

## Diversity-sensitive Visual Language in Recruitment

**Why is this important?** Images work faster than words and shape who is addressed. Studies show: People recognize themselves in visual worlds - or not:

- People who see themselves visually represented are more likely to be confident in their performance - especially in professional contexts (Born et al., 2023)
- 67% of applicants draw conclusions about corporate culture based on images in job advertisements (StepStone, 2022)

→ In short: those who make diversity visible win - in terms of talent, credibility and impact.

### If we want to win over people with different perspectives, then we have to

- ✓ Make diversity visible - representing people of different age groups, gender identities, origins, body shapes, religions and disabilities.
- ✓ Avoid stereotypes - no clichéd attributions or symbolic images. No reduction to individual characteristics (e.g. headscarf = only distinguishing feature).
- ✓ Demonstrate agency - present marginalized people as active agents (e.g. as speakers, leaders, explainers, not just as listeners).
- ✓ Consider accessibility - use alternative texts, subtitles, high-contrast design, simple and, if necessary, easy language.
- ✓ Check composition and reflect on hierarchies - Who is at the center? Who is active, who is passive? Which visual axes, focal points, repetitions influence the effect?
- ✓ Reflection and sensitivity - question your own assumptions, get feedback from different groups.

### Reflection questions: Questioning images - conscious perception

- Who is visible in our pictures - and who is missing?
- What roles do the people depicted play?
- Which perspectives are shown - which are hidden?
- Does our overall appearance appear diverse or homogeneous?
- How conscious is our image selection? Who checks them?

#### DO:

- Actively and equally represent different dimensions of diversity
- Use real employees instead of stock images
- Understanding visual language as part of strategic DEI communication

#### DON'T:

- Use alibi images ("diversity" only depicted in symbolic motifs)
- Reducing people to appearances or stereotypical characteristics
- Only communicate diversity on peripheral issues (e.g. inclusion) - not on key messages or leadership

**Diversity-sensitive visual language demonstrates professionalism, value orientation and future viability. It creates trust and a sense of belonging - and opens doors for the best minds.**