

Diversity and Inclusion at SearchPilot

First annual survey results and analysis: June 2020

This document exists because one of the things we are committing to doing, to ensure we build a diverse and inclusive team at SearchPilot, is to hold ourselves accountable by publishing the results of a diversity and inclusion survey inside and outside the company each year. This is the first one.

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Statement of intent

We believe that we will build the strongest possible company if we can put together a diverse team at all levels of the business, and that this is also one of the most powerful things that we can do as a senior team for the greater good and for wider society. We want to build a company where a diverse group of people can thrive and succeed as well as feel valued and welcomed at all levels.

Summary

SearchPilot spun out of Distilled at the end of January 2020. We are a small team of 14 at the time of writing, with strong growth ambitions. The small team size means that statistics aren't the best way to tell our stories, but it is nevertheless clear that we have important work to do as a result of our senior / founding team (original Distilled founders and VPs - four in total) being all white men.

We have identified this at SearchPilot with an urgency that we didn't have until later in Distilled's journey, and so we are hopeful that we can achieve great outcomes in the coming years.

Aside from the four white men identified above, the rest of the team we have hired identifies as ~40% Asian, ~10% Black, ~50% White meaning that overall the team is ~30% Asian, ~7% Black, ~60% White. Our dual priorities in regard to racial and ethnic diversity are to ensure we continue to bring Black colleagues in particular onto the team (both London and NYC have higher proportions of Black residents than we have on our team, while Seattle is around 7% Black) and to ensure that anyone on our whole team can get ahead, everyone feels welcome, and a diverse group stays with us long-term.

In terms of gender: aside from the four white male founders / VPs, 50% of the team we have hired identify as female and 50% identify as male meaning that overall ~36% of the whole company identifies as female. We therefore have a clear priority to ensure that we support, encourage, and develop the women on our team into senior positions as well as continuing to hire a diverse team.

CEO's statement

Like many people, I've been [doing a lot of thinking recently](#) about how I can make the biggest difference for those who don't have or haven't had my privileges or my luck.

I have spoken out, I have donated money, but I have come to the conclusion that the most important and most powerful thing I can be doing is **HIRING, RETAINING and PROMOTING** people. Business is both the world I understand best and the best tool I have at my disposal. I believe that [diverse teams](#)

[are stronger teams](#), and so there is a compelling business imperative to do the right thing - and yet too many leaders (including myself) have not tried hard enough, have failed, or both.

When I got started in business, it took me too long to realise that this had to be a priority. At first, it wasn't even really on my mind, and then even as my awareness grew, I believed for too long that **just** attempting to hire and promote the best people would be sufficient. It's not. It is **necessary** but it's **not** sufficient. I didn't realise this when Distilled was just 14 people, and probably the hardest lesson we learned over the years at Distilled was that by the time you are big enough to allocate budgets to HR and recruiting, you will not only have a much larger problem to fix, but you will also find it harder to attract a diverse range of candidates because they will be able to see the breakdown of the senior team and of the wider company and will wonder if they will fit in.

Even though I don't have all the answers, I do realise this, and am actively working on it while SearchPilot is 14 people.

At our size you can't read too much into the raw numbers - there's not a lot of statistical significance here - but nonetheless it's obvious that we need diversity in leadership. From past experience, I know that while we have the groundwork laid in a more diverse wider team, unless I can get better than I have been in the past at the inclusion part, and at retaining and promoting, the diversity in the broader team won't magically make its way into the senior team.

I chose to commit to a survey, and publishing the numbers, even though we aren't large enough for statistical analysis because it is an important part of holding ourselves to account, it's easiest to start while we are small, and it gives us a baseline for the future.

I've talked below about some of the [things we are already doing and some of the things we intend to do](#) to improve, but public transparency around the process is part of the accountability. I am going to repeat this survey annually and publish the results privately for discussion with the team and publicly for the accountability.

By doing all of this, I hope that we can make it so that SearchPilot is welcoming to everyone and a great place for **all** great people to work so that we can bring the **actual** best candidates onto the team, develop all our colleagues, and use diversity to build the strongest possible team.

Will Critchlow

CEO, SearchPilot

June 2020

Some notes on the process

We wanted to start the process of gathering data and holding ourselves accountable early in the life of the company. At the same time, we realise that our current team size makes it difficult to use a statistical approach.

Our approach was to use a **non-compulsory** survey (where individual questions were optional even within the optional survey) and to make the survey **anonymous** as far as possible.

We limited the identity questions we asked to race and gender initially to limit the sensitivity of the segments. We did some analysis of segments that held at least 5 people, and after this analysis, kept no individual-level responses. This means we have not analysed responses by each race / ethnicity individually, nor analysed intersections of race and gender, never mind intersections with other forms of diversity. We hope to be able to [extend our work](#) in these areas as the team grows, when we aren't talking about single individuals.

In addition to the identity questions, we asked for information on our team members' beliefs and feelings in three areas (each scored on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" - with each question optional):

1. SearchPilot leadership cares about diversity
2. I feel welcome at SearchPilot
3. I believe our diversity statistics will be better in a year's time

We have committed to repeating this process annually.

The Data

Diversity data

All but one of our team members completed the survey, and everyone who completed the survey answered all questions. We have included "No response" as a row, believing this is the fairest and most transparent way of representing the data.

Race / ethnicity

Although we have begun the process of ensuring that we don't create a disproportionately white team,



we have an obvious need to bring more Black colleagues onto the team as we scale:

Race / ethnicity	
Asian	29%
Black	7%
White	57%
No response	7%

Gender

Outside of the senior team, 50% of the team identify as female and 50% identify as male, leaving the overall company picture skewed somewhat male:

Gender	
Identify as Female	36%
Identify as Male	57%
Other	0%
No response	7%

Diversity among managers

When we extend the definition of senior team beyond the founders / VPs talked about above to everyone in a managerial role, we add two more individuals - a white man and a white woman meaning our overall breakdown for managers is:

Managers	
White men	83%
White women	17%

Diversity among the rest of the team

There is significantly more diversity in the rest of the business outside the senior team of founders + VPs. We hope this means that the foundations for a better future are already in place, with a more diverse team coming up through the business:

1. Race / ethnicity:
 - a. Asian: ~40%
 - b. Black: ~10%
 - c. White: ~50%



2. Gender: 50% identify as female and 50% identify as male

Beliefs and feelings

While acknowledging that despite the anonymous nature of the responses, *everyone* responding to the survey is by necessity in a small group, and those from the most under-represented groups are in very small groups or even theoretically identifiable from their responses, it was nevertheless important to start collecting this data to create a benchmark for future years.

We asked three questions about beliefs and feelings - asking respondents to rate each from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”:

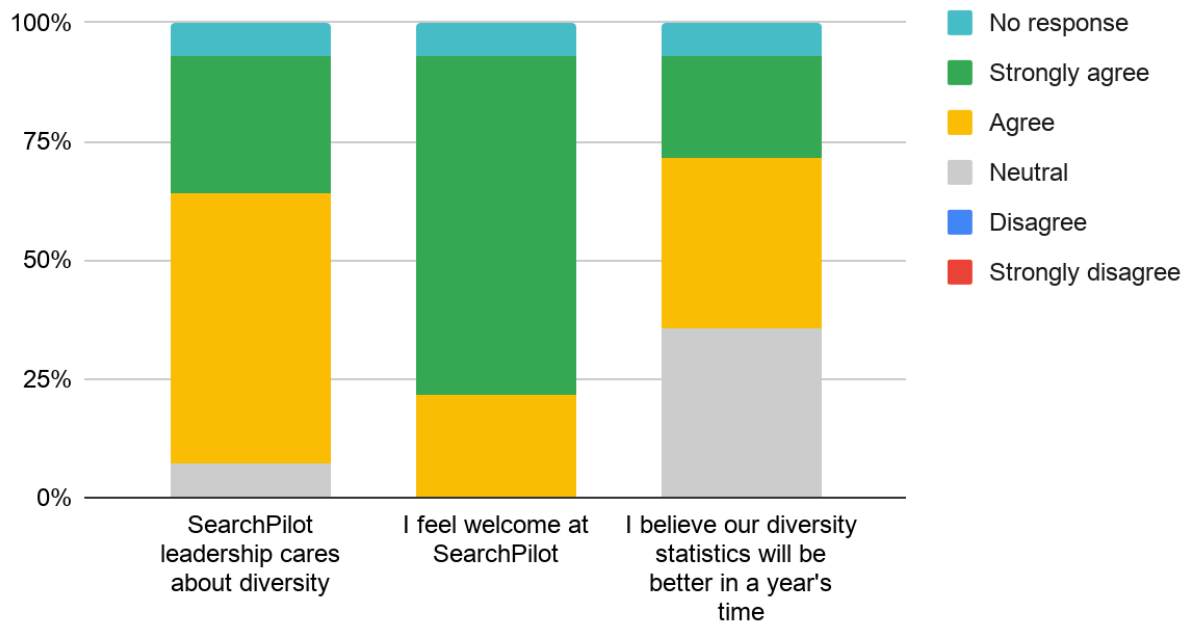
1. SearchPilot leadership cares about diversity
2. I feel welcome at SearchPilot
3. I believe our diversity statistics will be better in a year’s time

This survey is just one of the things [we are doing](#) to demonstrate with actions that we care about diversity, and it is unsurprising that at the beginning of the journey there is at least some “wait and see” (neutral) sentiment on both the “leadership cares” question and the question about optimism about a year’s time. Some of the “neutral” respondents to the latter question indicated privately that this was more of a “don’t know” and that it also relates to uncertainty in how much hiring we will have done in that time given that we ran the survey during the coronavirus pandemic which is impacting all businesses in some way or another.



It is nonetheless important and reassuring to see that all respondents agreed or strongly agreed (the majority strongly agreeing) with the statement “**I feel welcome at SearchPilot**”:

Beliefs and feelings



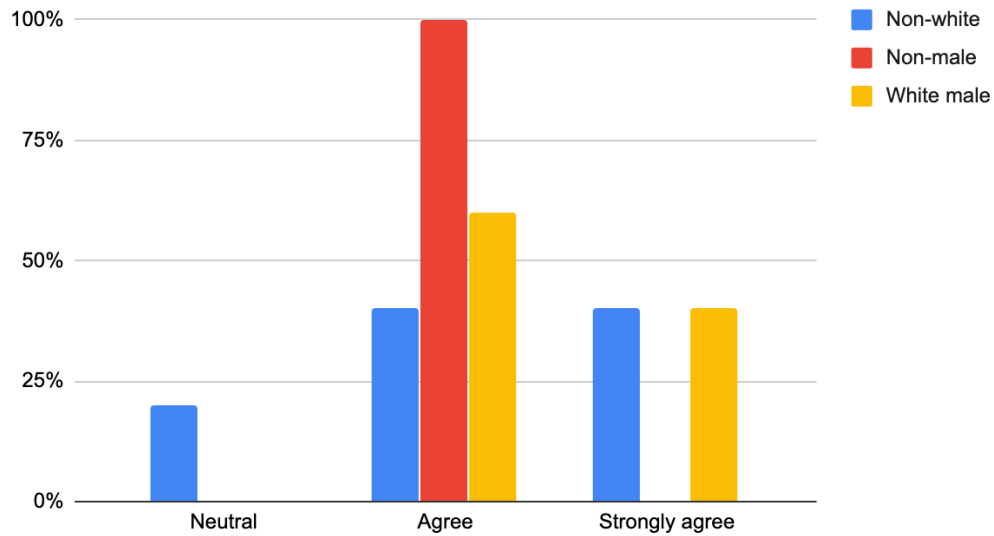
Cross-tabs

We don't intend to analyse (or even keep) the data about groups smaller than 5, and so won't be publishing intersectional data about beliefs and feelings apart from comparing white / non-white and male / non-male to ensure that we aren't showing positivity only from white men.



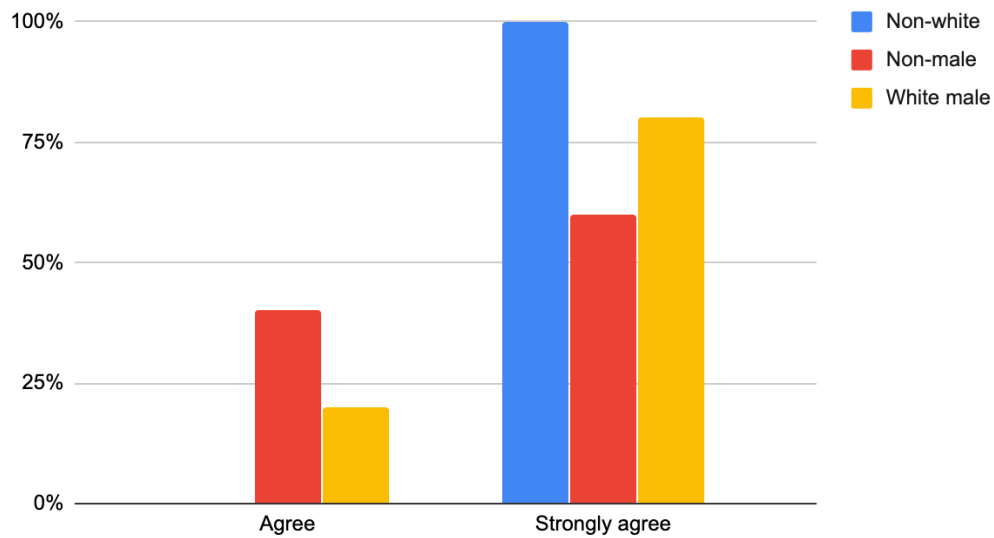
There is a small bias to positivity in white men's responses about leadership's attitudes (possibly reflecting their beliefs about their own views), with all white men responding at least "Agree":

SearchPilot leadership cares about diversity

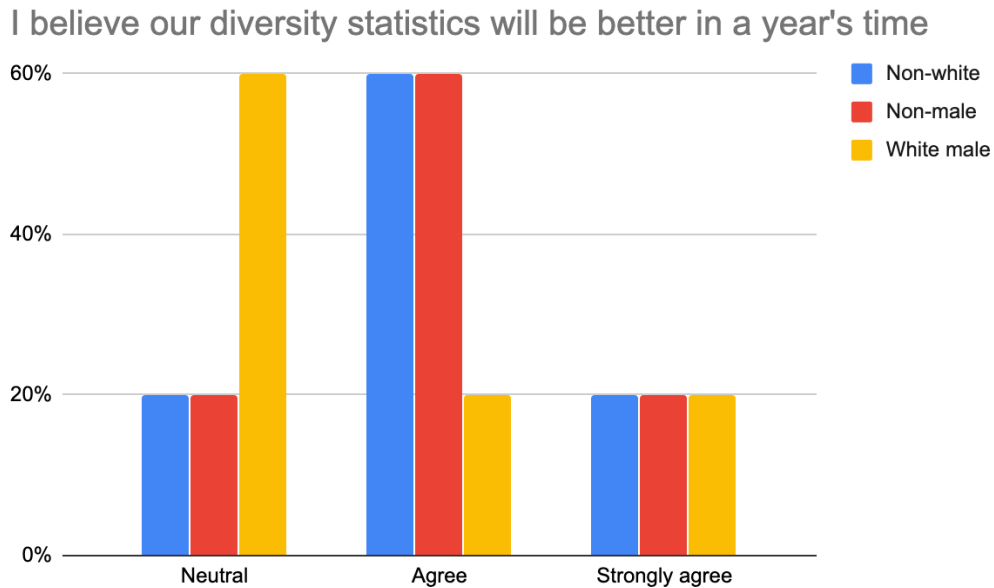


But there is less of a difference in positivity in the statistics about feeling welcome and **non-white respondents were actually the most positive:**

I feel welcome at SearchPilot



And if anything the most optimism about future diversity comes from non-white / non-male respondents:



Driving Improvements

There are some things that we learned over the years at Distilled that we intend to keep in place at SearchPilot. Examples include:

1. Creating the fairest hiring process we can (see: [Changing how we act after an interview](#)).
2. Actively seeking new places from which to recruit - in particular, we have found it easier to find junior team members from diverse backgrounds by advertising (paid) internships and junior roles in different places.
3. Asking people on the team to apply for senior roles when they come available even if they aren't quite ready ([here's why](#)).
4. Aiming for diversity in interview panels. At our scale, without having hiring duties fall unreasonably on a small group of people, we aren't ready to guarantee that every candidate will be interviewed by a fully diverse panel, but we can commit to avoiding having candidates interviewed only by white men.
5. Seeking feedback on job adverts from a diverse group of people to avoid unconscious bias or off putting phrases.

In addition, we are committing to trying some new things including:

1. When we do **any** senior external hiring (defined for these purposes as any manager or senior individual contributor), we will not select a candidate until we have had at least one non-male and one non-white candidate get through to the final round of interviews.
2. We will track the diversity of **applicants** to all roles to enable us to hold ourselves accountable for diversifying the sources of applicants and for the results of our efforts - this will be done via optional self-reporting kept separate from personally identifiable information and hence will not enable us to track individuals throughout the entire process. At our scale, it's only at the applicant stage that we will have statistical significance, and we want everyone to feel confident in our data policies.
3. When reviewing salaries, instead of asking people to pitch who should get a pay rise, where too often visible white men spring to mind, in small companies it's possible to ensure the reviewing team considers everyone at the same time and justifies why someone **isn't** ready for a raise. This ensures everyone is at least considered and contributes to an equitable process.
4. We will standardise interview questions in addition to our standard assessment methodologies and processes.
5. If we're on the fence about offering a role to a member of an under-represented group, we will bias towards taking a chance. Research shows [we have inconsistent levels of scrutiny](#) during interview processes, so to try and overcome our implicit biases, we need to take more chances.

Future enhancements to the survey

As we grow, we will be able to focus on more forms of diversity than just the race and gender focus of this first survey. The underlying goal is to build a truly diverse organisation, and that will most crucially involve ensuring that great people feel welcome and can get ahead. As such, we intend to extend the information we gather to include feelings about managers ("does your manager care..." as well as "do managers at SearchPilot in general care...").

Feedback

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions regarding how we are approaching this, you can contact: will.critchlow@searchpilot.com.

Credits

Thank you to everyone who read drafts of this document - both inside and outside the company. It was useful to get feedback from a diverse group of people, and I appreciate having my blindspots pointed out to me. Given the sensitive topic, I won't list here everyone who helped, but you know who you are and I owe you one. Thank you.

