Open Science Framework. IRB approval was obtained for this field experiment. The experiment took place in February 2018. We include data on job-seeker interest for the one-month period immediately following study launch.

⁶ The name of the employment search engine is available from the authors upon request. Revealing the identity of the site poses potential risks to the platform itself as job seekers may discover that academic research is being conducted. Therefore, we are not including the name of the site in the paper.

in their job search, making the employment search engine a generalizable and relevant setting from which to source U.S. job seekers for our job vacancy.⁷

Our decision to create a market research analyst job vacancy was driven by two important considerations. First, the position of market research analyst is deemed to be one of the fastest growing jobs for individuals holding a bachelor's degree, ensuring we would be able to identify a large sample of relevant job seekers for our study.⁸ Second, this position satisfied our need for a gender-neutral job in order to avoid potential confounding effects related to the gender-typing of the job.⁹ We created a corresponding market research analyst job description, and identified job seekers, or potential applicants, suited for this position on JobSeeker.com. To identify potential applicants for the job, we used the functionality on Jobseeker.com for filtering job seekers based on relevant search criteria. Specifically, we limit the set of job seekers included in our study to individuals who had updated their resume on the Jobseeker.com within the past week, are based in the United States, indicated that they were looking for a full-time job, and have a bachelor's degree. We further restricted our selection of job seekers to those whose resumes included the following terms under job titles or skills: "market research," "business analyst," "business analysis," "data entry," "market analyst," "market analysis," "data analyst," "data analysis," or "research analyst." This ostensibly identified the population of relevant job seekers on Jobseeker.com on the day we conducted our search.

We then randomly assigned job seekers who met these criteria to one of our nine conditions (conditions and their corresponding manipulations described in detail in the following section) and

⁷ Certainly, online employment search engines are not the only manner through which prospective applicants source jobs, with referrals and other sources being important (e.g., Fernandez, Castilla and Moore, 2000). They are, however, an important source for job seekers in today's job market, making our setting a relevant one.

⁸ <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2017/article/occupational-projections-charts.htm>

⁹ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

sent each individual a message about our job opening via the portal for contacting job seekers on JobSeeker.com. In this message, the details of the job were the same for all individuals, while the described characteristics of the hiring company, including information about the gender composition of the leadership team and details about the company's claims of commitment, varied by condition. The message also included a link to the company's website and invited contacted job seekers to visit the website to learn more about the company and to submit an online application.

Messages sent to job seekers via JobSeeker.com generate an email message to the recipient that includes a voting button through which contacted job seekers can indicate whether they are interested in the job opportunity. If a job seeker indicates that they are interested using this voting button, JobSeeker.com sends an automated message to the hiring company indicating that the seeker is interested.¹⁰ Importantly, indicating interest is not costless for job seekers since JobSeeker.com shares the job seeker's contact information, typically email, phone number, and address, with the hiring company at that time. Based on our conversations with individuals working for JobSeeker.com, the voting buttons are the predominant way that job seekers reciprocate interest to prospective employers who contact them. It is less common to request that individuals submit separate applications when they are contacted, since an employer who messages a job seeker through the website already has access to that job seeker's resume.¹¹ In the opening line of the messages that we sent to job seekers via JobSeeker.com we explicitly indicated that we had found their resume on the employment search engine (see Figure 2).¹² Furthermore, there is a

¹⁰ We created an email address, info@{name of company} for each company.

¹¹ All employers on JobSeeker.com have access to the job seeker's resume, which is publicly available and viewable to those signed up on JobSeeker.com. The resumes and information from the resumes were kept confidential.

¹² Since submitting a formal application via company websites is not typical for job seekers contacted through JobSeeker.com, this outcome would introduce some potential noise and selection bias in the set of job seekers who choose to submit an application on the company website despite it being against the norm to do so when using

charge to hiring companies (approximately \$1.00-\$3.00) for contacting each job seeker, therefore, an employer willing to pay this fee to contact a job seeker has presumably reviewed that individual's resume and determined they are a viable candidate. We thus use indication of job seeker interest via the "interested" voting button on JobSeeker.com as our main dependent variable.

Independent of the research objectives of the study, we designed our study with ethical considerations in mind aiming to ensure minimal impact on the job seekers included in our study. First, the dependent variable we use requires minimal time investment from the job seekers. Second, we hired nine individuals, one for each of our conditions, amongst those who indicated interest in the company, to conduct a short-term market research job.¹³

3.2. Conditions and Manipulations

We randomly assigned each job seeker included in our study to one of nine conditions (see Figure 1 for the 3x3 design). We varied the gender composition of the hiring organization's leadership team, or founders (the founders and employees were all female, all male, or mixed gender and balanced in number) and social claims (included claims of the company's commitment to the community and the environment, included claims of the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, or did not include any social claims). We will refer to the companies in conditions in which the founders are male as male-led companies, those in which the founders are female as female-led companies, and those in which the founders are mixed gender as mixed gender-led companies, in what follows.

JobSeeker.com. Unsurprisingly, while the average rate of indicating interest on JobSeeker.com was 27% for our sample, on average across conditions only 5% of contacted job seekers submitted resumes on the website.

¹³ Of the subset who indicated interest in a temporary, short-term project-based job with the company, we randomly selected one per condition and offered them the short-term job until we one job seeker per condition accepted the short-term job offer.

Insert Figure 1 about here

These manipulations were implemented in two ways. First, we varied the messages sent to the job seekers via JobSeeker.com. In addition to the job description, which was constant across conditions, the messages sent to job seekers included information about the company's two founders and claims of commitment. Specifically, each job seeker in our study received a message with the names of the company's two founders, which conveyed founder gender, the organization's claims of commitment to business outcomes, the name of the recruiter, and a link to the company's website, which directed them to a company website corresponding to their condition as described below. In addition, individuals assigned to a social claims condition also received information about the organization's commitment to either the community and environment or diversity and inclusion. Figure 2 shows the exact messages sent to job seekers via JobSeeker.com, revealing the precise manipulations used in these messages for each condition.¹⁴

Second, we created nine company names with corresponding websites for each of our nine conditions, where we varied the images and text accordingly. The names of these companies were identical, with the exception of two letters at the start of the company name.¹⁵ Each website was identical in design and layout (including a "Home" page, an "About Us" page, a "Join Us" page, and a "Contact Us" page), portrayed two founders, and listed the exact same job description. As can be seen in the screenshots of each condition's website (see Appendix), the text on the websites convey gender of each of the company's two founders, describe the company's claims of commitment (community-focused, diversity-focused, or no social claims), and highlight each

¹⁴ The messages sent to job seekers include the founder names, recruiter name, and details about the mission that are consistent with the corresponding condition and website.

¹⁵ Names of the nine companies and exact website URLs are available from the authors upon request.

founder's own experiences and commitment, which are consistent with the company's broader claims of commitment.

The images reinforce our leadership gender manipulations by revealing the gender composition of the two-person founding team, who comprise the company's leadership, and other employees. Specifically, the images on the company websites corresponded to our leadership gender conditions as follows: all female for the female-led company condition, all male for the male-led company condition, and equal number of men and women for the mixed-gender-led company condition.¹⁶ The images of the founders were pre-tested on Amazon Mechanical Turk so that the men and women across conditions did not differ on important characteristics that could confound our results. Specifically, we selected photographs that were statistically equivalent in perceived attractiveness, age, competence, and warmth.¹⁷ In addition to the founder pictures, we selected names for our founders and recruiters based on the most popular names for girls and boys in their approximate year of birth, based on the age measure from our pre-test (male founders: Michael and Christopher; female founders: Jessica and Amanda).

To manipulate social claims, we varied the text on the websites, in addition to a logo. For example, the headline text of the Home Pages reads, "At {Company Name}, we provide outstanding service to our clients and invest our capital to {no social condition: grow and expand our company / community claims condition: inspire and implement solutions that improve the broader community and the environment / diversity claims condition: promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace and beyond}." All pages are structured identically and include the same

¹⁶ At the recommendation of the editorial team, we drop the Mixed Gender-led company condition from our sample.

¹⁷ 14 female and 14 male stock photos were identified by the authors, and 30 MTurkers saw each photo and ranked them on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 along each of the dimensions with the exception of age, which was measured in the following buckets: <25, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55+. To measure competence and warmth, the questions were adapted from Fiske, Cuddy, and Xu (2002).

text on the lower left-hand side of the home page referencing a commitment to clients, developing integrative solutions and preparing for future success. Claims were manipulated by condition in the text on the lower right-hand side of the home page. Further detail on these manipulations is available in the Appendix.

3.3 Sample

Our original sample was comprised of 6,321 job seekers who represent the population of active job seekers meeting our search criteria on JobSeeker.com on the day we sourced participants for our study.¹⁸ At the recommendation of reviewers, we dropped the three Mixed-Gender conditions from our sample to more directly focus on the key comparisons between male- and female-led organizations. For the purpose of analyses, our conditions thus correspond to a 3x2, and our sample size for analysis is 4,242 job seekers.

4. Measures and Analyses

Dependent Variable. Our dependent variable, *Interested*, is a binary variable representing whether the contacted individual indicated they are interested in the market research analyst job using voting buttons embedded in the messages that we sent via JobSeeker.com. This variable is equal to 1 if the individual indicated interest in the job, and 0 otherwise. As aforementioned, indicating interest is a strong indicator that the job seeker wants to pursue the given opportunity. First, this is the predominant way that job seekers reciprocate interest to prospective employers.

¹⁸ We truncated our sample at the earliest date and time at which the first company account on JobSeeker.com stopped contacting job seekers. Due to the high volume of messages we were sending over a short period of time (the messages were automated), the employment website suspended our ability to contact job seekers. As this suspension happened at different times for each of the company accounts, we exclude all observations of individuals that were contacted after the time at which the first cancellation of messaging ability took place.

Second, by indicating interest, the job seeker agrees to having their contact information shared with the hiring company, thus this is a form of applying for the job.

Independent Variables. To compare the treatment effects of individual cells of our (effective) 3x2 matrix, we constructed binary variables for each condition. We use a two-part variable naming convention to designate the condition we are referencing. For example, *Female-led (No Social Claims)* is equal to 1 for observations in the Female-led, No Social Claims Condition and equal to 0 otherwise. We have a total of six binary variables to represent each of our conditions and define each of these as described in the above example. For some specifications of our models, we combine conditions. For example, *Female-led* is equal to 1 for observations in all Female-led conditions (whether no social claims, community claims, or diversity claims are made), and 0 otherwise. Because we are making comparisons between different pairs of condition variables, the relevant baseline varies across models and is specified in each respective model.

To examine how treatment effect differs by gender of the prospective applicant, we assigned gender to each job seeker based on their name using the IBM InfoSphere Global Name Management Tool (see also Botelho and Abraham 2017). We first scored each job seeker's name based on the likelihood of it being a woman's name. This tool takes as its input an individual's first name and compares that name with its database of 750 million names from around the world. Each name is then scored, on a scale from 0 to 99, for the likelihood that the individual with the given name is female, with higher scores being more likely to be female. We then created a dichotomous variable *Female* equal to 1 if this score was greater than 60 and equal to 0 if this score was less than 40 to avoid the possibility of erroneously coding names that were more gender ambiguous.

Other variables and controls. We ensure that our results are robust to the inclusion of control variables, particularly those for observables that were not well-randomized across conditions in regression specifications. We report results from OLS regressions controlling for the various measures detailed below for ease of interpretation, though our results are also robust to the use of a logit specification.

Our first set of controls captures the job seeker's U.S. geographic region. *Midwest* is equal to 1 if the job seeker is based in the Midwest and equal to 0 otherwise. Indicators for *South*, *West* and *Northeast* are constructed in the same fashion. Our next set of controls include four distinct measures of job seeker quality. *Employed* is a binary variable equal to 1 if the job seeker's resume indicated that they were employed (identified by the terms "present*" or "current*" within 25 words of the term "Work Experience"), and 0 otherwise. *Years of Experience* is a continuous variable inferred from the job seeker's bachelor year. Fit with the job description was assessed by the number of terms relevant to the job description that appeared in the job seeker's resume. A relevant term was counted when one of the following string combinations (within 10 words of each other) appeared in the resume: (market + research); (market + analysis); (market + analyz*); (competit* + research); (competit* + analysis); (competit* + analyz*); (industry + research); (industry + analysis); (industry + analyz*). We constructed a binary variable, *Top Quartile Fit*, to indicate whether each job seeker was in the top quartile of fit based on the number of relevant terms identified. The *Top Quartile Fit* cutoff was 2, such that *Top Quartile Fit* is equal to 1 if two or more terms were counted, and 0 otherwise. As another control for quality, we also constructed a binary variable, *Top Quartile Education*, to indicate whether each job seeker's bachelor's degree university ranking was in the top quartile of our sample. The quartile cutoff was 117, such that

Top Quartile Education is equal to 1 if a given job seeker's bachelor's degree college or university has a rank that is equal to or less than 117 on the US News and World Report, and 0 otherwise.

5. Sample Characteristics and Randomization Balance

Table 1 presents summary statistics for the job seekers in the sample, by job seeker gender given the focus of our study. Forty-four percent of our sample of job seekers were female. Pooling across gender, these job seekers represent a national sample, with 25 percent being from the Northeast, 35 percent being from the South, 23 percent being from the West, and 16 percent being from the Midwest. By design, only those with bachelors' degrees were contacted, so everyone in the sample has at least a bachelor's degree. Approximately 70% of job seekers were employed at the time of contact, and job seekers had approximately ten years of work experience on average. The mean number of relevant terms per resume, captured by our measure for fit, was 1.41 (std deviation 1.95).

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 2 reports the randomization balance of observable characteristics, by condition. For robustness, we report versions of our regression analyses that control for the few observables not well-randomized across conditions (female, from Midwest, from Northeast, from South, employed, top quartile job fit, and top quartile education).

Insert Table 2 about here

Of those contacted, 27.7% responded that they were interested in the job on average across the six conditions. Table 3 provides an overview of the characteristics of the job seekers who did versus did not indicate interest. On average, those interested were marginally less likely to be female, less likely to come from the Northeast, more likely to come from the South, and marginally

less experienced. As we would expect, those interested were more likely to be in the top quartile of job seekers who are a good fit for the job description.

Insert Table 3 about here

6. Results

6.1. Effect of Founder Gender (No Social Claims) on Job Seeker Interest

Figure 3a pools male and female job seekers to show the average likelihood that job seekers indicated interest in the job, based on whether the company is male- or female-led, to test our first set of hypotheses. Since H1a and H1b posit differences in job seeker interest only as a function of leadership gender, for these analyses we focus on our conditions for companies not making social claims. Consistent with hypothesis 1a, a comparison of job-seeker interest in the job vacancy in companies not making social claims reveals that female-led companies receive less job seeker interest than do male-led companies, on average. Whereas thirty-one percent of contacted job seekers indicated interest in the job in our male-led companies, only twenty-seven percent of job seekers indicated interest in our female-led companies ($t(1415)=-1.65, p<0.10$). Model 1 (Table 4) illustrates the difference shown visually in Figure 3a (the difference between interest for female- and male-led companies not making social claims), and Model 2 adds control variables to the specification. Though the coefficient on *Female-led* is no longer statistically significant with the inclusion of control variables, the size of the effect remains the same ($B=-0.04, p=0.108$).

Insert Figure 3a here

Insert Table 4 here

To test hypothesis 1b, Figure 3b introduces job-seeker gender to examine whether this pattern is heterogeneous with respect to job-seeker gender. These results reveal that the observed

decrease in job-seeker interest for female- as opposed to male-led companies is driven by male job seekers. A comparison of the dark gray bars indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in interest from female job seekers for male- versus female-led companies not making social claims (24 vs. 26 percent, $t(562)=0.51, p>.10$). Alternatively, comparing the light gray bars reveals that male job seekers were significantly less interested in female-led companies than in male-led companies when these companies did not make social claims (36 vs. 28 percent, $t(711)=-2.25, p<0.05$). Models 3 and 4 (Table 4) provide consistent results, revealing that the negative effect of female-led (as compared to male-led) companies making no social claims on job seeker interest varies by job seeker gender. The negative main effect of our treatment, *Female-led*, in both of these models shows that male job seekers are less interested in jobs in female- than male-led companies. Though the effect of the interaction of *Female-led* and *Female* is only marginally significant ($B=0.10, p<0.10$ without controls, $B=0.08, p<0.10$ with controls), it is substantively significant and reveals that this decrease in job seeker interest is essentially mitigated for female job seekers, consistent with H1b. Taken together, these results largely support both H1a and H1b.

Insert Figure 3b here

6.2. The Effect of Adding Social Claims, for Female Founders (H2a)

Next, we examine the effects of adding social claims on job-seeker interest by leadership gender. To test the first part of H2a, we compare interest in female-led companies making social claims to female-led companies not making social claims, while pooling job seeker gender (see Models 1-4 of Table 5, where Models 3 and 4 include controls). These results reveal that adding social, particularly diversity-focused, claims leads to higher levels of job-seeker interest in female-led companies. Specifically, Model 1 reveals that the addition of community-focused claims increases interest in female-led companies by four to five percentage points ($p<0.10$ with or

without controls), from twenty-seven to approximately thirty-one percent. Model 2 and 4 show that adding diversity-focused claims leads to seven-percentage-point increase in job-seeker interest ($p < 0.01$ with or without controls), from twenty-seven to thirty-four percent. Overall, these results provide support for the first part of H2a, that adding social claims leads to an increase in job seeker interest, and that this effect is strongest when the social claims are diversity focused.

To further examine whether this increase in job-seeker interest resulting from the addition of social claims is driven by female job seekers, as proposed in H2a, we examine heterogeneous responses by job seeker gender visually in Figure 4a, as well as in Models 5-8 of Table 5. Contrary to our prediction in the second part of H2a, we find no differences by job-seeker gender in the effect of adding social claims for female-led companies. An examination of the coefficients for *Female* and for the interaction of *Female* and each of the indicators for our social claims conditions in Models 5 through 8 of Table 4 shows that for female-led companies both male and female job seekers exhibit greater interest when the company is also making social claims, irrespective of whether these are community- or diversity-focused.

Insert Table 5 here

Insert Figure 4a here

6.3. The Effect of Adding Social Claims, for Male Founders (H2b)

Next we test the first part of H2b, focusing on male-led companies and positing job seekers will be less interested in male-led companies making social claims. We first compare interest in male-led companies making social claims to male-led companies not making social claims, pooling job seeker gender (see Models 1-4 of Table 6). Consistent with H2b, these results reveal that adding social claims leads to a decrease in job-seeker interest for male-led companies. Specifically, the addition of either community- or diversity-focused claims decreases interest by

nine percentage points ($p < 0.001$ without controls, $p < 0.01$ with controls), from thirty-one to twenty-two percent, providing strong support for the first part of H2b.

To further examine whether this decrease in job-seeker interest resulting from the addition of social claims is driven by male job seekers, as proposed in H2b, we examine heterogeneous responses by job seeker gender visually in Figure 4b, as well as in Models 5-8 of Table 5. These results reveal that the observed decrease in job-seeker interest for male-led firms adding social claims (as compared to male-led not making social claims) is driven by male job seekers. A comparison of the dark gray bars indicates that among female job seekers there was no statistically significant difference ($p > 0.10$) in interest for male-led companies adding either community-diversity-focused claims (24 vs. 22 vs. 21 percent). Comparing the light gray bars, on the other hand, reveals that male job seekers were significantly less interested ($p < 0.001$) in male-led companies adding either community- diversity-focused claims than male-led companies not making social claims, with a substantively large 16 to 13 percentage-point decrease (36 vs. 20 vs. 23 percent). Results from Models 5 through 8 (Table 6) confirm that the negative effect of adding social claims for male-led on job seeker interest varies by job seeker gender. The negative main effect of our treatments, both *Male-led (Community Claims)* and *Male-led (Diversity Claims)*, across these models shows 15 and 13 percentage-point decreases in job seeker interest from male job seekers for jobs in male-led companies adding social claims. The effect of the interaction of *Male-led* and *Female* shows that this negative main effect is reduced for female job seekers and that these effects are both substantively and statistically significant. Taken together, these results thus provide strong support for H2b.

Insert Table 6 here

Insert Figure 4b here

6.4. Implications for the Gender Composition of Applicant pool

To understand the potential implications of gender composition of leadership and social claims for gender segregation, we now examine whether and how our findings relate to the effects of the gender composition of the application pool. Figures 4a and 4b reveal that female job seekers exhibit the highest levels of interest for female-led companies making diversity claims. Interestingly, male job seekers exhibit the highest levels of interest for both male-led companies not making any social claims and female-led companies making social claims. As a result of these gender differences in revealed preferences, we would thus expect the gender composition of the applicant pool to differ across conditions. To attribute observed differences in the gender composition of the applicant pool to leadership gender and social claims, it is necessary to isolate where the gender composition of the applicants (i.e., those indicating interest) differs significantly from the gender composition of the pool of job seekers contacted. Table 7 reports this comparison showing the percent female amongst those contacted, and those interested, by condition. Pearson Chi-Squared comparisons between the percent female contacted and percent female interested, by condition, indicate that the proportion female is statistically equivalent between the pool of those contacted and the pool of those interested in all conditions except that of male-led companies making no social claims. In this condition, while forty-two percent of those contacted are female, only thirty-three percent of those interested are female ($p < 0.01$).

Given that the likelihood a female candidate is hired is largely a function of the proportion of women in the applicant pool, this difference has implications for the likely gender composition of the workforce under different organizational conditions. Being a female-led company *or* making social claims results in an applicant pool that is (gender) representative of the pool of those contacted, whereas being a male-led company, not making social claims results in an applicant

pool that is skewed with respect to gender. Because the applicant pool for jobs in male-led companies not making social claims is disproportionately male, it is more likely that men are also disproportionately hired *ceteris parabis*.

***Insert Table 7 here ***

Despite the potential negative implications of male-led companies not making social claims for gender segregation, to the extent that the pool of male applicants to these firms are higher quality, this overrepresentation of men could be viewed positively by the hiring firm. To examine this, we compare the applicants on various measures of quality: whether the job seekers are currently employed at the time of contact, in the top quartile of fit, in the top quartile of education, and in terms of years of experience in Table 8. Specifically, we examine whether male applicants in our male-led company not making social claims differ from male applicants in our other conditions along each of these quality dimensions. Our results reveal that there are not statistically significant quality differences across the conditions. The one exception is in terms of top quartile fit, where male applicants applying to for female-led companies making diversity claims are higher quality than those applying to male-led companies not making social claims. We can thus rule out the possibility that the pool of male applicants is higher quality in male-led companies not making social claims. This is particularly notable given that job seekers contacted in the Male Founder, Community Claims Condition happened to be slightly lower quality on average than those contacted in the Male Founder, No Social Claims condition (as was reflected in the Randomization Balance table, Table 1).

Insert Table 8 here

7. Discussion

Beyond the direct ways that employers' evaluations of job candidates and employees are posited to contribute to gender segregation (Fernandez-Mateo 2009, Heilman 2001, Joshi 2014, Leung and Koppman 2018), we argue that employers may also affect gender segregation more indirectly by shaping the pool of candidates who apply to job openings in the first place. This study posits and tests whether the representation of women in leadership and the extent to which an organization claims to be committed to social issues differentially affects men's and women's likelihood to apply for jobs. We find that both male and female job seekers demonstrate greater interest in female-led companies when they add social claims. However, the effect of adding social claims for male-led companies has heterogeneous effects by job seeker gender. Specifically, only male job seekers exhibit less interest in jobs in male-led companies making social claims.

This paper makes several contributions to research on labor market processes, gender segregation, and corporate social responsibility. First, this study advances theories of demand- and supply-side sources of gender segregation by examining the interaction of these two sets of labor market processes. Specifically, we examine how demand-side characteristics, namely the gender of an organization's leadership and an organization's social claims, shape the gender composition of the applicant pool. Most research aimed at understanding labor market processes has focused largely on either the demand-side, or the actions taken and decisions made by employers (Cohen and Broschak 2013, Fernandez and Mors 2008), or the supply-side, or the choices made by job seekers (Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013), treating these as two distinct processes. However, these labor market processes do not operate independently. Though not centered on labor market outcomes, there is some evidence that quotas, as imposed by affirmative action initiatives, may lead women to opt-in to tournaments because they perceive greater likelihood of success and

lower-levels of competition (Niederle et al. 2013). Additionally, prior negative experiences with a specific firm have been shown to reduce the likelihood that a job seeker subsequently applies to job opportunities with that firm (Brands and Fernandez-Mateo 2016). This study contributes to this line of inquiry by showing that job seekers are affected by overarching organizational characteristics in their decisions about whether to pursue a given job opportunity.

Second, our findings have important implications for understanding the antecedents of gender segregation, specifically by uncovering precisely how organization-level characteristics affect the gender composition of the applicant pool. By examining the effects of leadership gender and social claims on job seeker behavior, we advance existing research on gender segregation, which has largely focused on how characteristics of the job or field contribute to gendered applicant pools (e.g., Barbulescu and Bidwell 2013, Cech et al. 2011). Whereas the pool of applicants for job vacancies in both female-led companies, irrespective of whether they make social claims or not, and male-led companies making social claims is gender balanced, the pool of applicants for job vacancies in male-led companies not making social claims is disproportionately male. Since the gender composition of the applicant pool is a critical factor in understanding gender segregation (Fernandez et al. 2000, Fernandez and Sosa 2005, Fernandez-Mateo and Fernandez 2016), these results suggest that, all else equal, male-led companies not making social claims may be most apt to have an overrepresentation of male hires. Given that most organizations continue to have male-dominated leadership teams and do not make strong claims of commitment to social issues, these findings provide insight into an indirect pathway through which gender segregation may be perpetuated at the organizational level.

Third, our study contributes to research on social claims, commonly included under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility, by highlighting that a general failure to account for leader gender may lead to an incomplete understanding of gender differences in the responses to such claims. In mock interviews for a job opportunity at a company highlighting their commitment to diversity, for example, white male college students performed significantly worse when compared to those interviewing for the same job at a company without an explicit focus on diversity (Dover et al. 2016). These types of results are often interpreted to suggest that men have a distaste for social claims. While this may be true, our study suggests an alternative explanation. To the extent that male prospective employees perceive social messages to be coming from male leaders, observed negative reactions to such claims may actually be a function of gender incongruence and not simply the claims. One recent study examines the implications of social claims in the entrepreneurial context for male versus female founders and, similar to our study, finds only female founders are evaluated more favorably when adding a social impact framing (e.g., Lee and Huang 2018). Our study extends this line of inquiry by further examining how social messages coming from male versus female leaders are evaluated differently based on the gender of the evaluator, specifically male and female job seekers. One fruitful direction for future work is to examine heterogeneous effects of social claims by leadership gender on other key outcomes. For example, it is plausible that incongruence between claims and leadership gender composition affect job applicant salary requirements, or post-hire employee actions, such as productivity, shirking, and turnover. Beyond understanding how management gender and CSR interact in affecting employee behaviors, it is also plausible that gender and CSR interact such that participating in social initiatives impacts male and female employees differently. One recent paper suggests that this is in fact the case: managers penalize male employees engaging in social

initiatives in making promotion decisions (Bode et al. 2018 wp). Examining whether other stakeholders such as consumers, investors, and the media also penalize men for engaging in social initiatives, or more broadly respond in different ways to CSR depending on management gender, are also potential directions for future research.

In addition to overcoming the empirical challenges associated with addressing our research question, our research design uniquely allows for generalizability of our results. By identifying our population of job seekers on one of the highest traffic online job search engines, we are confident that we captured a nationally representative population of job seekers for our market research analyst position. As with any field experimental setting, there are additional elements of interest which we are outside the scope of this study and point to opportunities for future research. For example, while the job search engine from which we sourced our job seeker population provides a representative sample of job seekers for our job vacancy, it is likely that more senior, or highly-educated job seekers rely less on these platforms. To the extent that these more savvy job seekers place a higher emphasis on inferences drawn from organizational characteristics such as those we explore in this paper, we may expect that our observed effects to be even stronger amongst that sample. Relatedly, given that the job of focus in our study was by design a gender-neutral job, a promising avenue for future work could be to examine how leader gender and social claims interact to affect job-seeker interest in more male- or female-typed jobs. Likewise, future work could examine how the racial composition of leadership interacts with social claims to influence the composition of the applicant pool, both in terms of gender and race. Though it is unclear whether or how responses from job seekers would differ in each of these scenarios, an examination of whether our observed patterns vary for different populations of job seekers and types of job vacancies is warranted.

It is also plausible that our hiring companies are most representative of smaller, entrepreneurial organizations for which publicly available information is limited to what the organization shares on its websites. For larger established corporations, about which prospective applicants may have preconceived notions and access to other sources of information about the company, the magnitude of our effects may be dampened. Furthermore, in larger organizations it is plausible that it is not senior leadership directly publicizing social claims, but instead another organizational representative. Our study sets the stage for future work to further unpack how our findings vary based on employer characteristics, including status and size, and when individuals other than senior management are publicizing these claims. Nonetheless, given that small firms make up a substantial proportion of the economy, comprising 48 percent of US employment, understanding the effect of firm characteristics among this population of firms is inherently important.¹⁹ Relatedly, our focus on small firms means that the information available to job seekers in our study was limited to the company websites we created. It is possible, therefore, that job seekers made inferences from photos about not only the gender composition of leadership but also the gender composition of the company more broadly. Future work could directly explore how different indicators about the gender composition of non-leadership positions in the organization may shape the applicant pool.

Our field experimental design establishes important causal pathways, pointing to additional opportunities for future complementary work to further develop this line of inquiry. For example, future work could more directly test, and specifically rule out, mechanisms potentially underlying our observed results. One possible alternative mechanism to the logic we propose for the combined

¹⁹ US Census Bureau, Business Dynamics Statistics, 2014

effect of leadership gender and diversity-focused claims relates to perceptions of authenticity, wherein male leaders making claims of diversity are seen as inauthentic. The fact that we observe very similar effects in male-led companies adding either community- or diversity-focused claims suggests that this alternative mechanism is unlikely to be the main driver of the decreased interest from job seekers. Nonetheless, directly ruling out this potential mechanism warrants further attention, for example in a lab setting. Relatedly, based on traditional definitions of diversity, both our male- and female-led companies are equally non-diverse (e.g., all leaders are same gender and race within condition), and should arguably be seen as similarly inauthentic. Our results suggest job seekers may hold an alternative conception of diversity, where the presence of historically disadvantaged groups in leadership, as is the case in our female-led companies, is perceived as diverse.

Practically speaking, this paper has important implications for what firms can do to influence the gender composition of the applicant pool. To the extent that some industries are so imbued with gendered beliefs, for example engineering and finance are predominantly male, the process of macro-level change in gender segregation will be slow. However, our study suggests that there are things that organizations can do to influence this outcome. Specifically, since most companies remain male-dominated, our results suggest that adding social claims may lead to a more gender-balanced applicant pool, and thus increase the odds women are hired.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: 3x3 Randomization Design

Claims Founder Gender	No Social Claims	Community Claims	Diversity Claims
Male-led	N=711	N=711	N=713
Female-led	N=708	N=688	N=711
Mixed Gender - led	N=688	N=705	N=686

Note: at the recommendation of the editorial team, we drop the mixed gender – led conditions from our analyses.

Figure 2: Messages Sent to Job Seekers, with Manipulations Corresponding to Conditions
Manipulations are bolded below, though they were not bolded in the messages sent to job seekers.

Hi {Name of Job Seeker},

We found your resume on {site} and wanted to introduce our company, {name of company}, and current job opportunities. We are looking for candidates interested in Business and Market Research to assist with client projects by conducting comparisons of our key clients to competitors, completing data entry and analysis, and preparing summary reports.

Our founders [**male-led condition: Michael and Christopher / female-led condition: Jessica and Amanda / mixed gender - led condition: {no text}**] launched {name of company} based on the belief that a small team could provide customized consultancy services to meet our clients' needs [**community condition: while being committed to giving back to our local and global communities / diversity condition: while being committed to diversity and inclusion/ no social claims condition: {no text}**].

Please visit our website {hyperlink to company website provided} to find out more about us, about our job opportunities, and to apply (applications must be completed online on our website).

Best regards,

[**male-led condition: Kevin Smith / female-led condition: Ashley Smith / mixed gender-led condition: Taylor Smith**], {name of company}

JOB DETAILS

Job Title: Market/Business Research Position

Company: {name of company}

The job will consist of doing research, data entry, and analysis for one of our core clients. See our website for more details.

Figure 3a: Job-seeker Interest for Male- and Female-Led Companies Not Making Social Claims (H1a)

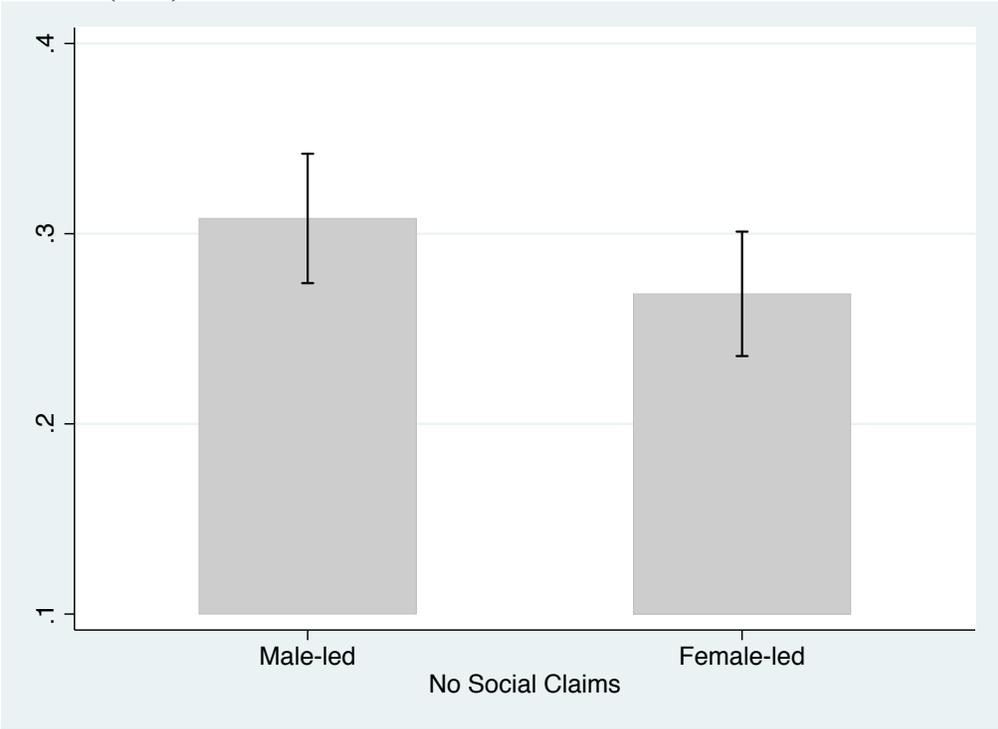


Figure 3b: Job-seeker Interest for Male- and Female-Led Companies Not Making Social Claims, by Job-seeker Gender (H1b)

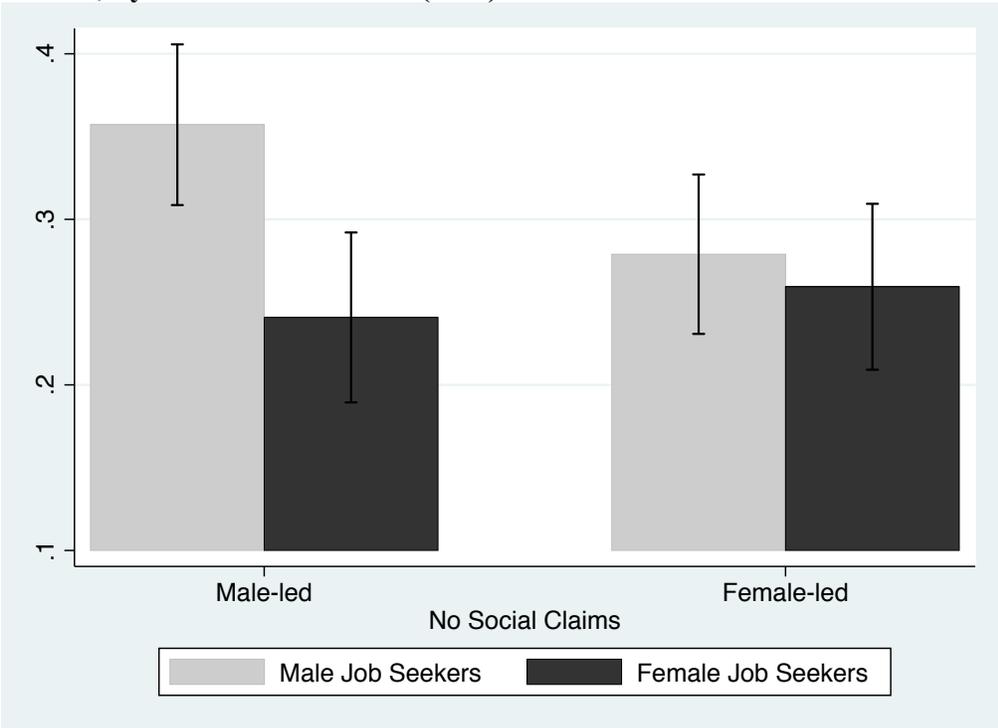


Figure 4a: Job-seeker Interest for Female-led Companies Making Social Claims, by Job-seeker Gender (H2a)

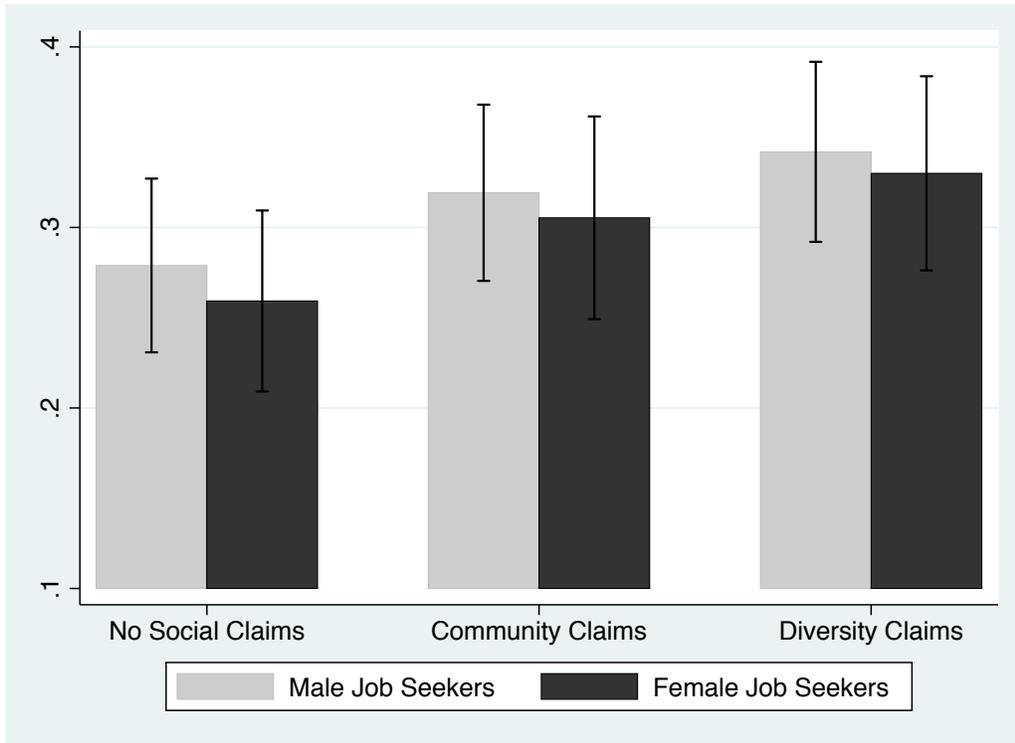


Figure 4b: Job-seeker Interest for Male-led Companies Making Social Claims, by Job-seeker Gender (H2b)

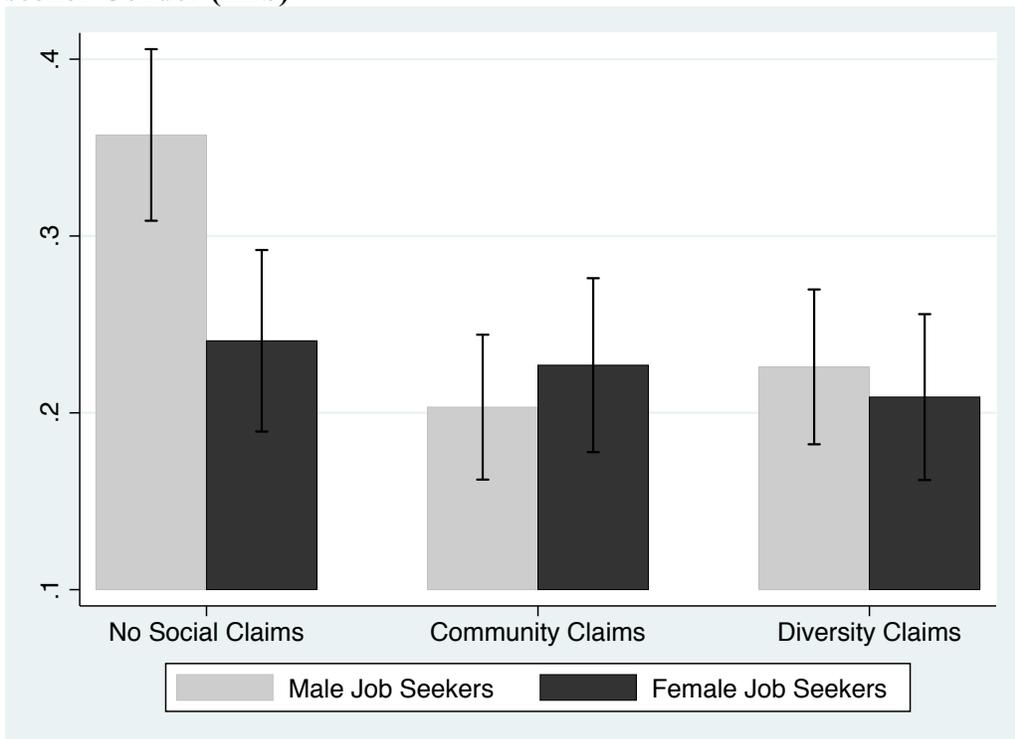


Table 1: Summary Statistics, by Job Seeker Gender

	Female Job Seekers		Male Job Seekers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
From Northeast	0.25	0.43	0.26	0.44
From Midwest	0.16	0.37	0.17	0.38
From South	0.37	0.47	0.33	0.48
From West	0.22	0.41	0.24	0.43
Years of Experience	9.50	9.39	10.50	10.74
Employed	0.70	0.46	0.70	0.47
Top Quartile Job Fit	0.31	0.46	0.35	0.48
Top Quartile Education	0.22	0.42	0.25	0.44

Note: N=1,700 female job seekers, N=2,148 male job seekers.

Table 2: Randomization Balance, by Condition

	Male-led No Social Claims ("Control") N=711	Male-led Community Claims N=711	Male-led Diversity Claims N=713	Female-led No Social Claims N=708	Female-led Community Claims N=688	Female-led Diversity Claims N=711
Female N=3848	0.42	0.43 [0.63]	0.45 [0.20]	0.47 [0.06]	0.43 [0.76]	0.46 [0.13]
From Northeast N=4130	0.28	0.24 [0.14]	0.22 [0.01]	0.27 [0.73]	0.26 [0.47]	0.26 [0.48]
From Midwest N=4130	0.16	0.17 [0.56]	0.15 [0.78]	0.16 [0.93]	0.16 [0.69]	0.18 [0.18]
From South N=4130	0.32	0.35 [0.15]	0.39 [0.00]	0.34 [0.44]	0.35 [0.21]	0.34 [0.42]
From West N=4130	0.25	0.23 [0.61]	0.24 [0.64]	0.24 [0.72]	0.22 [0.35]	0.22 [0.20]
Years of Experience N=3673	9.35	10.21 [0.13]	9.71 [0.52]	9.66 [0.57]	10.21 [0.14]	9.73 [0.49]
Employed N=4240	0.71	0.60 [0.00]	0.70 [0.67]	0.72 [0.69]	0.71 [0.95]	0.70 [0.82]
Top Quartile Job Fit N=4242	0.34	0.25 [0.00]	0.34 [0.79]	0.35 [0.70]	0.37 [0.40]	0.37 [0.38]
Top Quartile Education N=4242	0.26	0.20 [0.01]	0.26 [0.83]	0.24 [0.45]	0.23 [0.18]	0.23 [0.17]

Note: Table reports means. P-value of null that difference of means between the treatment group and the control group (Male-led, No Social Claims) equals 0 is reported in brackets. Statistically different ($p < 0.10$) means are highlighted in bold.

Table 3: Summary Statistics of Job Seekers Who Indicated Interest vs. Did Not Indicate Interest

	Interested	Not Interested	P-value of null that difference of means between Interested and Not Interested equals 0
Female	0.42	0.45	p=0.07
From Northeast	0.22	0.27	p=0.00
From Midwest	0.16	0.15	p=0.70
From South	0.39	0.33	p=0.00
From West	0.22	0.23	p=0.67
Years of Experience	9.34	9.99	p=0.07
Employed	0.69	0.69	p=0.91
Top Quartile Job Fit	0.36	0.33	p=0.02
Top Quartile Education	0.23	0.25	p=0.37

Note: Means are reported. N=1,175 interested, 3,067 not interested.

Table 4. Effect of Founder Gender (No Social Claims) on Likelihood of Indicating Interest, Pooling (H1a) and Differentiating by (H1b) Job Seeker Gender

	Model 1 (H1a)	Model 2 (H1a)	Model 3 (H1b)	Model 4 (H1b)
Female-led (No Social Claims)	-0.04+	-0.04	-0.08*	-0.08*
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Female		-0.07**	-0.12**	-0.11**
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female-led (No Social Claims) * Female			0.10+	0.08+
			(0.05)	(0.05)
Midwest		-0.01		-0.01
		(0.04)		(0.04)
South		0.00		0.01
		(0.04)		(0.04)
Northeast		-0.10*		-0.09*
		(0.03)		(0.03)
Employed		0.03		0.03
		(0.03)		(0.03)
Top Quartile Fit		0.02		0.02
		(0.03)		(0.03)
Top Quartile Education		0.05		-0.05
		(0.03)		(0.03)
Constant	0.31***	0.33***	0.36***	0.34***
	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)
N	1419	1252	1282	1252

Note: OLS regression results where all models include robust standard errors, reported in parentheses.

Baseline is Male-led (No Social Claims).

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5: Effect of Social Claims for Female-led Companies on Likelihood of Indicating Interest (H2a)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Female-led (Community Claims)	0.04+		0.05+		0.04		0.05	
	(0.02)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.04)	
Female-led (Diversity Claims)		0.07**		0.07**		0.06+		0.06+
		(0.02)		(0.03)		(0.04)		(0.04)
Female			-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
			(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female-led (Community Claims)* Female					0.01		0.00	
					(0.05)		(0.05)	
Female-led (Diversity Claims)* Female						0.01		0.02
						(0.05)		(0.05)
Midwest			0.03	-0.02			0.03	-0.02
			(0.04)	(0.04)			(0.04)	(0.04)
South			0.05	0.02			0.05	0.02
			(0.04)	(0.04)			(0.04)	(0.04)
Northeast			-0.03	-0.04			-0.03	-0.04
			(0.04)	(0.04)			(0.04)	(0.04)
Employed			-0.01	0.01			-0.01	0.10
			(0.03)	(0.03)			(0.03)	(0.03)
Top Quartile Fit			0.03	0.05+			0.03	0.05*
			(0.03)	(0.03)			(0.03)	(0.03)
Top Quartile Education			0.04	-0.01			0.04	-0.01
			(0.03)	(0.03)			(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	0.27***	0.27***	0.25***	0.26***	0.28***	0.28***	0.25***	0.38***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.03)
N	1396	1419	1217	1259	1250	1282	1217	1259

Note: OLS regression results where all models include robust standard errors, reported in parentheses.

Baseline is Female-led (No Social Claims).

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6: Effect of Social Claims for Male-led Companies on Likelihood of Indicating Interest (H2b)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Male-led (Community Claims)	-0.09*** (0.02)		-0.09** (0.02)		-0.15*** (0.03)		-0.15*** (0.03)	
Male-led (Diversity Claims)		-0.09*** (0.02)		-0.09*** (0.02)		-0.13*** (0.03)		-0.13*** (0.03)
Female			-0.05+ (0.02)	-0.07** (0.02)	-0.12** (0.04)	-0.12** (0.04)	-0.12** (0.04)	-0.11** (0.04)
Male-led (Community Claims)* Female					0.14** (0.05)		0.14** (0.05)	
Male-led (Diversity Claims)* Female						0.10* (0.05)		0.10+ (0.05)
Midwest			-0.03 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)			-0.03 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)
South			0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)			0.03 (0.03)	0.02+ (0.03)
Northeast			-0.07+ (0.03)	-0.07+ (0.03)			-0.06+ (0.03)	-0.06+ (0.03)
Employed			0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)			0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Top Quartile Fit			0.05+ (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)			0.05+ (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
Top Quartile Education			0.07* (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)			0.07* (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Constant	0.31*** (0.02)	0.31*** (0.02)	0.28*** (0.04)	0.35*** (0.04)	0.36*** (0.02)	0.36*** (0.02)	0.31*** (0.04)	0.37*** (0.04)
N	1422	1424	1267	1259	1304	1294	1267	1259

Note: OLS regression results where all models include robust standard errors, reported in parentheses.

Baseline is Male-led (No Social Claims).

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 7. Implications for Gender Segregation, by Condition

	% Female in Contacted Pool	% Female in Interested Pool	Pearson Chi2
Male-led, No Social Claims	0.42	0.33	$X^2(1, N=648)=10.00,$ $p=0.002$
Male-led, Community Claims	0.46	0.43	$X^2(1, N=656)=0.54,$ $p=0.462$
Male-led, Diversity Claims	0.43	0.45	$X^2(1, N=646)=0.27,$ $p=0.601$
Female-led, No Social Claims	0.45	0.47	$X^2(1, N=634)=0.31,$ $p=0.578$
Female-led, Community Claims	0.41	0.43	$X^2(1, N=616)=0.13,$ $p=0.714$
Female-led, Diversity Claims	0.45	0.46	$X^2(1, N=648)=0.10,$ $p=0.749$

Table 8: Comparison of Quality Amongst Male Job Seekers Indicating Interest, by Condition

	Male-led, No Social Claims (1)	Male-led, Community Claims (2)	Male-led, Diversity Claims (3)	Female-led, No Social Claims (4)	Female-led, Community Claims (5)	Female-led, Diversity Claims (6)
Employed	0.70	0.66 [0.49]	0.69 [0.80]	0.71 [0.88]	0.70 [0.93]	0.72 [0.82]
Top Quartile Fit	0.39	0.39 [0.98]	0.31 [0.24]	0.37 [0.75]	0.42 [0.61]	0.52 [0.05]
Top Quartile Education	0.28	0.33 [0.47]	0.21 [0.26]	0.27 [0.94]	0.29 [0.86]	0.22 [0.24]
Years Experience	9.41	11.71 [0.17]	9.06 [0.82]	9.40 [0.99]	9.97 [0.70]	9.85 [0.74]

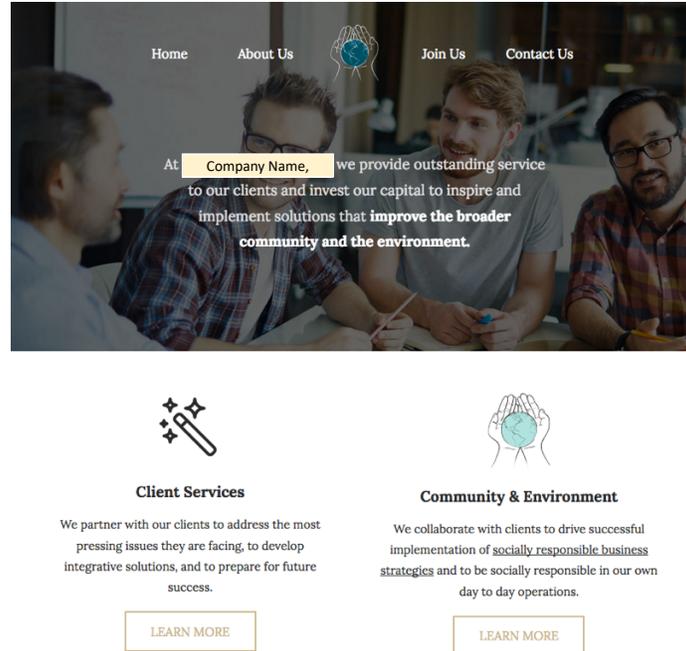
Note: Table reports means. P-value of null that difference of means between each condition and that of Male-led, No Social Claims equals 0 is reported in brackets. Statistically different ($p < 0.10$) means are highlighted in bold.

APPENDIX

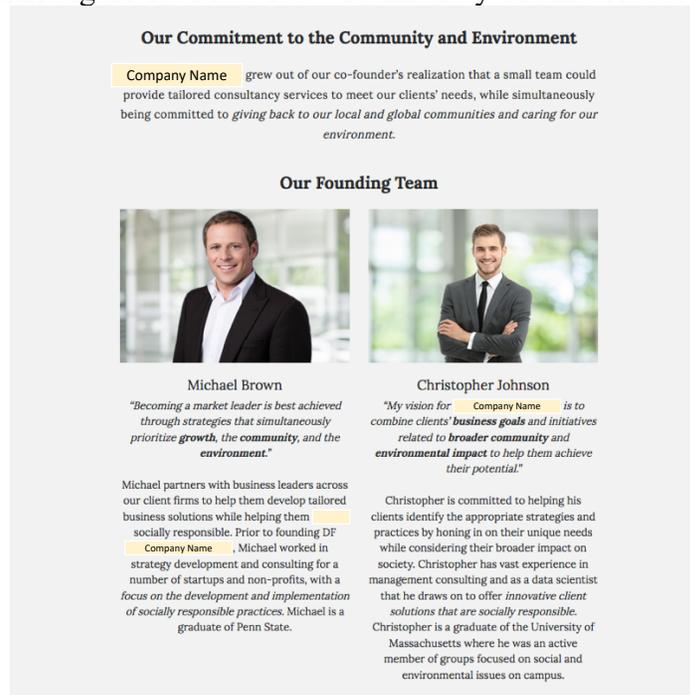
Company Website Screenshots, per Condition

The parts of the website that vary by condition are shown in Appendix Figures 1a-9d below.

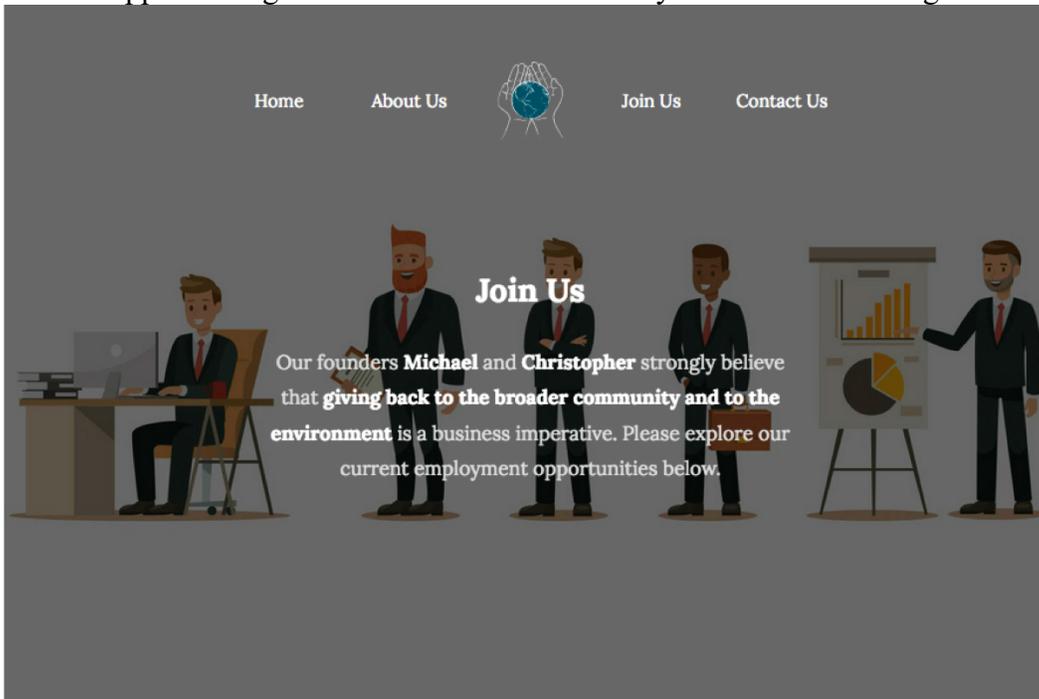
Appendix Figure 1a. Male-led – Community Claims: Home Page



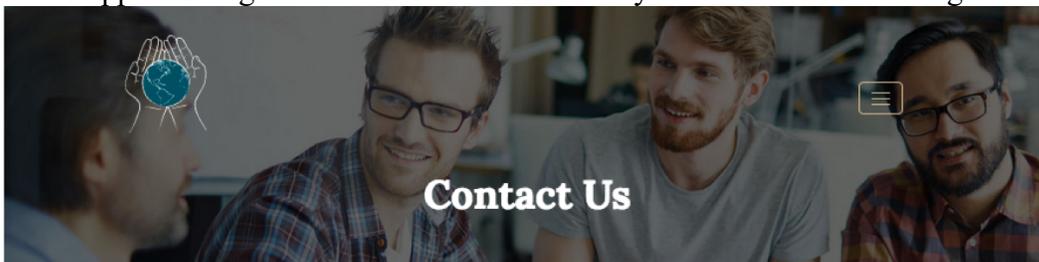
Appendix Figure 1b. Male-led – Community Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 1c. Male-led – Community Claims: Join Us Page

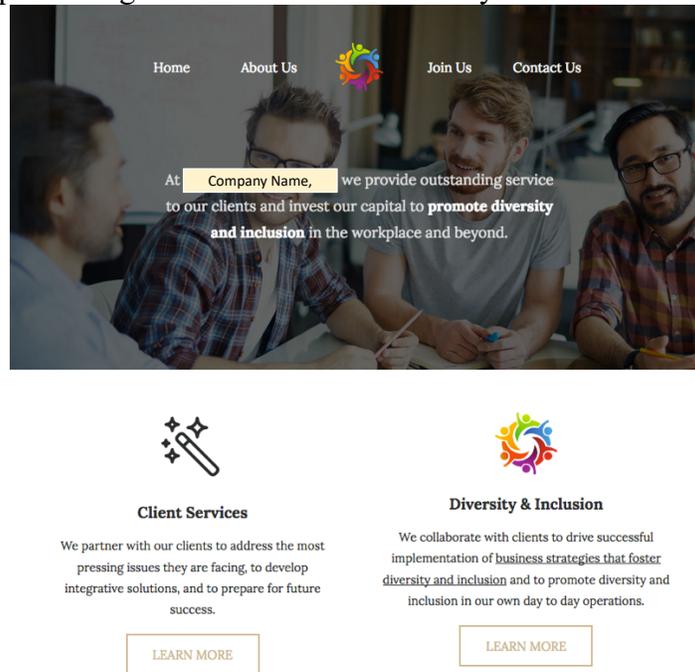


Appendix Figure 1d. Male-led – Community Claims: Contact Us Page

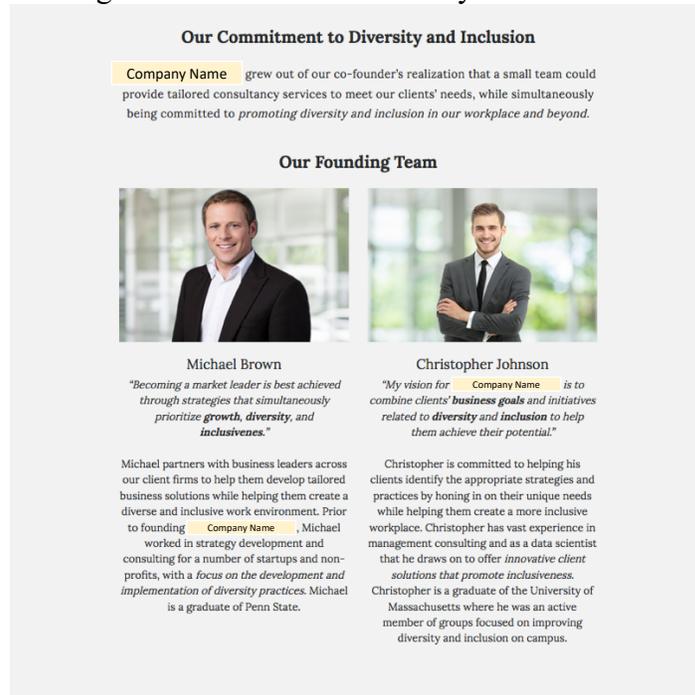


Please feel free to contact our team at
info@companyname.com if you have
additional questions.

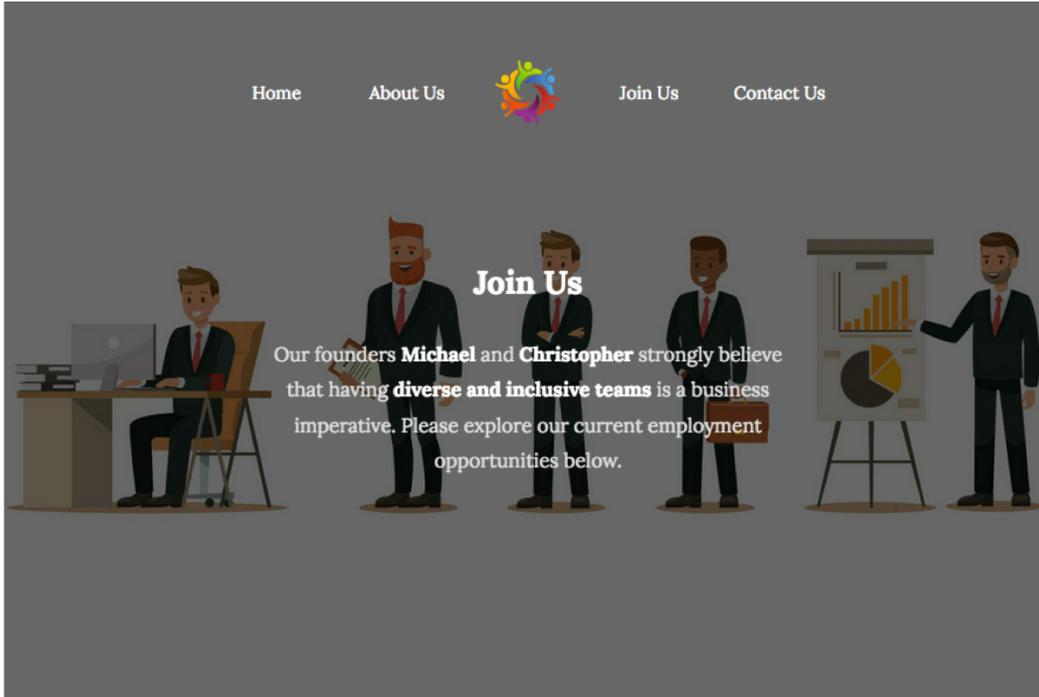
Appendix Figure 2a. Male-led – Diversity Claims: Home Page



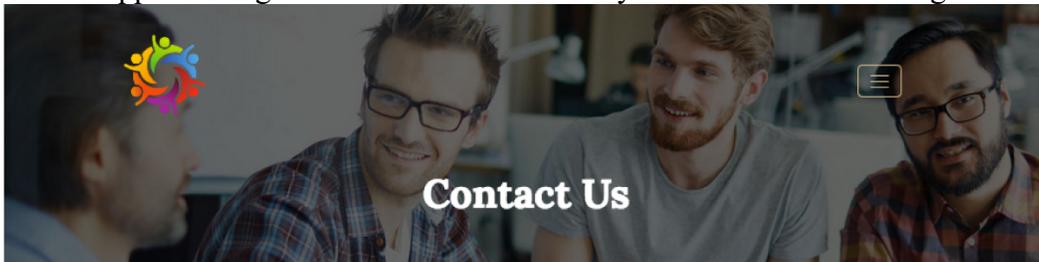
Appendix Figure 2b. Male-led – Diversity Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 2c. Male-led – Diversity Claims: Join Us Page

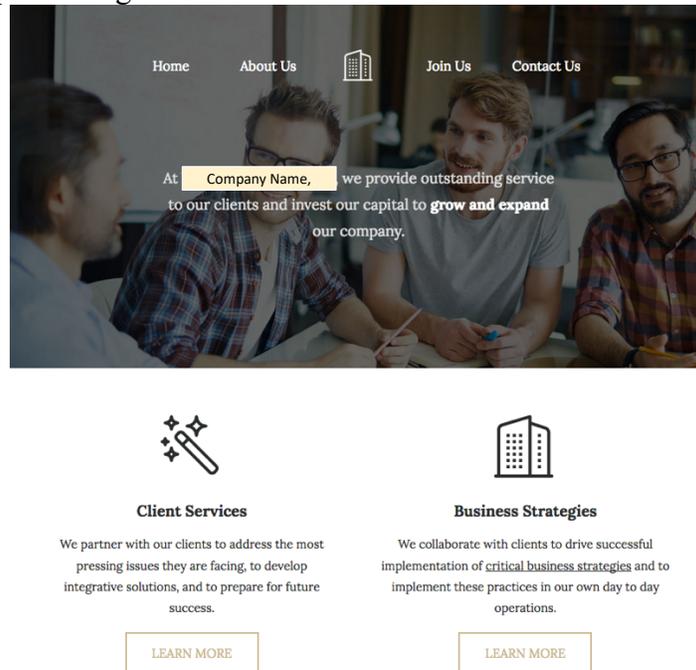


Appendix Figure 2d. Male-led – Diversity Claims: Contact Us Page

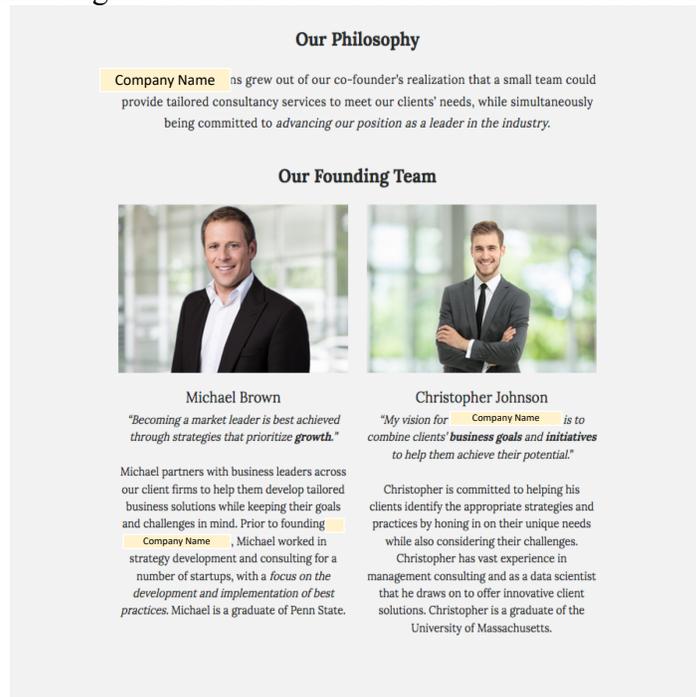


Please feel free to contact our team at
info@companyname.com if you have
additional questions.

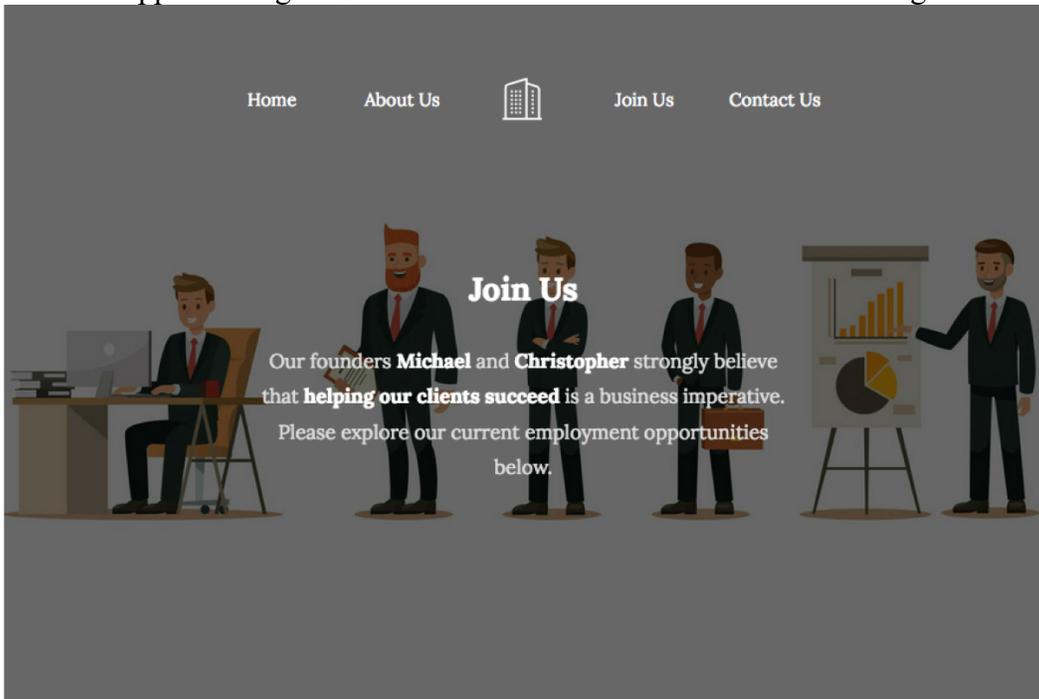
Appendix Figure 3a. Male-led – No Social Claims: Home Page



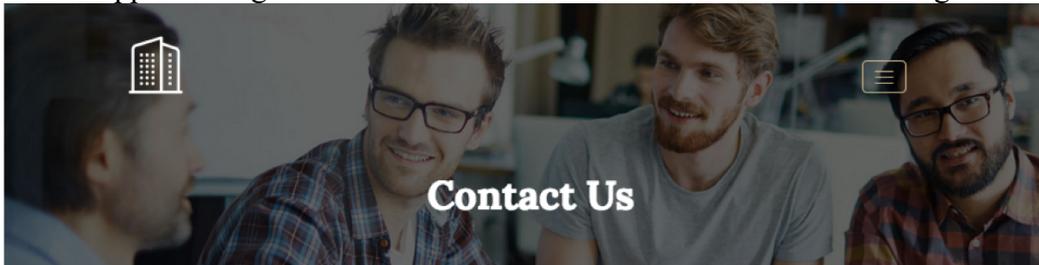
Appendix Figure 3b. Male-led – No Social Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 3c. Male-led – No Social Claims: Join Us Page



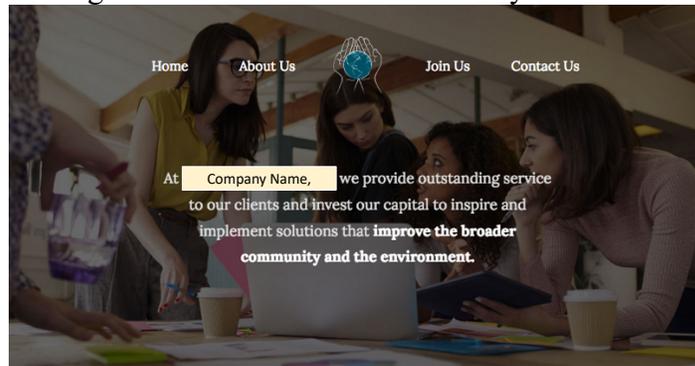
Appendix Figure 3d. Male-led – No Social Claims: Contact Us Page



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Appendix Figure 4a. Female-led – Community Claims: Home Page



Client Services

We partner with our clients to address the most pressing issues they are facing, to develop integrative solutions, and to prepare for future success.

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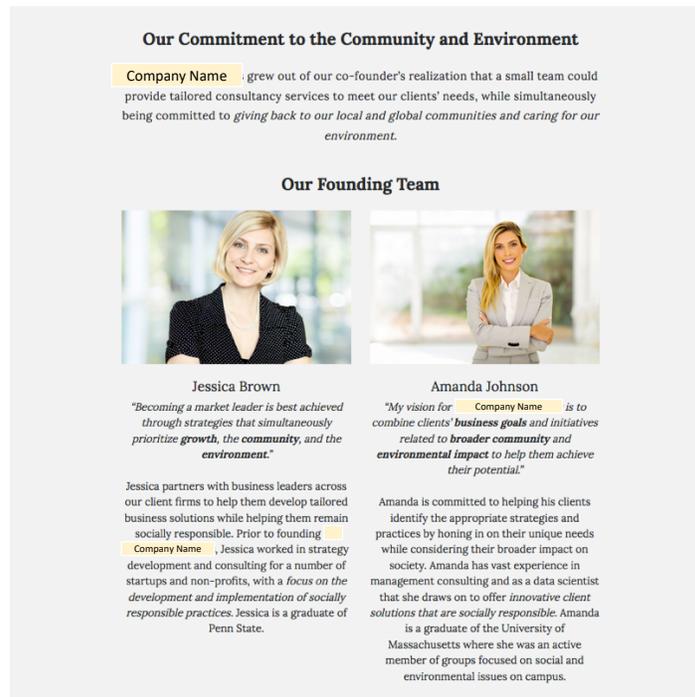


Community & Environment

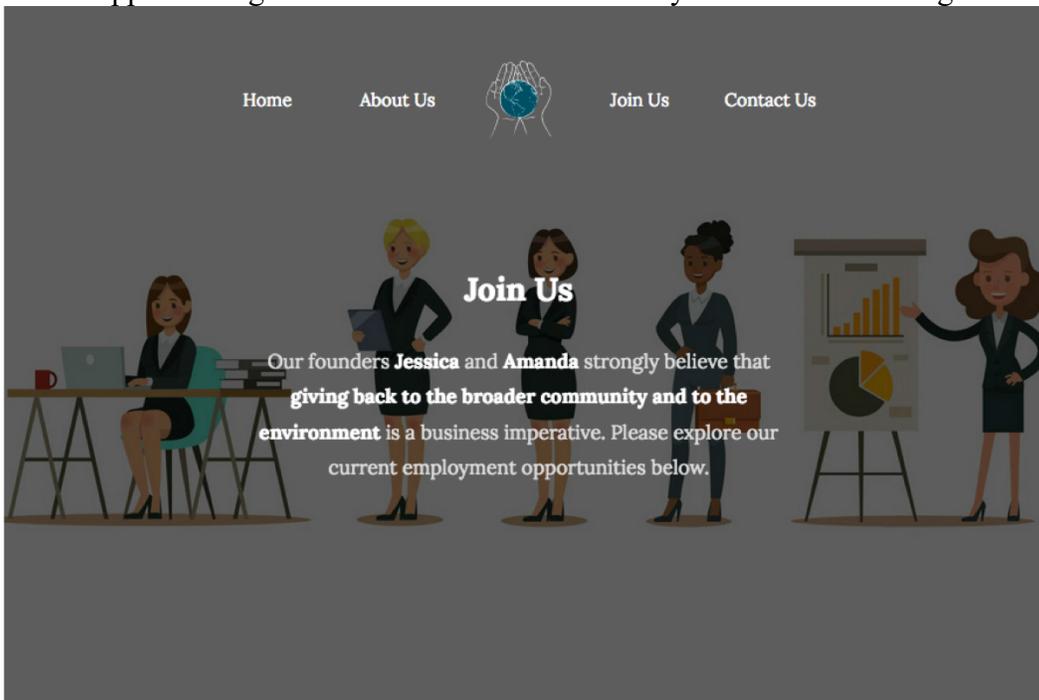
We collaborate with clients to drive successful implementation of socially responsible business strategies and to be socially responsible in our own day to day operations.

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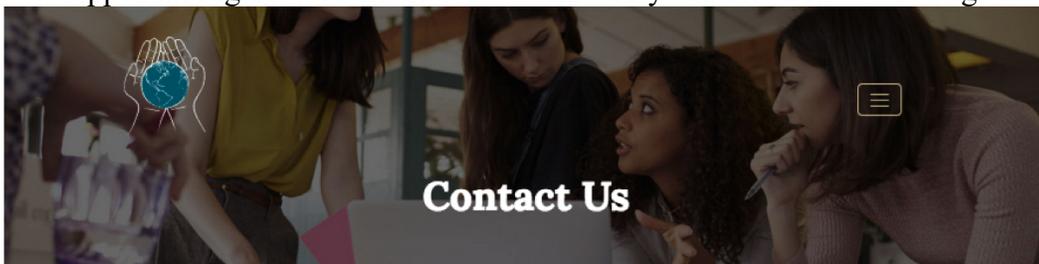
Appendix Figure 4b. Female-led – Community Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 4c. Female-led – Community Claims: Join Us Page

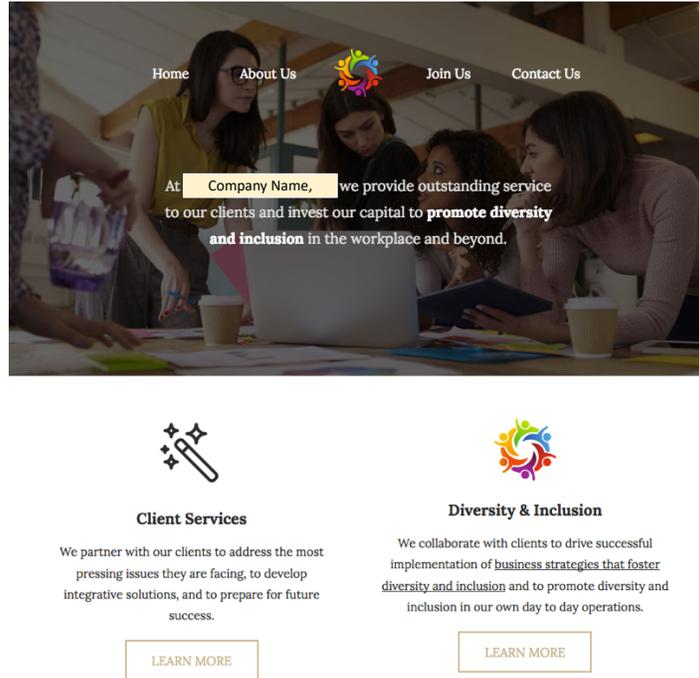


Appendix Figure 4d. Female-led – Community Claims: Contact Us Page

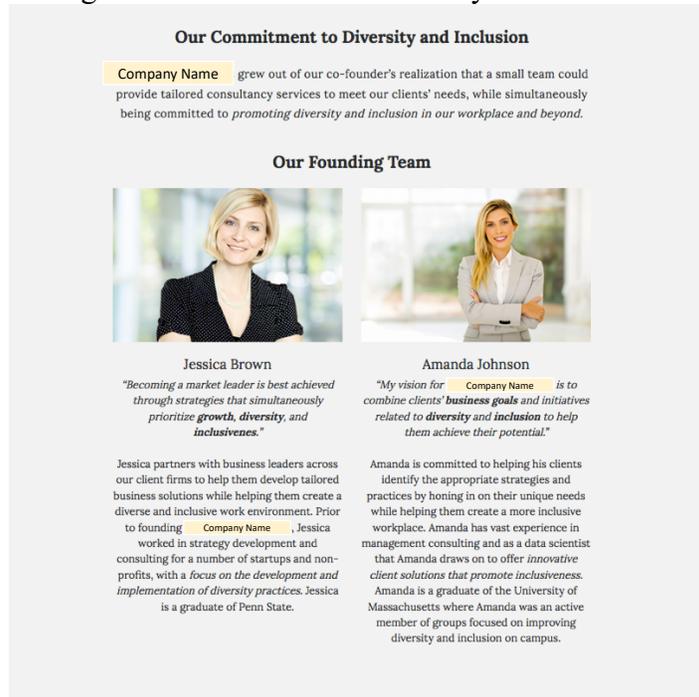


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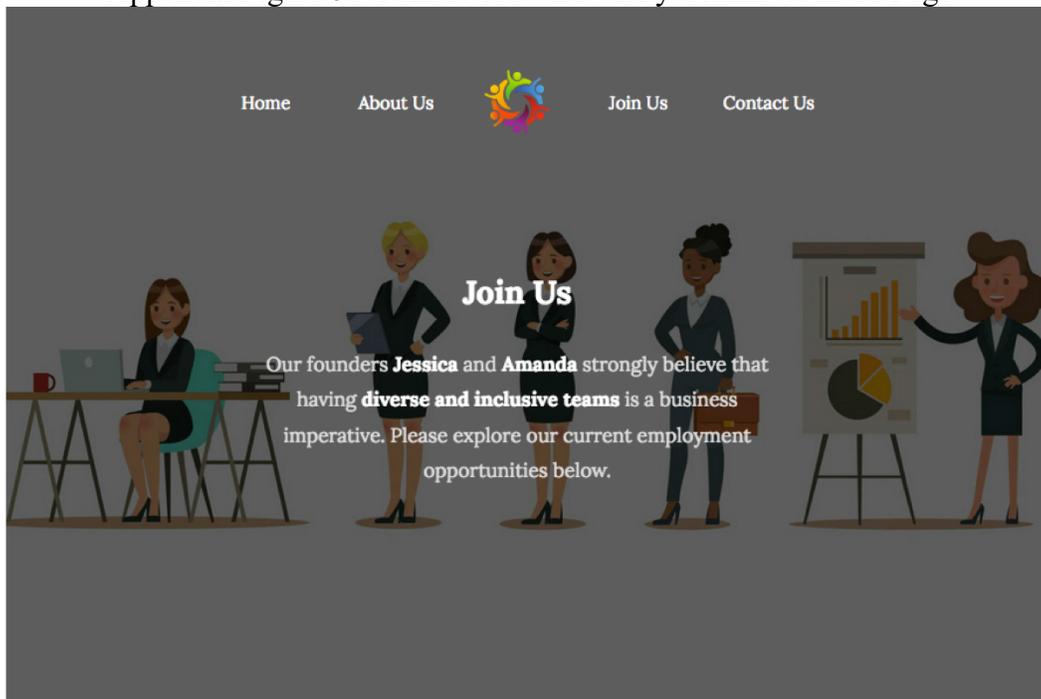
Appendix Figure 5a. Female-led – Diversity Claims: Home Page



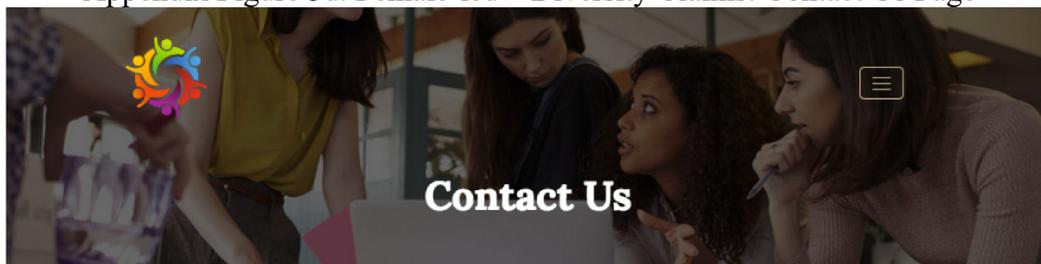
Appendix Figure 5b. Female-led – Diversity Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 5c. Female-led – Diversity Claims: Join Us Page

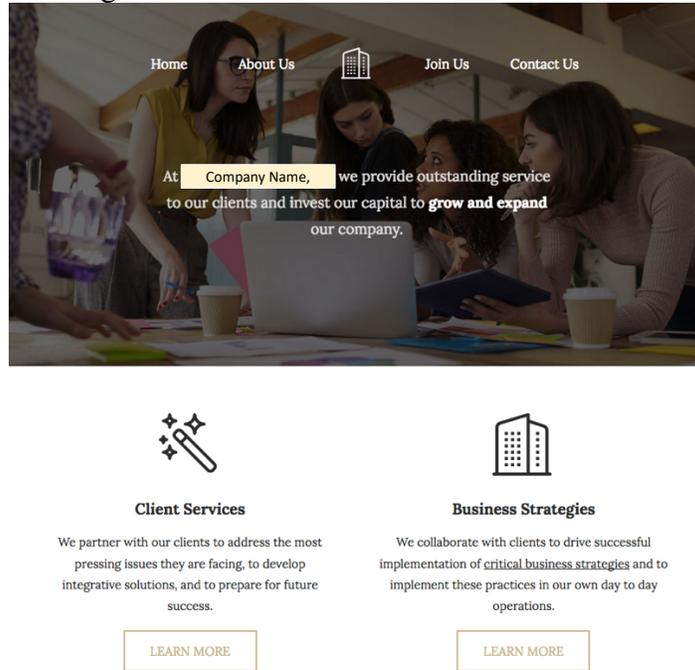


Appendix Figure 5d. Female-led – Diversity Claims: Contact Us Page

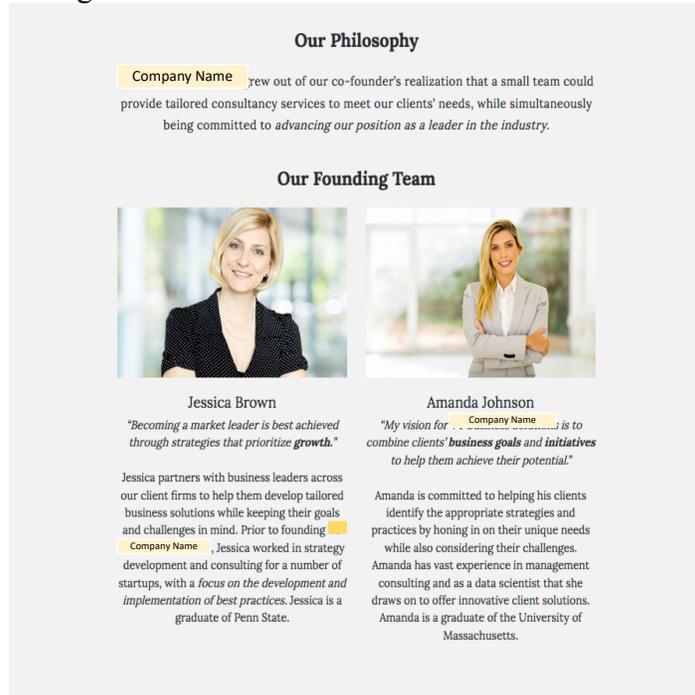


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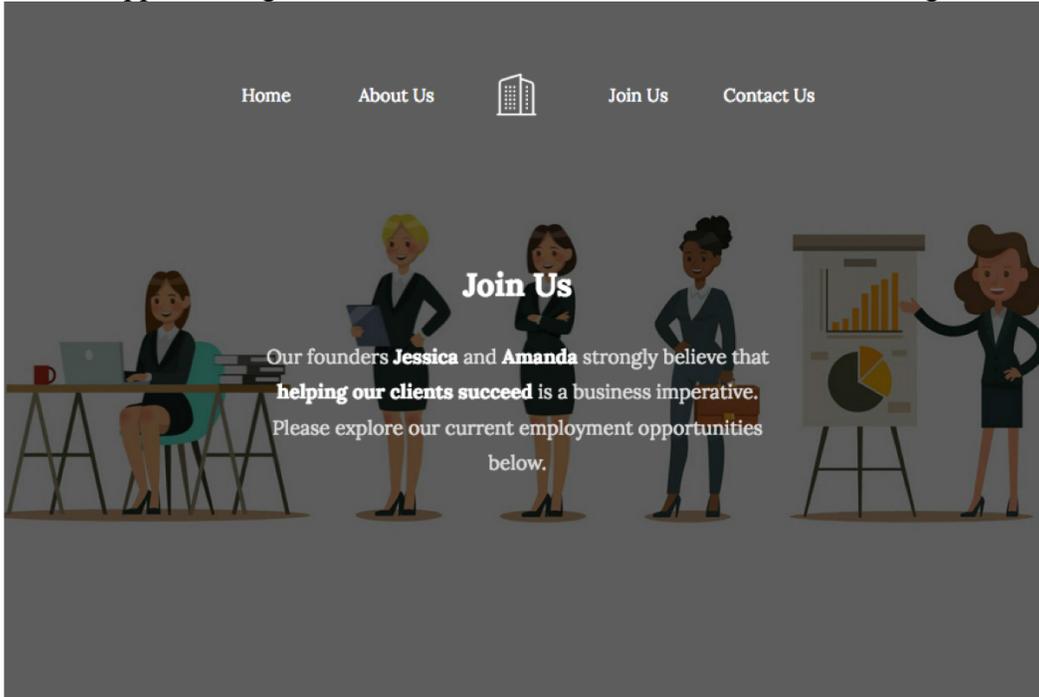
Appendix Figure 6a. Female-led – No Social Claims: Home Page



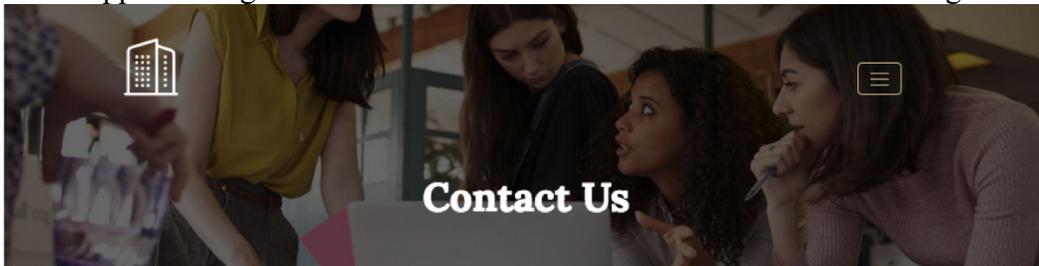
Appendix Figure 6b. Female-led – No Social Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 6c. Female-led – No Social Claims: Join Us Page

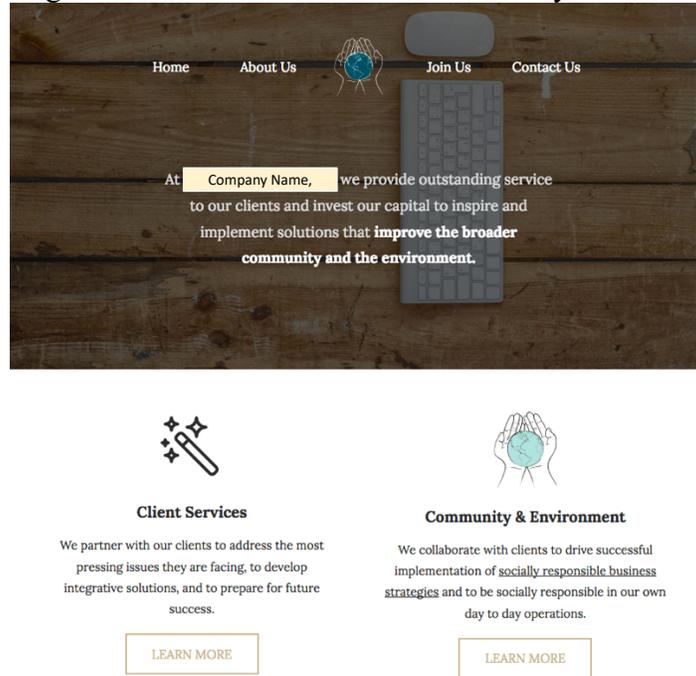


Appendix Figure 6d. Female-led - No Social Claims: Contact Us Page

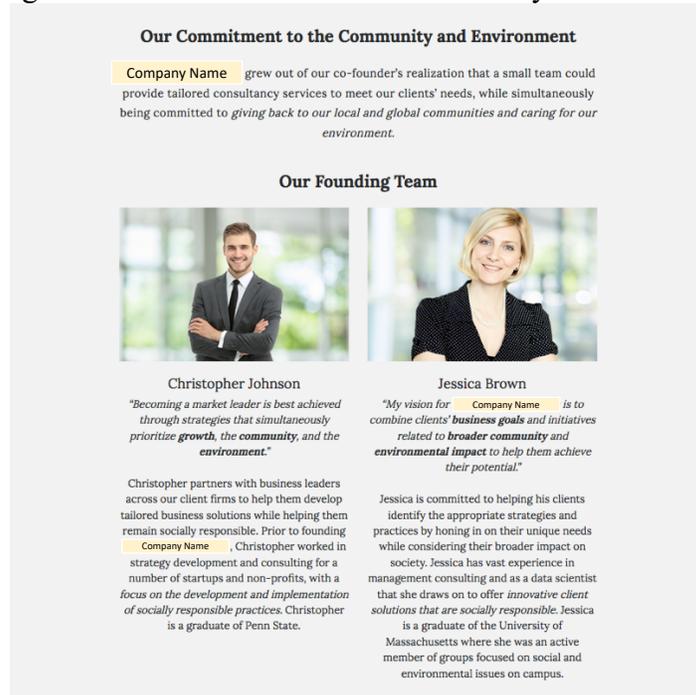


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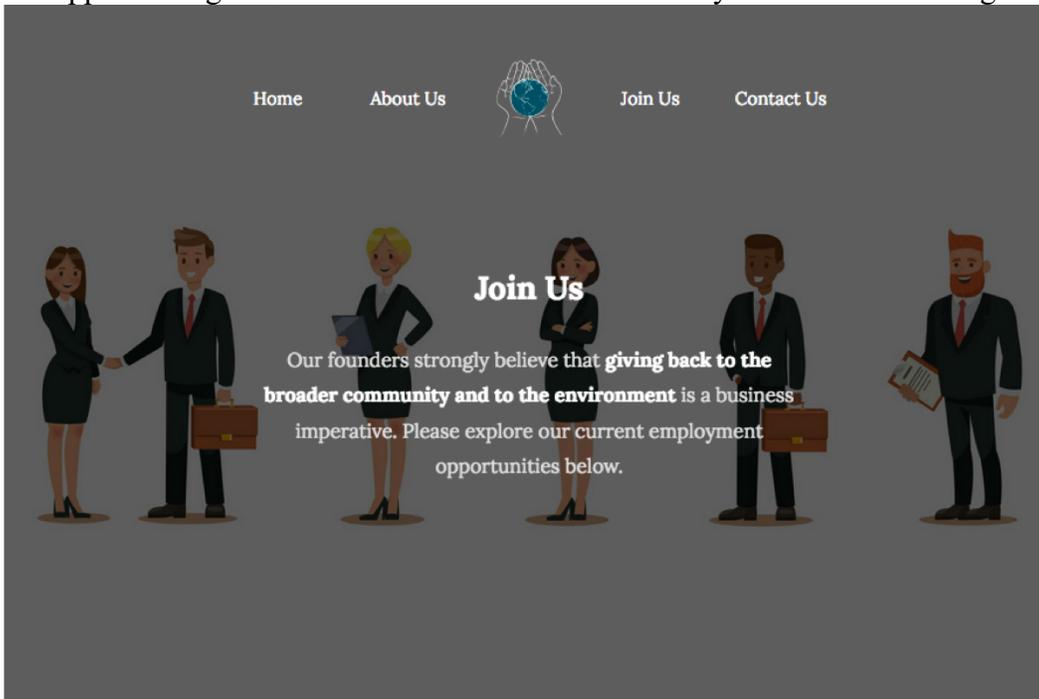
Appendix Figure 7a. Mixed Gender-led - Community Claims: Home Page



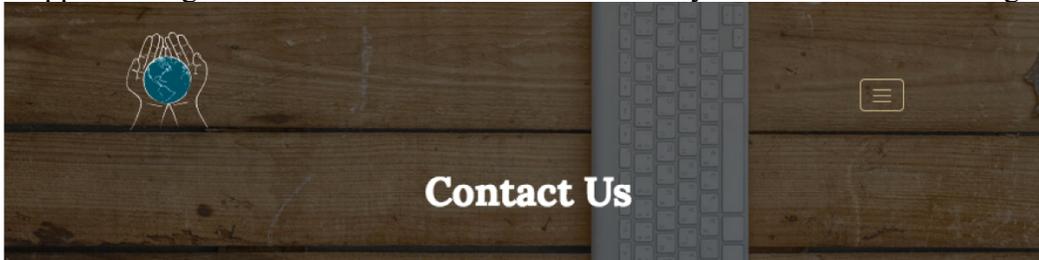
Appendix Figure 7b. Mixed Gender-led - Community Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 7c. Mixed Gender-led - Community Claims: Join Us Page

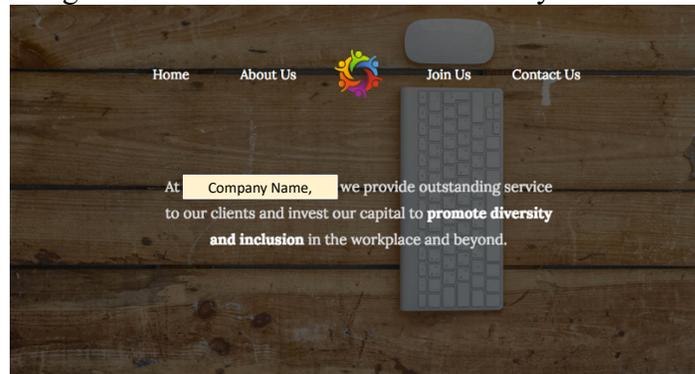


Appendix Figure 7d. Mixed Gender-led - Community Claims: Contact Us Page



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Appendix Figure 8a. Mixed Gender-led - Diversity Claims: Home Page



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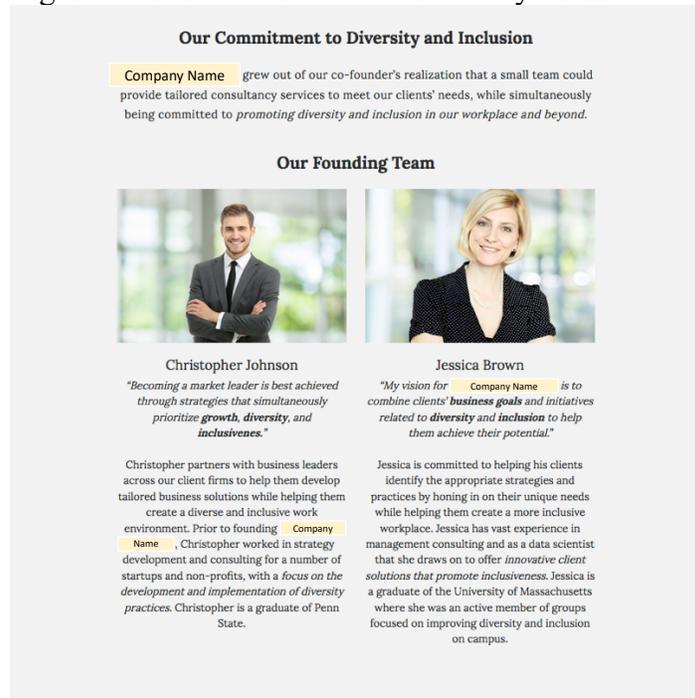


Diversity & Inclusion

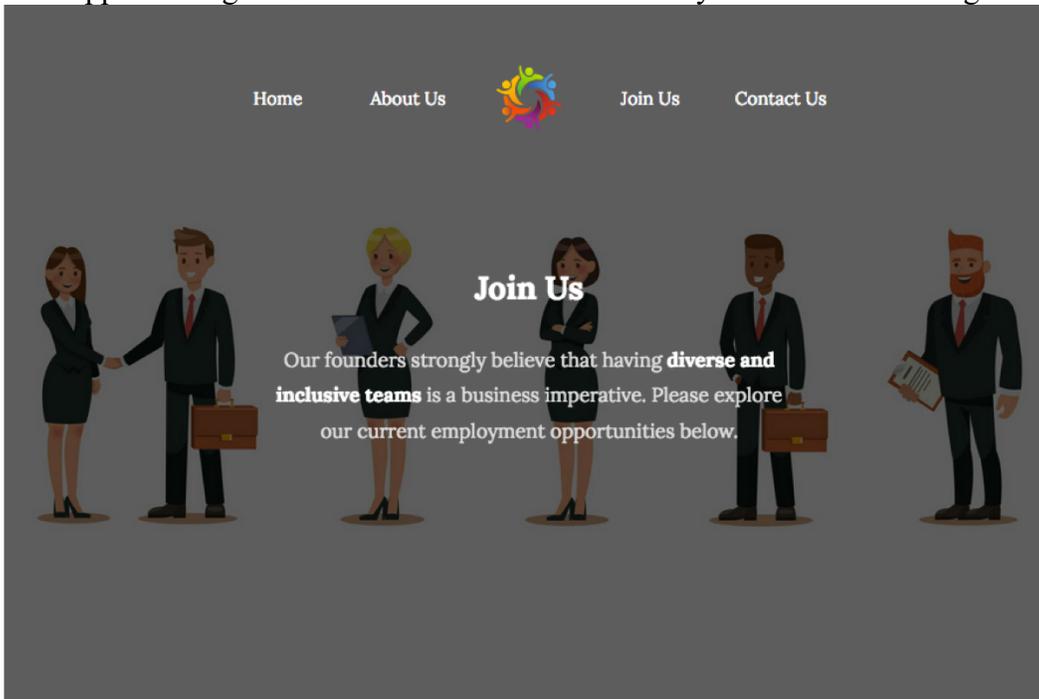
We collaborate with clients to drive successful implementation of business strategies that foster diversity and inclusion and to promote diversity and inclusion in our own day to day operations.

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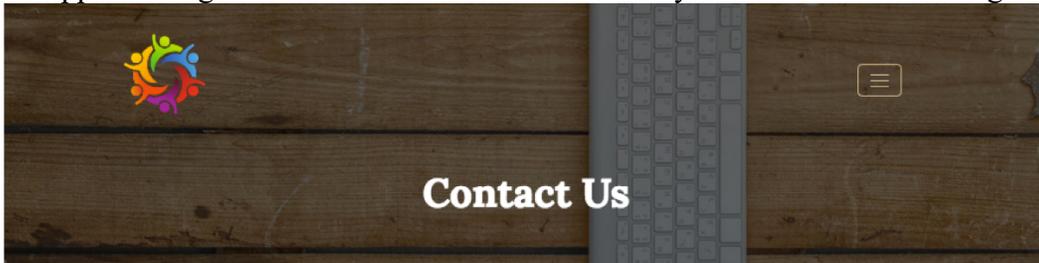
Appendix Figure 8b. Mixed Gender-led - Diversity Claims: About Us Page



Appendix Figure 8c. Mixed Gender-led - Diversity Claims: Join Us Page



Appendix Figure 8d. Mixed Gender-led - Diversity Claims: Contact Us Page



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Figure 9a. Mixed Gender-led – No Social Claims: Home Page

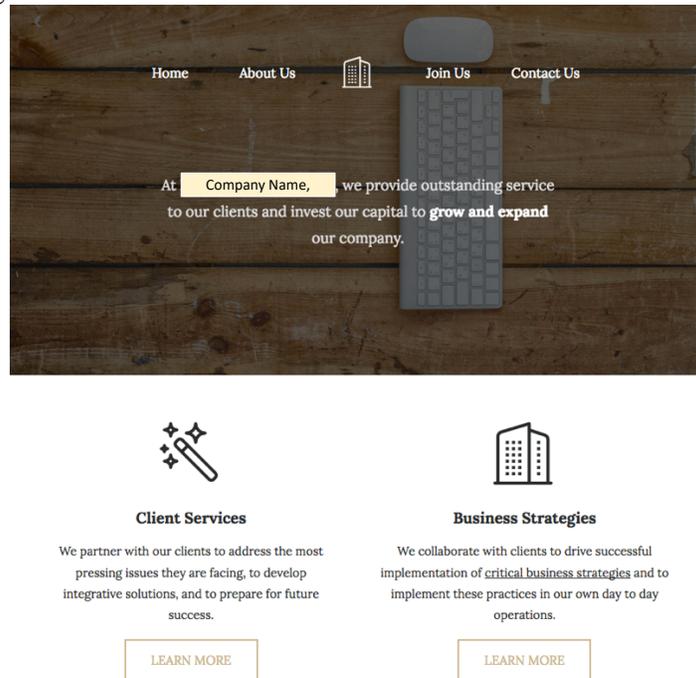


Figure 9b. Mixed Gender-led – No Social Claims: About Us Page

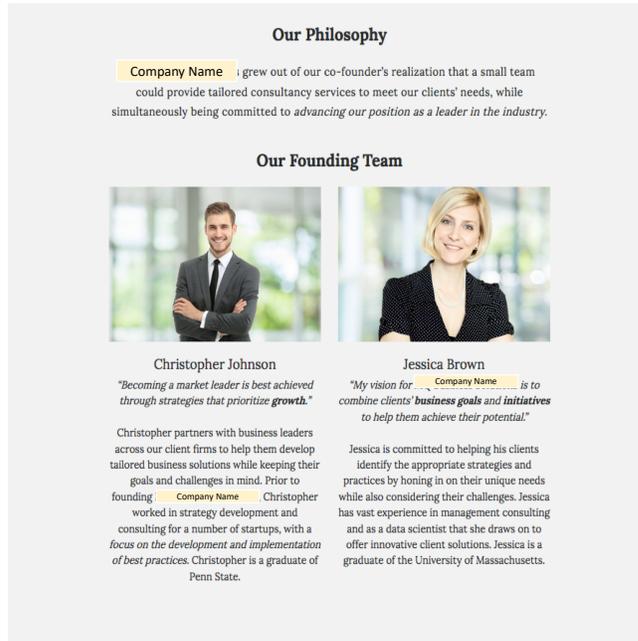


Figure 9c. Mixed Gender-led – No Social Claims: Join Us Page

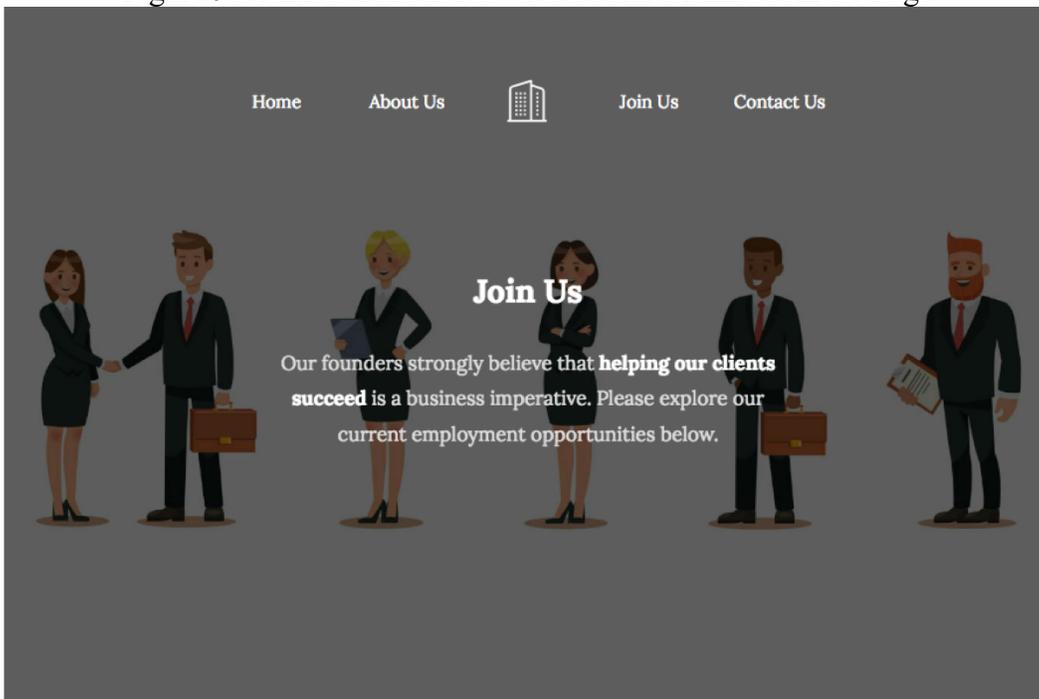
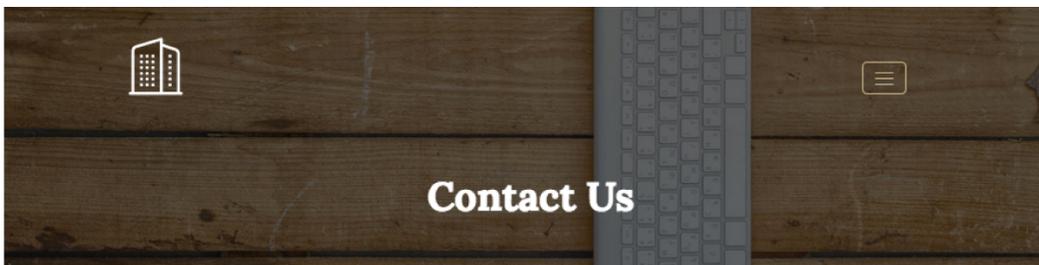


Figure 9d. Mixed Gender-led – No Social Claims: Contact Us Page



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