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## How I Discovered Gender Discrimination

It was the late '90s and I was at an interesting phase of my career. For the first time in my life I possessed relevant qualifications, experience and could also show a successful track record in my chosen career path. I had the job seeker's trifecta. It was also summer and my current employer was pissing me off with their penny-pinching ways, so after three years of ball busting effort I decided a break and a job change was in order. Displaying characteristic overconfidence in myself I quit my job (without burning any bridges) and set about applying for others.

I was experienced in managing technical & trade supply businesses. I also had engineering experience and sales experience and had demonstrably excelled at every sales and profit target I had ever been given. I started applying for roles that would stretch me and lift my career up a notch. There were plenty of opportunities around and I usually had a few applications on the go at any one time. I was an experienced guy in an experienced guy's world, this wouldn't be hard.

Then the rejection letters trickled in. I could take rejection, it goes hand in hand with business, but after the first few months I was frankly confused. I hadn't had a single interview. Instead of aiming high I lowered my sights and started applying for jobs where there was no career advancement. Now I had everything these employers could possibly want, it would be a shoe in. But still not one interview came my way, not even a phone inquiry.

Somewhere after the four month mark my confidence was starting to take a hit. The people rejecting me were business people too, how could my reasoning that I was perfect for these jobs be so different to theirs? Putting on my most serious business head I went back and scoured my CV. It was the only contact any of my potential employers or their recruitment companies had had with me. My CV was THE common denominator and if something was wrong it MUST be there.

I had fortunately seen a number of CVs in my time. I was happy with the choice of style and layout, and the balance of detail versus brevity. I was particularly pleased with the decision I made to brand it with my name with just enough bold positioning to make it instantly recognizable, and as I sat scouring every detail of that CV a horrible truth slowly dawned on me. My name.

My first name is Kim. Technically its gender neutral but my experience showed that most people's default setting in the absence of any other clues is to assume Kim is a women's name. And nothing else on my CV identified me as male. At first I thought I was being a little paranoid but engineering, trades, sales and management were all definitely male dominated industries. So I pictured all the managers I had over the years and, forming an amalgam of them in my mind, I read through the document as I imagined they would have. It was like being hit on the head with a big sheet of unbreakable glass ceiling.

My choice to brand the CV with a bold positioning of my name actually seemed to scream that I was a woman. I could easily imagine many of the people I had worked for discarding the document without even reading further. If they did read further the next thing they saw (as politeness declared at the time) was a little personal information, and that declared I was married with kids. I had put this in because I knew many employers would see it as showing stability, but when I viewed it through the skewed view of middle aged men who thought I was a woman, I could see it was just further damning my cause. I doubt if many of the managers I had known would have made it to the second page.

I made one change that day. I put Mr. in front of my name on my CV. It looked a little too formal for my liking but I got an interview for the very next job I applied for. And the one after that. It all happened in a fortnight and the second job was a substantial increase in responsibility over anything I had done before. In the end I beat out a very competitive short-list and enjoyed that job for the next few years, further enhancing my career.

Where I had worked previously there was a woman manager. She was the only one of about a dozen at my level, and there were none on the next level. She had worked her way up through the company over many years and was very good at her job. She was the example everyone used to show that it could be done, but that most women just didn't want to. It's embarrassing to think I once believed that. It's even more incredible to think many people still do.

Source: <http://whatwouldkingleonidasdo.tumblr.com/post/54989171152/how-i-discovered-gender-discrimination>