

How gender-biased is your job ad?

Gender-coded language in Dutch job ads

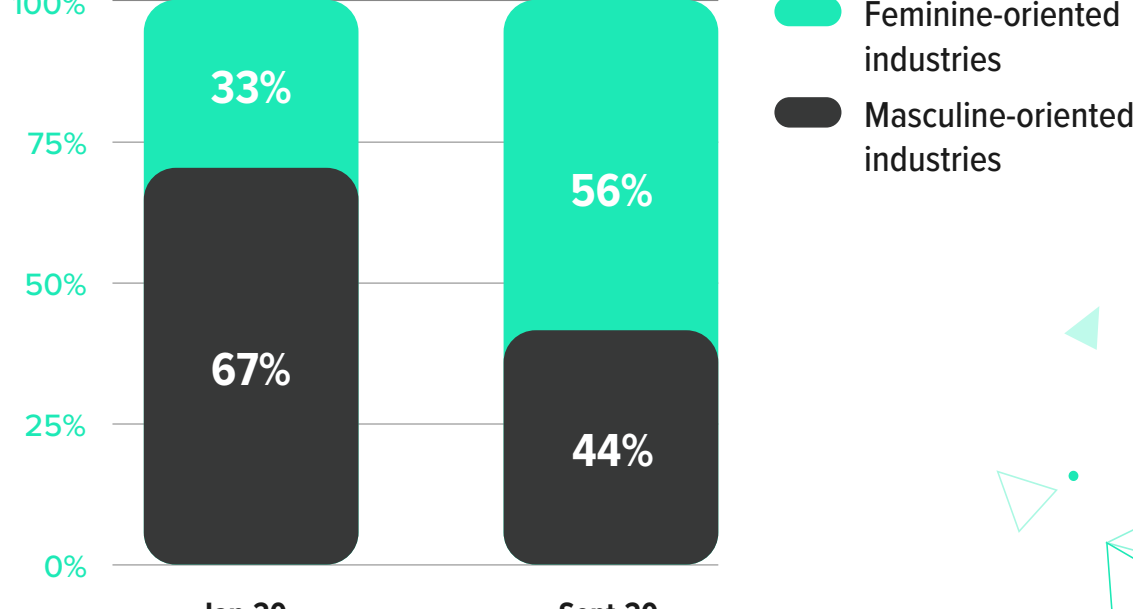
Volume II – September 2020



• Introduction •

Sia Partners researched the use of gender-biased language in Dutch job ads for the first time in January 2020. 67% of the industries were masculine-oriented. Conducting the research again in September 2020, a shift towards the usage of feminine-coded language has taken place.

Percentage of gender-oriented industries



There are possible explanations that could explain this shift:

- Organisations become more aware of the need to diversify and (un)consciously adjust their communication.
- Responsibility, care and compassion are among the leadership skills that people seek during the pandemic. As research and the media acknowledges the benefits of the combination of masculine and feminine (androgynous) leadership traits during the pandemic, this has led to more feminine-coded language in job ads.
- The relative distribution of sectors has changed as a result of the impact of the crisis in sectors.

• Masculine and feminine-coded language •

In social studies, it is shown that if job ads contain mainly **masculine-coded words** they are **less appealing to female applicants**. When using mainly **feminine-coded words**, job ads are **evenly appealing to female and male applicants**, leading to more gender diversity on the work floor.

Masculine-coded

- Associated with masculine environments.
- Aimed at personality traits.
- Perceived as harder words.
- Studies have found that these words are appealing to men, but result in fewer female job applicants. This might result in a male dominated environment.

• An example of masculine-coded language is:
You are result driven

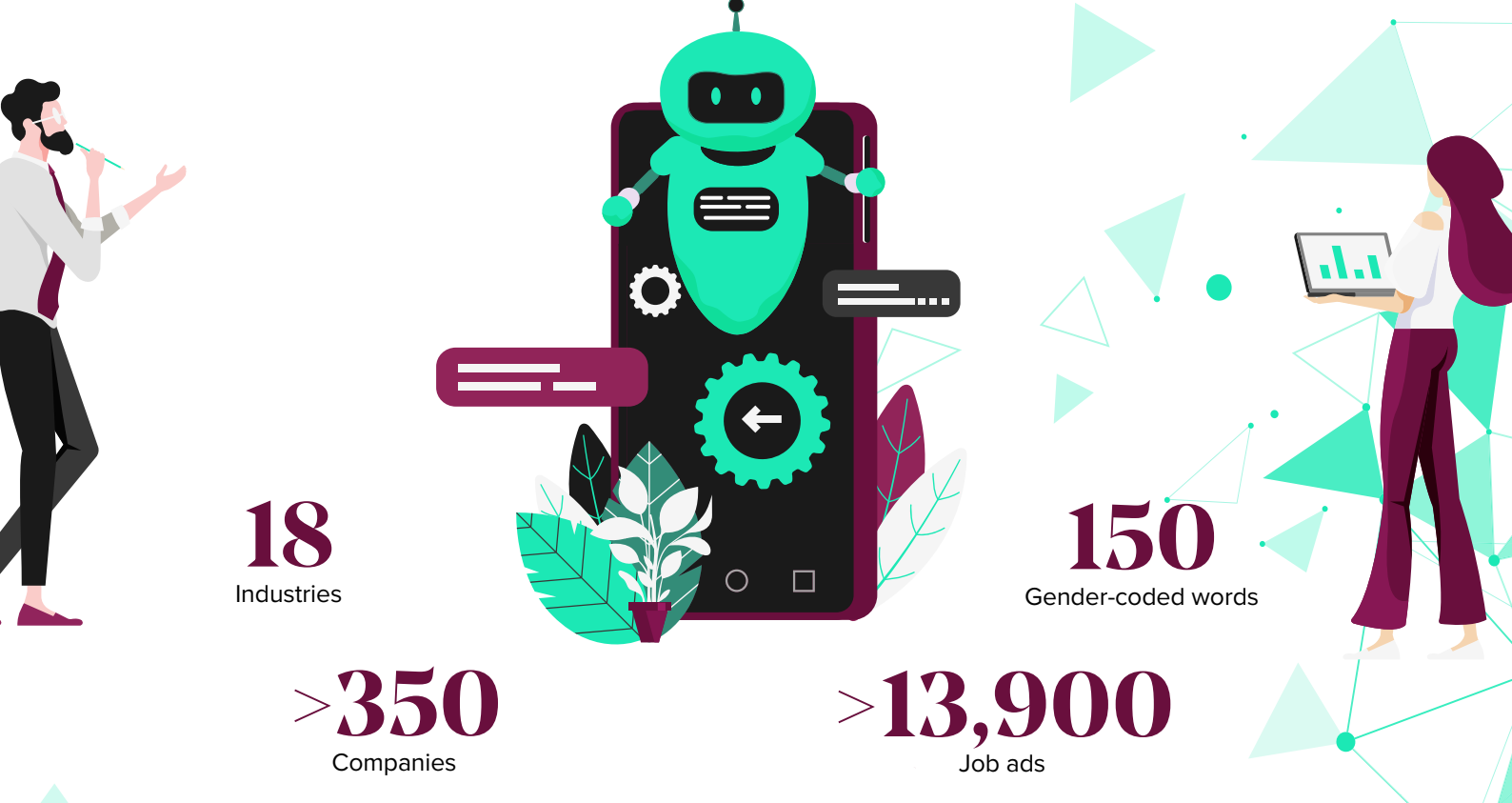
Feminine-coded

- Associated with feminine environments.
- Aimed at behaviour.
- Regarded as softer words.
- Studies have shown that the words are just as appealing to males and females. This leads to more diverse applicants for the job.

• The sentence on the left can be written as neutral or feminine:
You are able to achieve results

• Our Gender-coded language tracker bot •

Sia Partners' Data Science lab built a gender-coded language tracker bot via its innovative Heka ecosystem. The bot analysed job ads on the use of Dutch gender-coded language supported by social research.



Data has been normalised to ensure comparison among industries and companies

• Our main findings •

In a short time frame, we see that masculine-oriented industries became more feminine-oriented



Feminine-oriented industries became more balanced (androgynous) in the use of gender-coded words.

Top five industries with masculine-coded job ads

VS

Top five industries with feminine-coded job ads

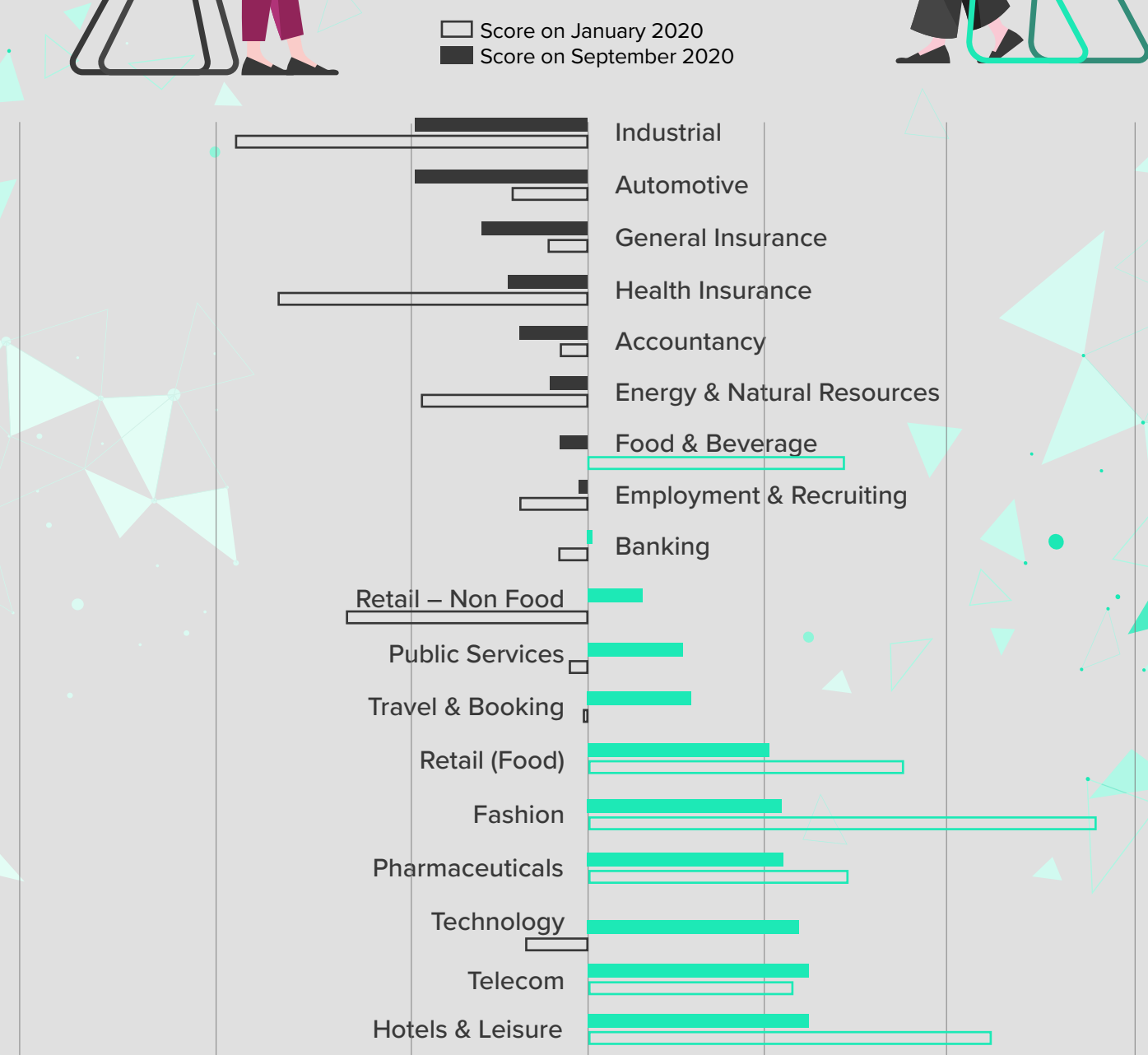
January 2020	September 2020	Rank	January 2020	September 2020
Industrial	Industrial	1.	Hotels & Leisure	Hotels & Leisure
Health Insurance	Automotive	2.	Fashion	Telecom
Energy & Natural Resources	General Insurance	3.	Retail (Food)	Technology
Retail (Non-Food)	Health Insurance	4.	Pharmaceuticals	Pharmaceuticals
Automotive	Accountancy	5.	Food & Beverage	Fashion

The more masculine-oriented industries show an increase in the use of feminine-coded words

• Total overview •

Score per industry

□ Score on January 2020
■ Score on September 2020



5.8

Gender-coded words per average job ad

81,110

Gender-coded words found

• Want to know how your company scores? •

Paul Geerts

Associate Partner
+31 6 52 53 26 65
paul.geerts@sia-partners.com

Stefan Twigt

Consultant
+ 31 6 51 94 91 16
stefan.twigt@sia-partners.com

Jorn Fokkens

Sr. Manager
+31 6 49 42 05 42
jorn.fokkens@sia-partners.com

Note:

The research is based on job ads posted on the job ad website Indeed in September 2020

Sources:

<https://hbr.org/2020/06/will-the-pandemic-reshape-notions-of-female-leadership>
Blake-Beard, S., Shapiro, M. and Ingols, C. (2020), "Feminine? Masculine? Androgynous leadership as a necessity in COVID-19", Gender in Management, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2020-0222>
Gaucher, D., Friesen, J., and Kay, A.C., (2011), "Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality", Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol 101(1), p 109-28.
Mollema, E. & Van Driel, J. (2019) Inclusief werven, selecteren en schrijven. Direction.