

Women are less likely to be rewarded for innovations in the workplace

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Organizations are eager to find innovative workers because of their ability to see opportunities for improvement in areas that might otherwise go overlooked. But research shows that if these innovative

employees are women, they are less likely to be rewarded for their innovations than if they are men.

The "think innovation, think male" [bias](#) – Recent research by Derek R. Avery, professor and the David C. Darnell Chair in Principled Leadership at the Wake Forest University School of Business, showed both men and [women](#) managers can struggle from a "think [innovation](#)—think male" bias that affects performance reviews. Female employees receive more favorable performance ratings when their levels of innovative work behaviors were lower than when they were higher. Avery can talk about how organizations can help managers overcome their own biases. "Being aware is a start," says Avery, "but the [workplace](#) is an extension of society, which has long undervalued women as innovators."

Women win by putting their best [idea](#) forward first – Communication professor Rebecca Gill says women can better position themselves to lead change in the workplace by bringing their most promising ideas to the table first. "Bringing an idea to the table that isn't fully fleshed out may validate the gender-bias that innovators tend to be youthful, male, white Silicon-Valley types," says Gill. "Presenting a promising idea, even if small, builds confidence. Innovations are often enhancements or improvements on what we already know and are already familiar with. An Elon Musk-size idea is not necessarily the best one. A small win that makes a difference for a client or customer gives confidence to put up a bigger new idea." Gill can talk about strategies for how to decide what ideas are the most likely to be wins.

Provided by Wake Forest University

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