## Bridging the Gap: How the Disappearance of Women in Tech Affects Product Development



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#### Welcome!

Slides are available by contacting me using any of the ways below:

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#### About Catherine:

- Product Strategy, Lean Innovation, Business Agility, Reinvention Practitioner
- 20+ years of research and development experience in complex product development software, hardware, services, operations, new product introduction
- Led successful large Agile transitions within organizations from several hundred to thousands of employees
- Side hustles: Beach vacation real estate, author, career coach
- Volunteer: 20 years as SAR II and K9 trainer and handler with Wake Canine Search and Rescue
- Offer: Want to speak at AgileRTP?





#### Plan for this session:

- Intros and welcome
- Who and what inspired this workshop
- □ Women in tech in the mid-1980s what worked!
- Impact of societal biases and technology changes mid-80s
- Affinity Bias
- Design Challenge
- Your Take Away

# Intro's: Find the person you know least and intro yourselves

Take 2 minutes for each person to share:

- Your name
- A story/situation about a product that clearly was not designed with your mother's (sister's, aunt's, etc) needs in mind.
- Remember the story (we'll use it later!)

### Who and what inspired this workshop

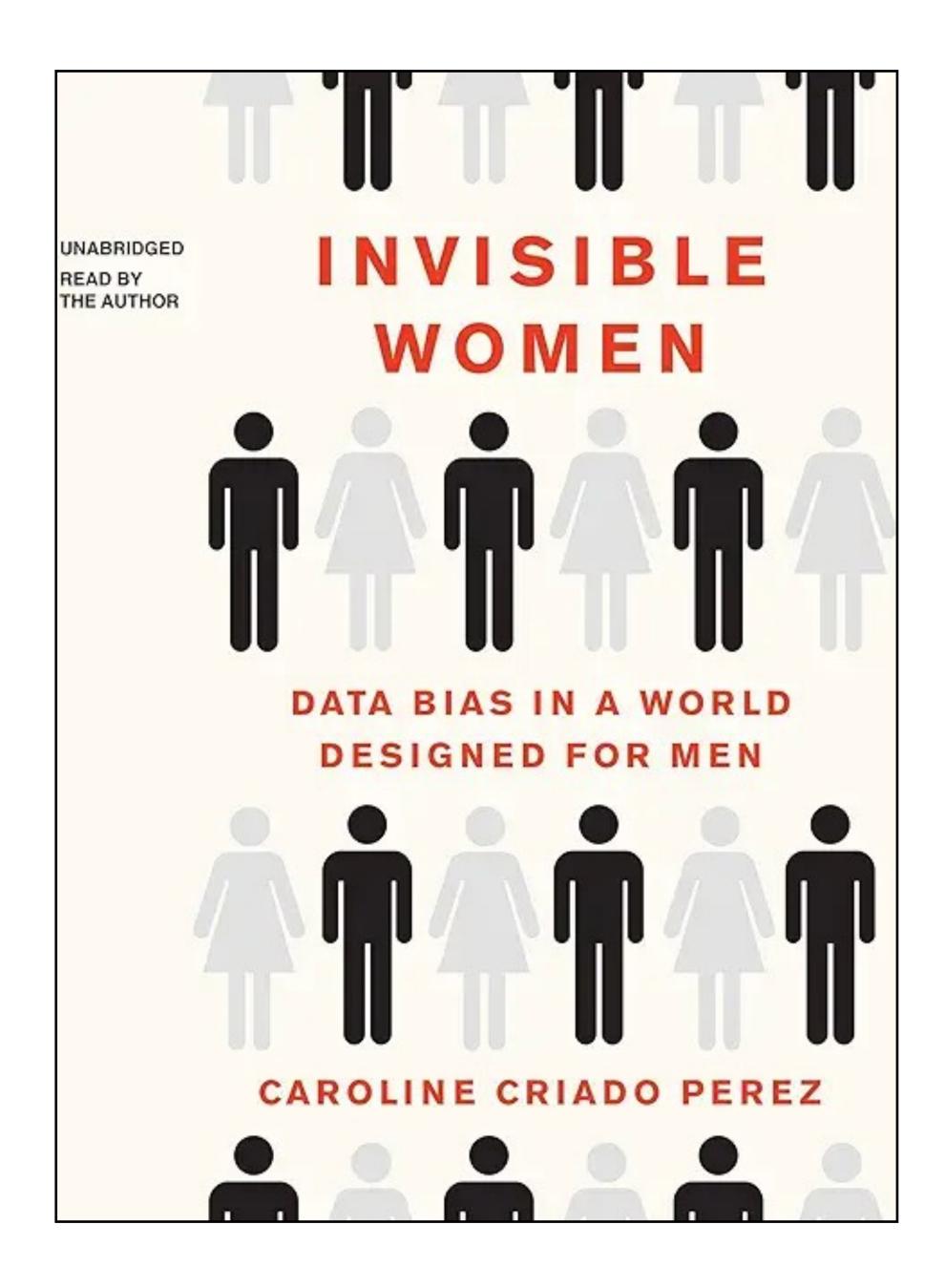




K Jarmul: Practical Data Privacy: Enhancing Privacy and Security in Data: https://www.amazon.com/Practical-Data-Privacy-Enhancing-Security/dp/1098129466

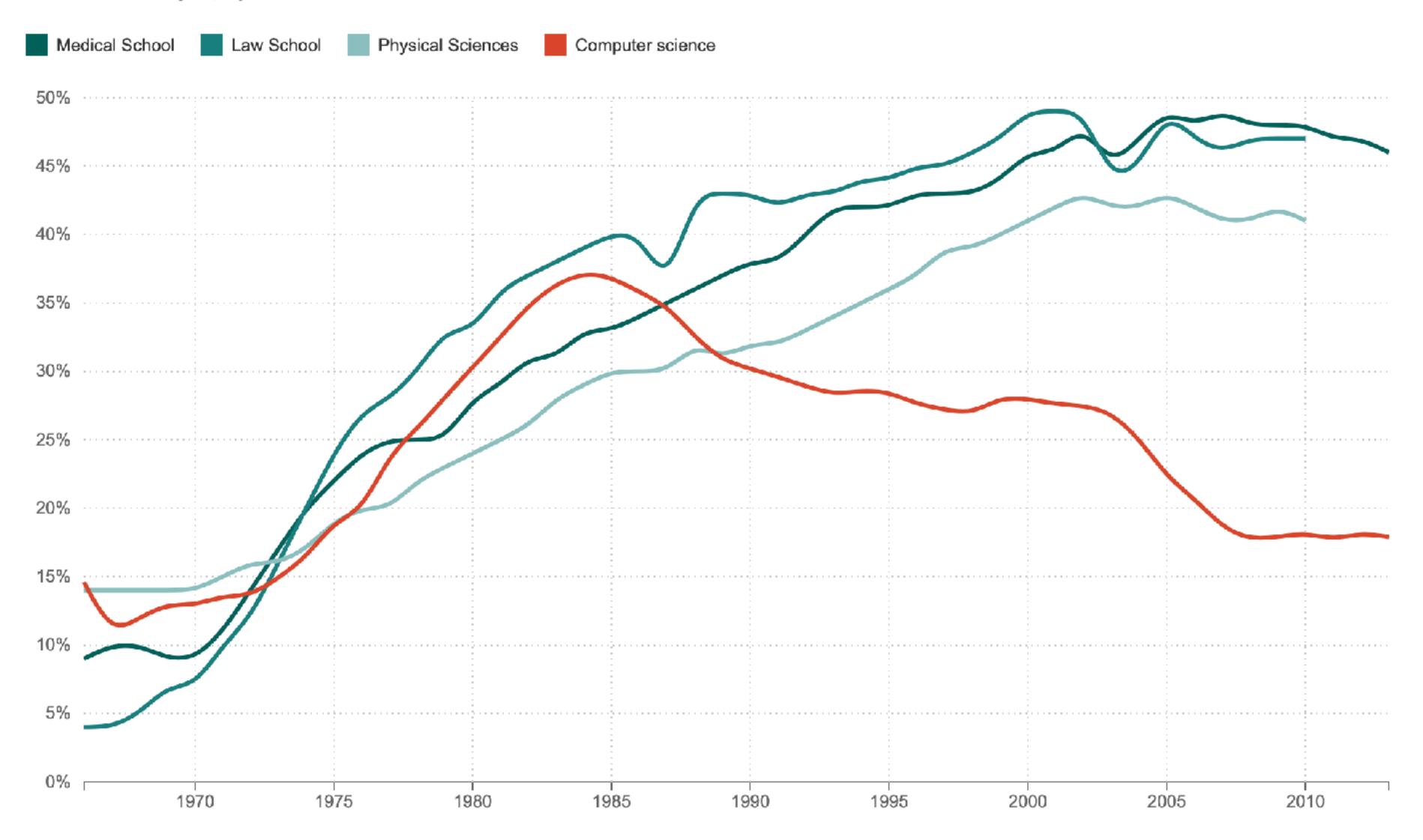


"Data matters because it shapes our understanding of the world, and without reliable gender data, we are perpetuating a biased and distorted reality."



## Women in Computer Science

% Of Women Majors, By Field



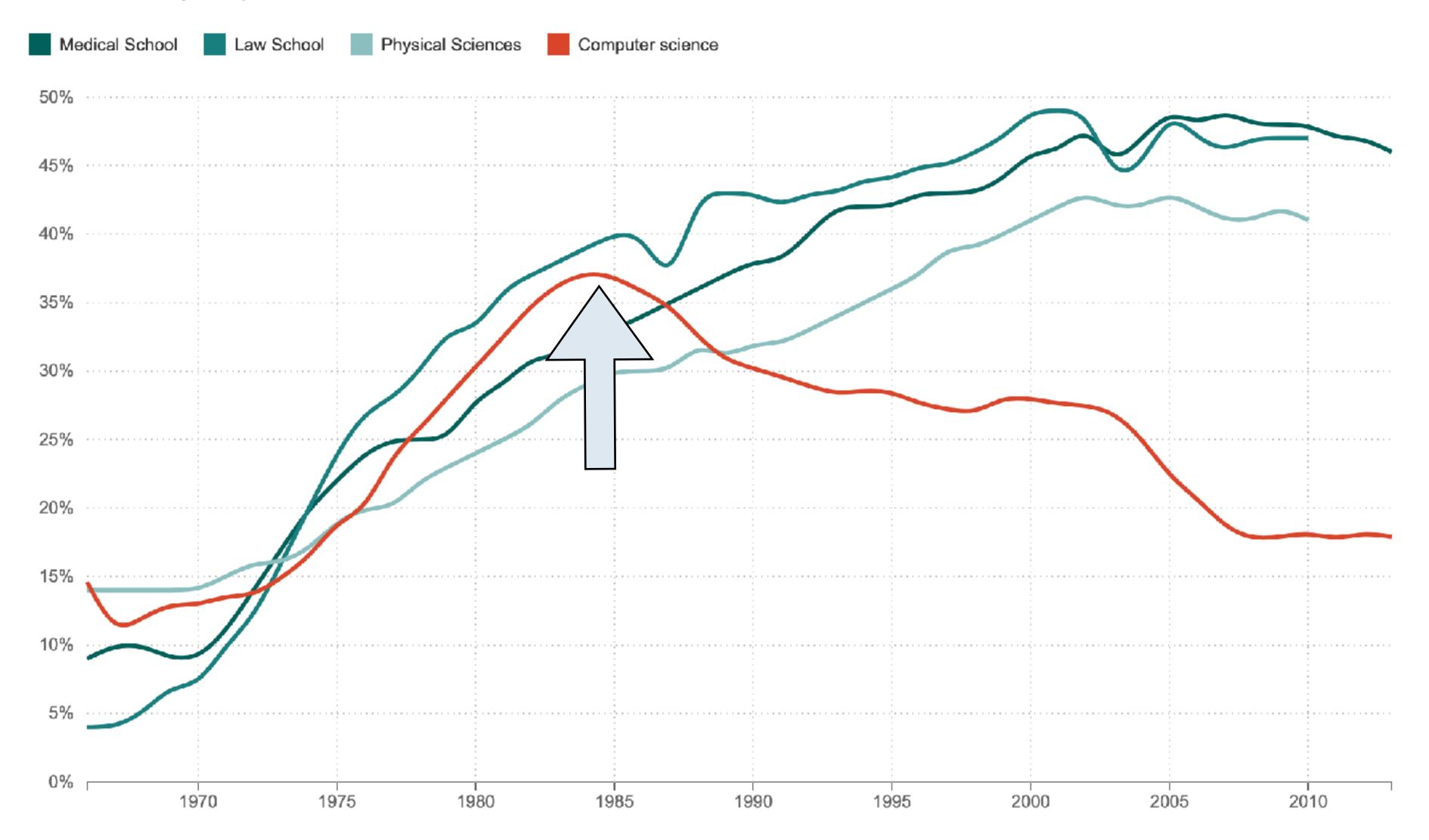
Source: National Science Foundation, American Bar Association, American Association of Medical Colleges Credit: Quoctrung Bui/NPR

## Questions:

- What was it like for women in 1985 starting a career in tech?
- Why did women leave tech in 1985, why are they not staying today?
- With a slim minority of tech workers (today) being women, is it possible to improve the lives of half the population, by designing products to be used by women too?

## Imagine you started here

% Of Women Majors, By Field



Source: National Science Foundation, American Bar Association, American Association of Medical Colleges
Credit: Quoctrung Bui/NPR



Once a month in the courtyard



The Luaus



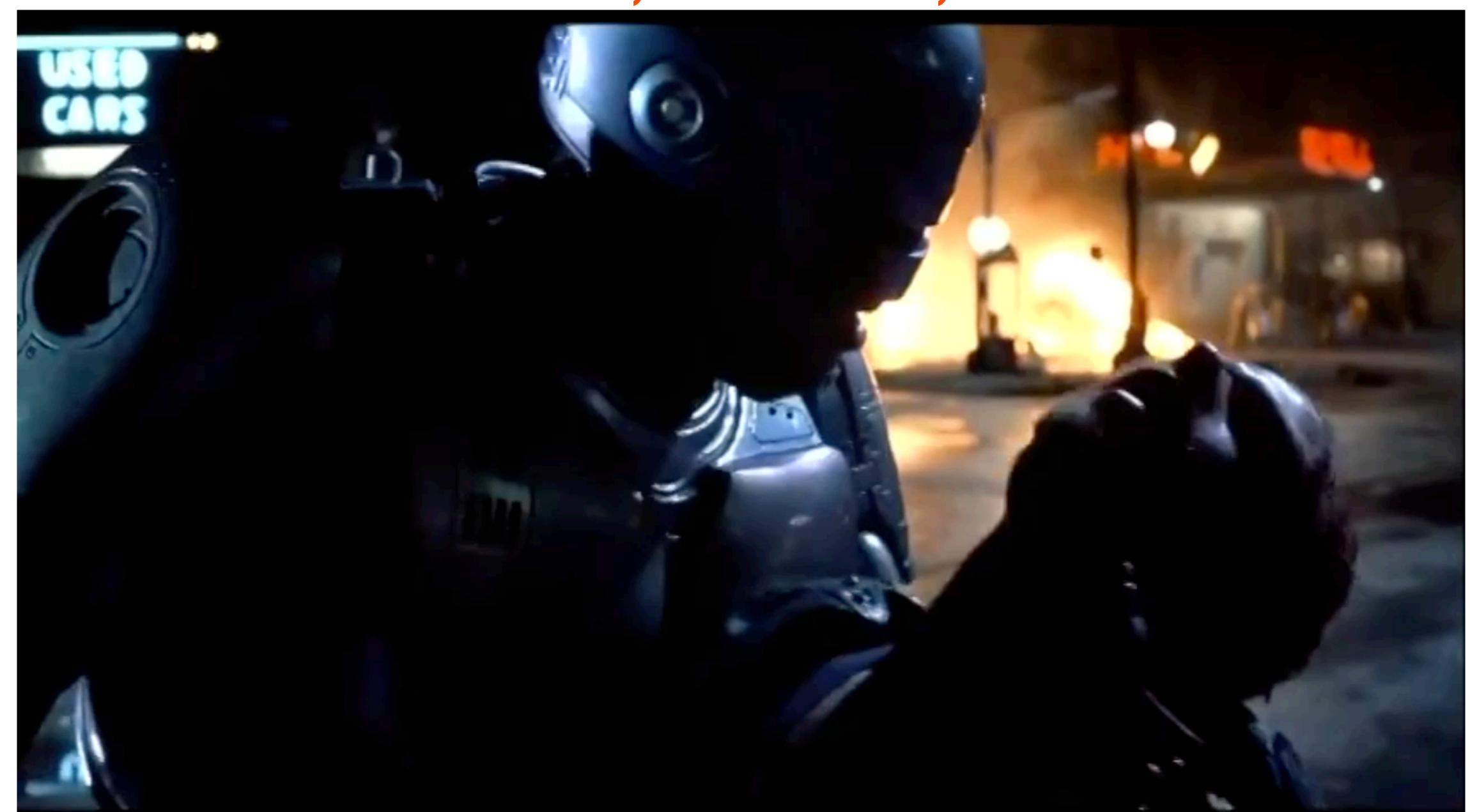
## "TNT" Shows

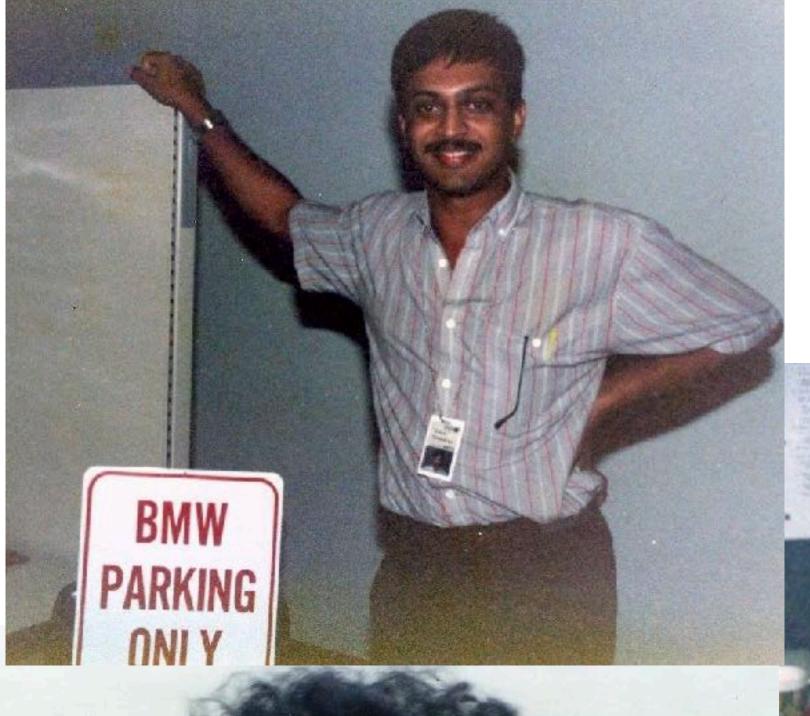


Scuba Club

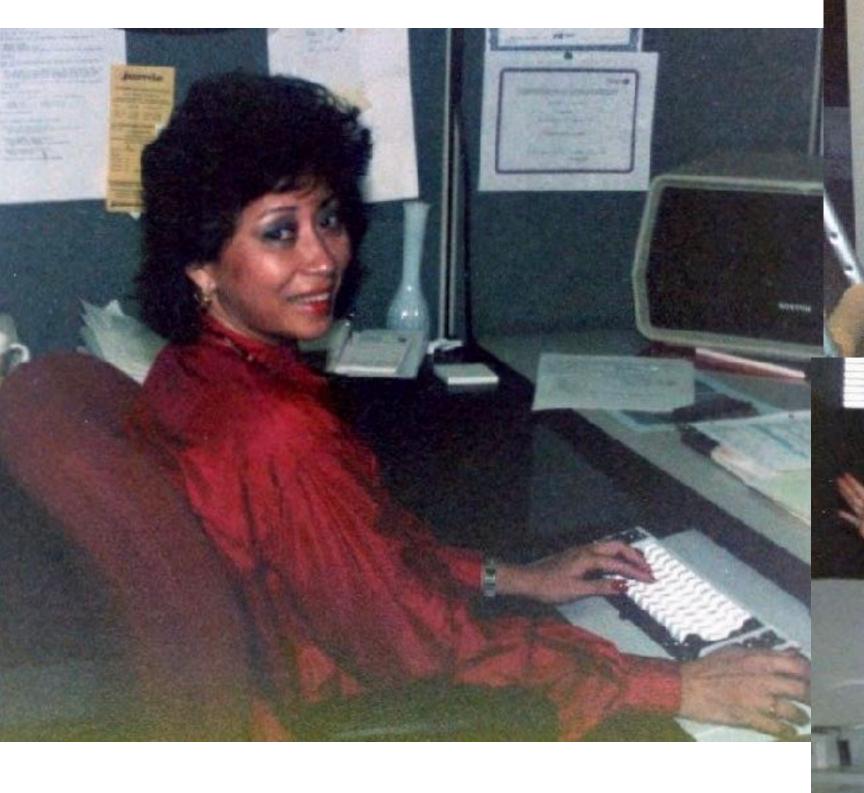


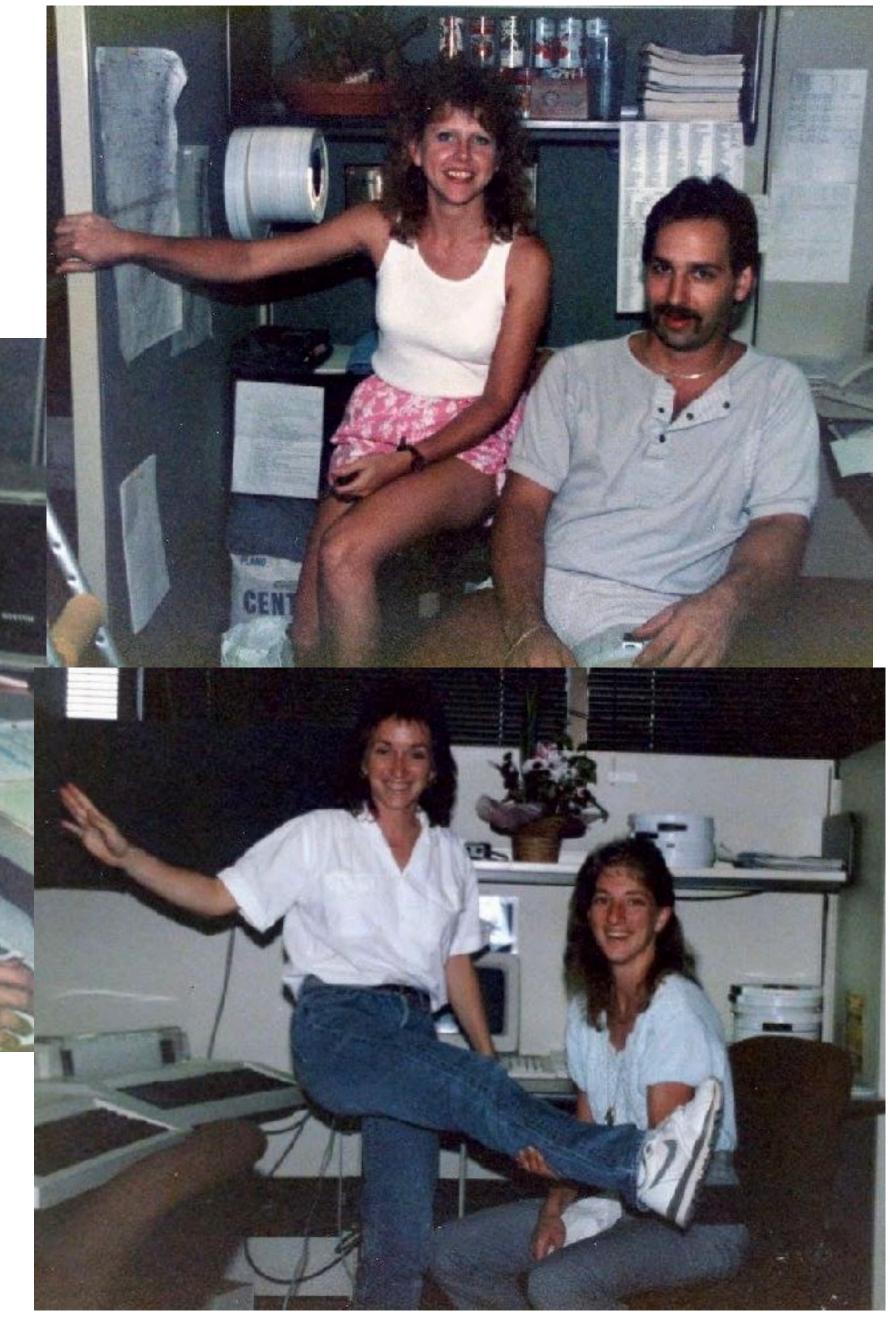
## Guess - movie, actor, location??











### Stuff that worked

- "Company culture" training this was serious
- Onboarding
- The "how" was owned by each team given a lofty goal
- Customers giving us feedback every iteration
- X-functional, diverse teams that cared about one another
- Encouragement to "switch jobs"
- A "CEO"
- Community activities
- A physical fitness program
- An HR team truly helping us with our careers
- A mentor program

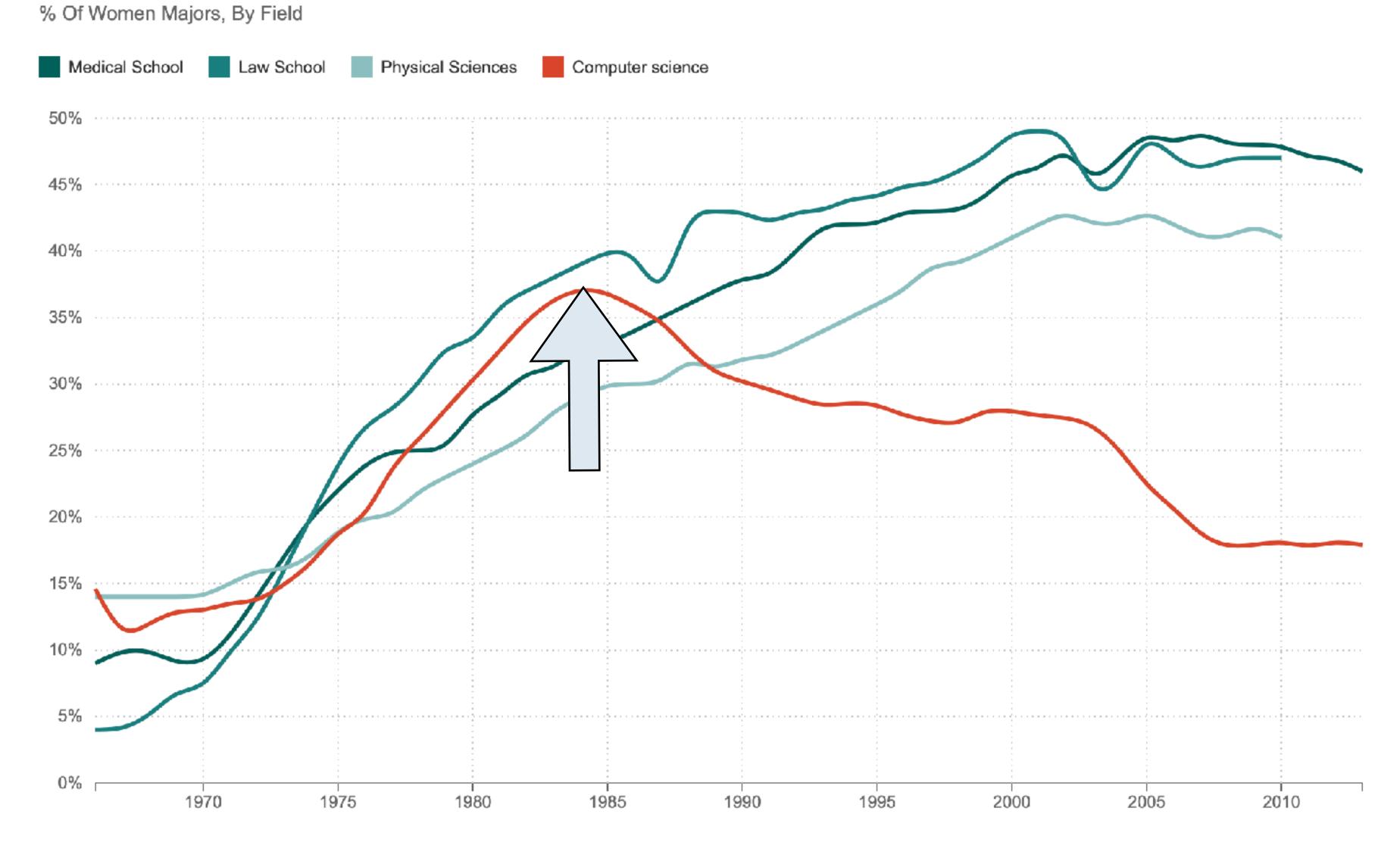
### Collect mentors!

- Mentoring is a 2-way street
- Be a mentor. Always. You never know who might need help
- Collect mentors. Always. You never know what help you may need
- When you get a good selection of mentors, create your own personal "board of directors"

## Mentor Mingle

- Jot down what you're pretty good at doing
- Jot down where you could use some help
- In the next time box, run around the room collecting as many mentors as you possibly can!

## Why did women leave in 1985?



Source: National Science Foundation, American Bar Association, American Association of Medical Colleges Credit: Quoctrung Bui/NPR

# Leading up to the 80s - a brief history of advertising to women

40s:

#### Working Women- "Rosie the Riveter"



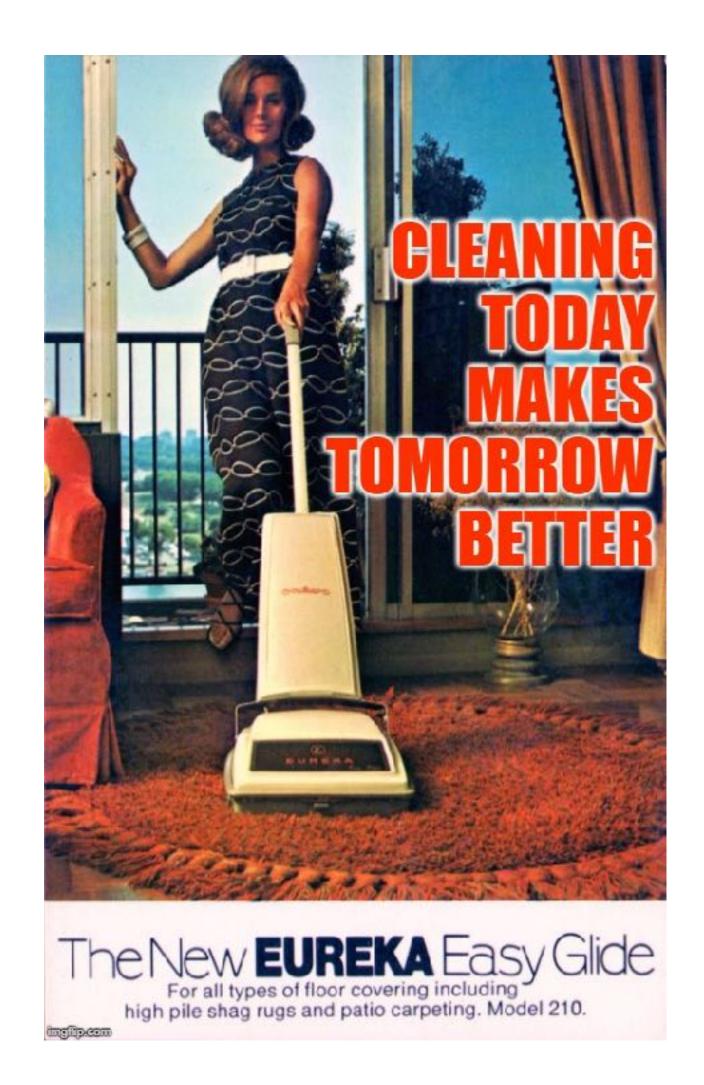




### 50s-60s:<sup>0</sup>

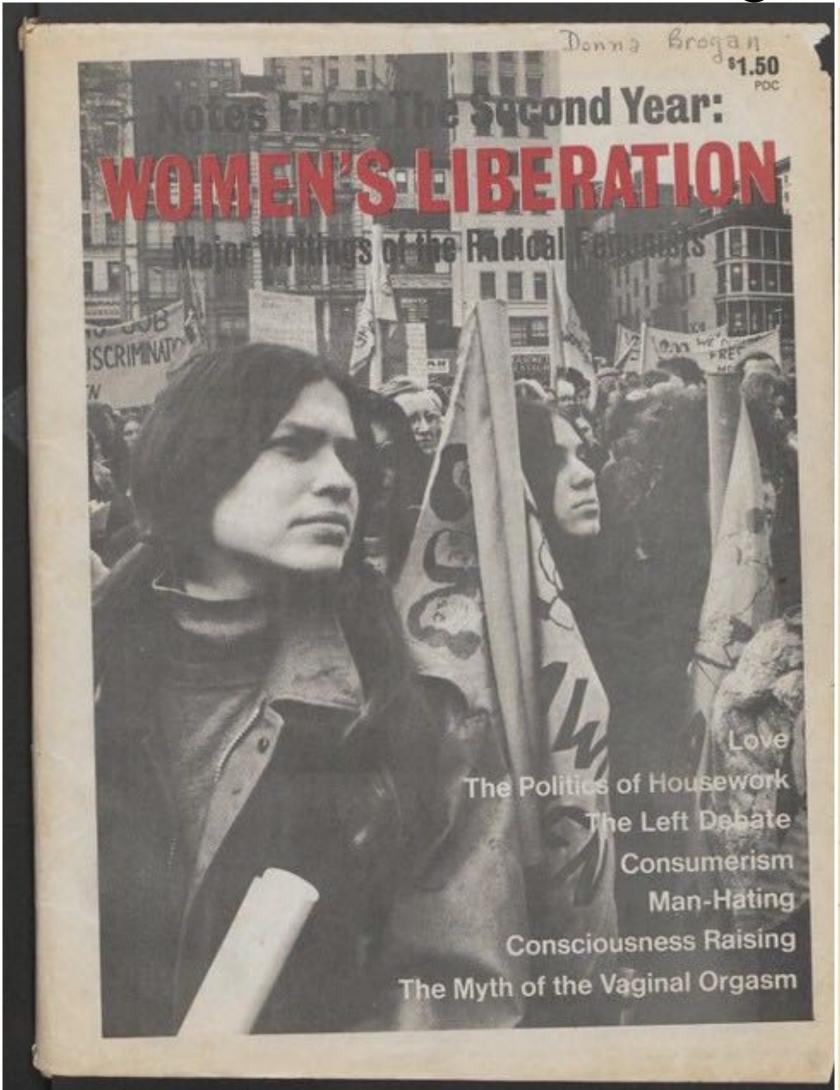
## 50s- 60s: Housewives pathologically obsessed with cleanliness







70s: The New Women - Women's Liberation was at its height late 60s-70s.

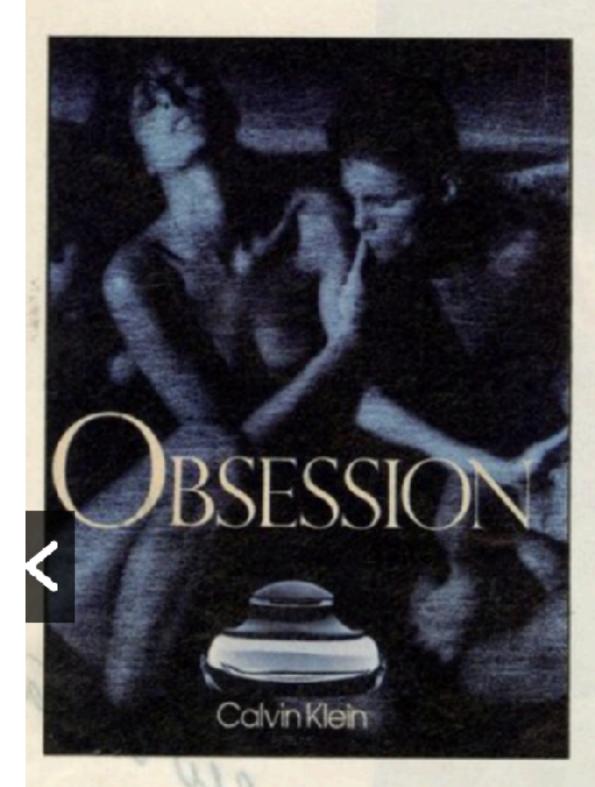






# How Advertising to Women changed in the mid-80s

#### Ads enter new dimensions



The sensuous woman: A current favorite, she is seen with her eyes closed, head thrown back, engaged in something other than the reader. Usually unsmiling, she is nonetheless luxuriating in something pleasurable—food, flowers, sex, sunshine, sleep, whatever satisfies.

The sensuous woman can be a nymph or Calvin Klein's carnally obsessed woman. The key dimensions of this image are self-absorption and unabashed enjoyment—from a finger-licking tryst to Kodak's recent image of a maiden mooning over a bowlful of berries.

By Kathy Ziff

hirty years ago, if men were looking for the woman of their dreams in magazines, they had to have one of two options in mind: The kitchen drudge or the maiden on a pedestal.

Some slight variations of these themes existed, but for the most part women were overly idealistic objects of desire or cleaning women, who also may have been wife and mother.

The contemporary man has a wider range of advertising images of women he can assess or with whom he can be obsessed.

However, as the real target of the ads, women—and their reactions to these images—are more important.

women continue to work through the issues of how to project themselves at home and at the office. How friendly, how sexy, how self-absorbed, how powerful should they be?

Images in today's ads convey these four different and often conflicting dimensions.

To varying degrees, the following eight categories of advertising either address or ignore them.

Kathy Ziff is a qualitative market researcher with Perry C. Craven Associates, a Winston-Salem, N.C.-based market consultancy, who also worked in ad testing at Arbor Inc., Philadelphia. She studies the portrayal of women in art and literature.



The siren: The siren is sexy and provocative—no room for subtlety here. The siren also is appealing and friendly, engaging the reader with a direct look and flashing a broad smile. She is seductive without being threatening—an attitude both men and women can find appealing.

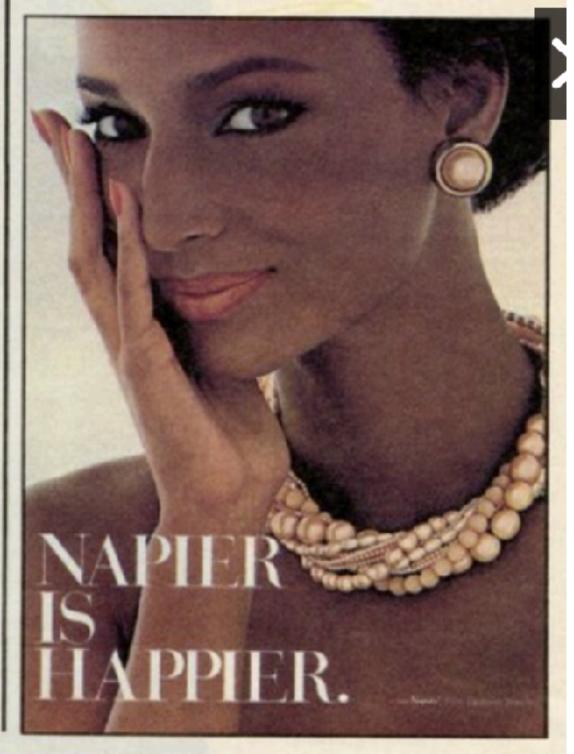
Body language is important in conveying the siren's message of sexual promise. The Woolite model's upheld arm accentuates her chest, the leg thrust forward focuses attention on her thighs. She offers a package deal: Body and sell in one image.

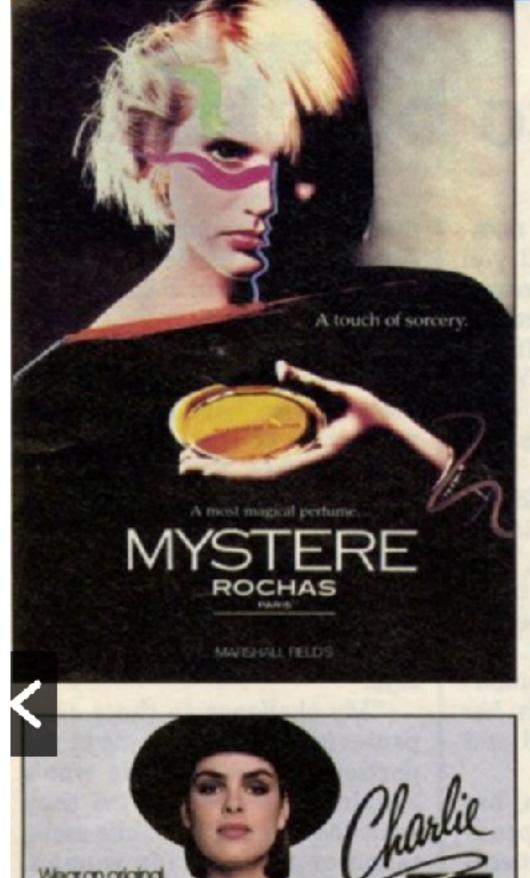
Come hither: This is a sexy image, certainly, yet it is quiet and a little shy.

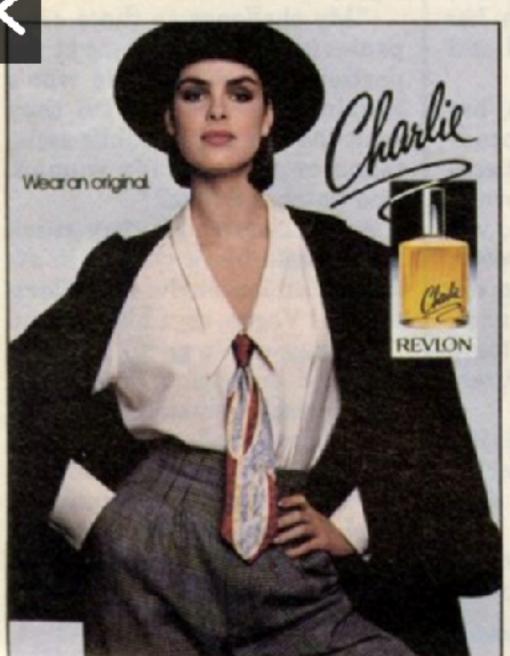
The woman offers the potential of both social and sexual interaction. A little dinner, some dancing—then wait and see what happens.

She charms rather than seduces; her sexuality is subtle and a bit submissive. The come hither woman makes eye contact, but often must look up to do so.

She does not shock or threaten. Because of this, atypical models, such as Napier's black woman or older women, often are posed in this traditional image.







The exotic art object: The woman in this image is decorated in an exotic manner, forming a composition that exists outside of herself. She serves as a palette, her personality subjugated to the picture of which she is only a part.

As in this Rochas ad, the question is: Does she belong in an ad or an art gallery?

The cheerleader: This friendly, engaging woman looks right at the reader and smiles.

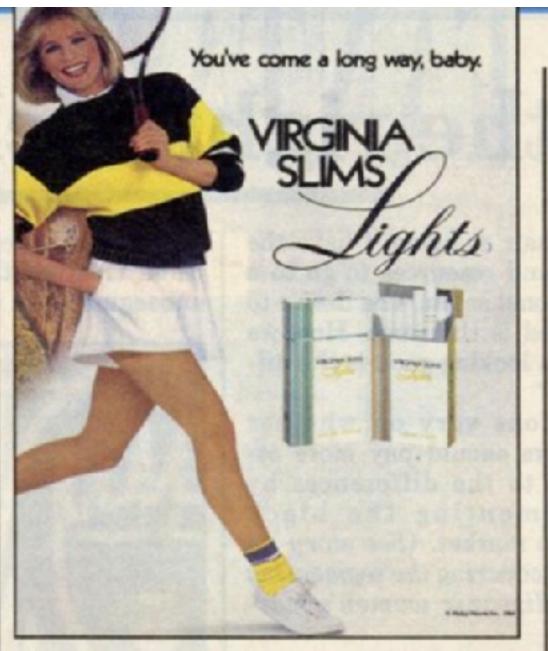
Threatening? No way. This woman is an upbeat, good sport-the Mary Tyler Moore of models. Sex? Perhaps a little comes through because of her good looks. But no seduction surfaces in this image of the grownup girl next door.

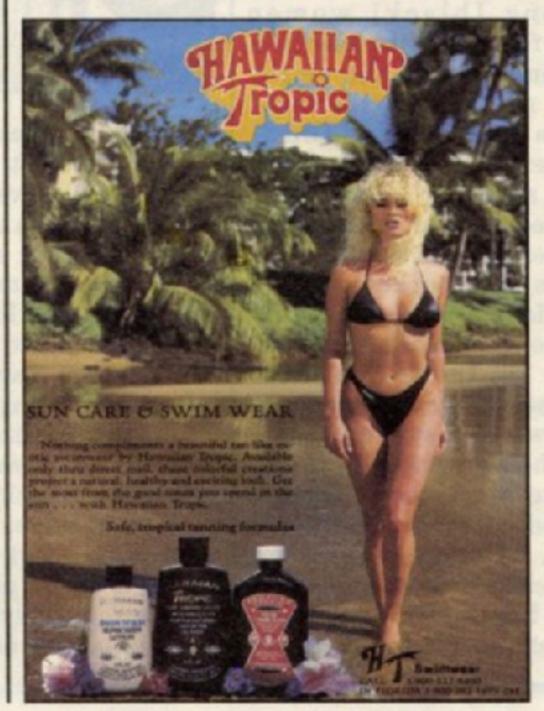
The serious modern woman: Represented perfectly by the latest Charlie woman, again clad in trousers, the serious modern woman is confident and straightforward. She is friendly enough not to be threatening.

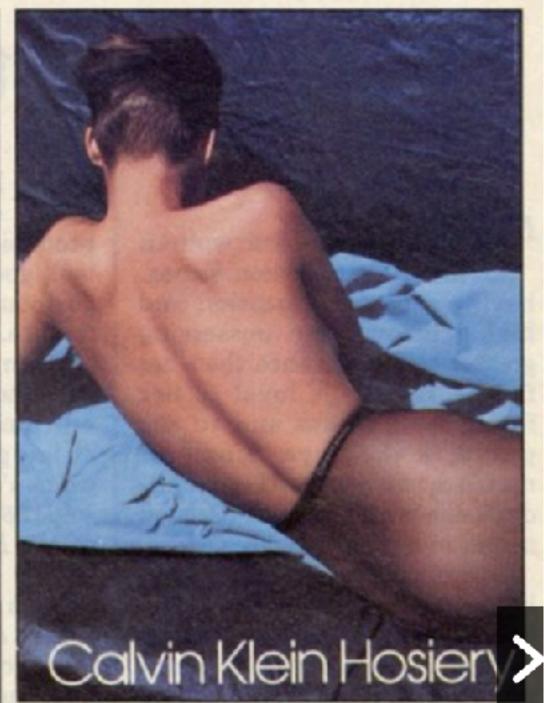
The key dimensions of this image are competence and authority—an attitude many women strive to project at workrather than sex or flirtation.

The amazon: Amazons historically derived their power through their sex and therefore are threatening figures to men. The amazon reincarnated in ads appears bold and unfriendly.

Sex, which is often accentuated by revealing clothing, is the key dimension of the amazon image. These women are powerful and dominant because of their sexual allure. The voluptuous, scantilyclad Hawaiian Tropic woman is stalking the reader, eyes narrowed and lips parted as if saying, "Buy this or you'll regret it."







The independent, yet vulnerable, woman: This woman couldn't care less about the reader. By turning her back, she is not inviting outside connections.

An independent woman, she is free to go about her business-even if her business happens to be reading a book or staring at her bed sheets while wearing only her pantyhose. This image is not about sex, however. She just happens not to be wearing clothes. Calvin Klein strikes again.

This woman is refreshing because of her independence. But because she is being watched without realizing it, she is a vulnerable figure. Looking at her borders on voyeurism, a threatening situation depending on whether the reader is feeling protective or aggressive.

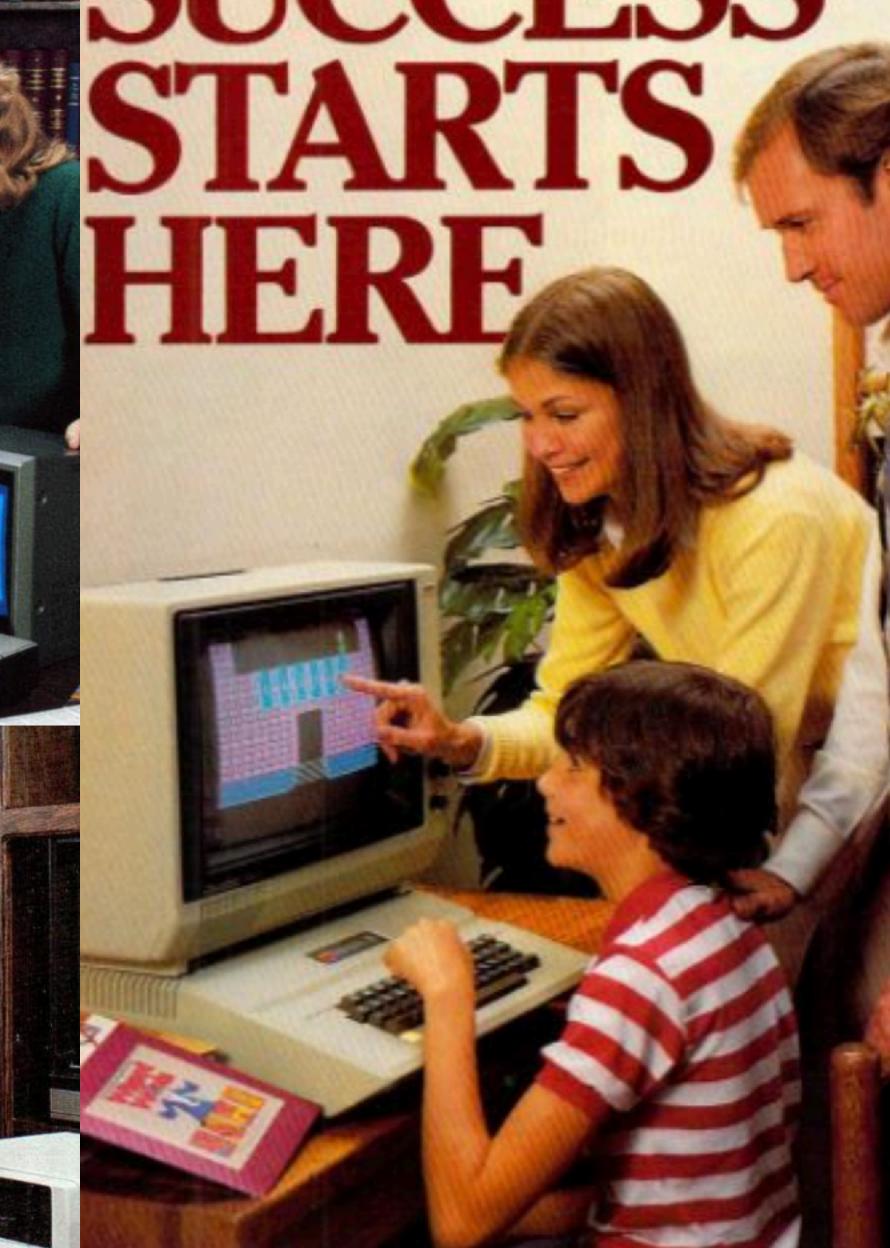
### Your attention is a currency

"Pay attention to where you spend your attention"

# Marketing the Personal Computer in the mid 80s



SUCCESS



March 4th, 1985



## The advantage:

- PC's were more likely to be in the boy's bedrooms:
  - · Early exposure and familiarity, early programming skills (BASIC)
  - Increased confidence and interest
  - · Supportive environments (peers, parents)
  - · Self-paced learning educational software

# Fast forward: Women in Computer Science Today

**WOMEN WHO SAY** THEY ARE LIKELY TO QUIT WITHIN A YEAR 32% 22% 30% China India

☐ In 2023: 329,559 software engineers work in the United States, and 25.1% are women<sup>1</sup>

□ Additionally, women are not staying²

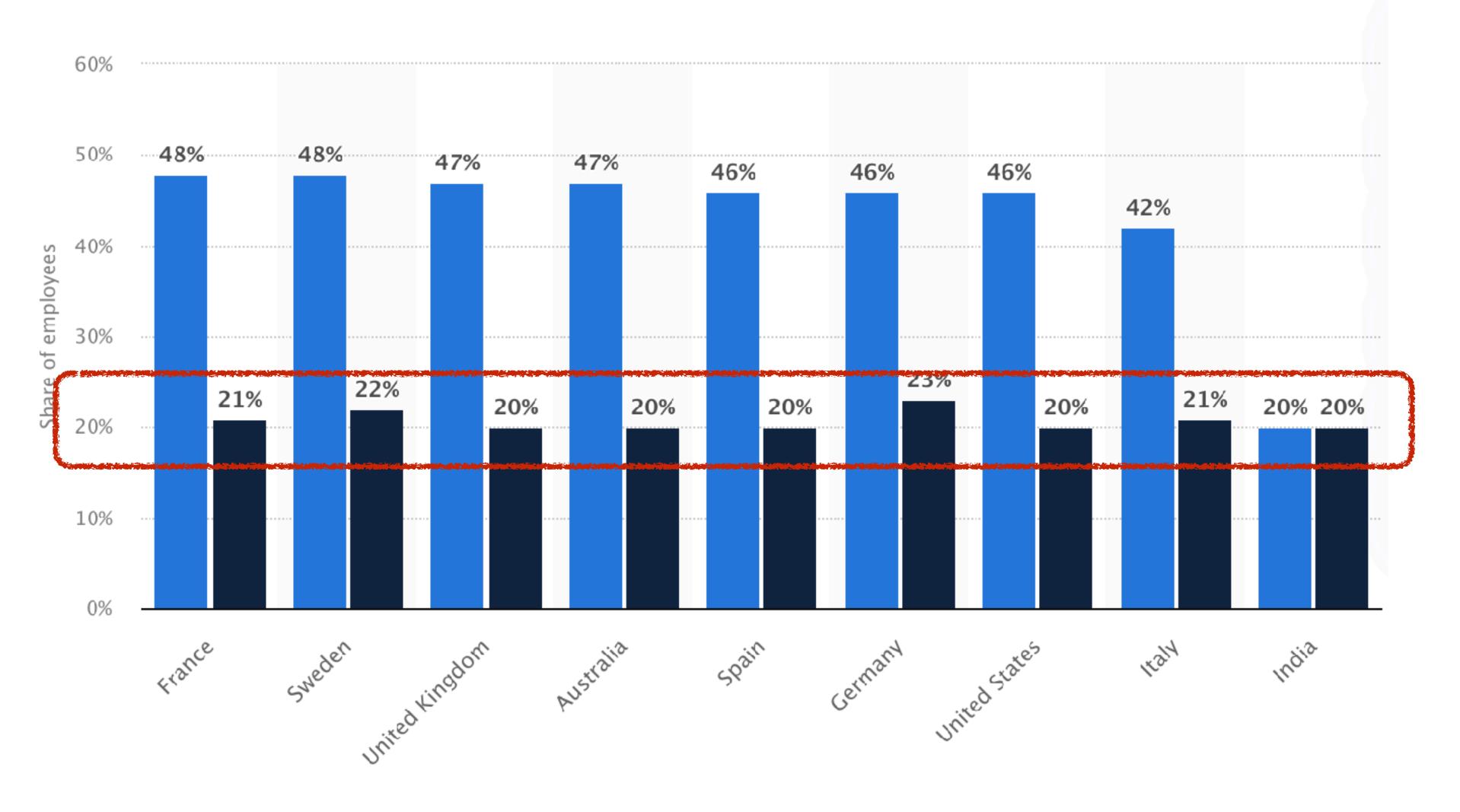
46% of U.S. SET women believe senior management more readily sees men as "leadership material"



<sup>1:</sup> https://techjury.net/blog/women-in-technology-statistics/

<sup>2:</sup> Athena-2-ExecSummFINAL-CTI.pdf

### Female representation by select country



■ Total labor force ■ In IT/tech teams

## Addressing the gap

#### **Educational Interventions:**

Coding camps, school initiatives, mentorship

#### Inclusive Environments:

Collaborative projects with a diverse representation. Ex: Partner with a local University

#### Culture Shift:

 Create awareness about unconscious affinity bias, foster a workplace culture where everyone feels valued and respected

### Assertions

- a An inclusive workforce is needed to be able to hire top talent, drive innovation, foster creativity, and guide business strategies
- Multiple, diverse perspectives lead to new ideas, new services, new products, and encourage out-of-the-box thinking
- n McKinsey study of 366 public companies analyzed, those in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above national industry medians\*

## Affinity Bias

Affinity bias is the unconscious human bias to gravitate toward other people with similar backgrounds, interests, and beliefs

#### Hiring with affinity bias:

- HR "Referral" programs: Referrals account for 30% to 50% of all new workers in the United States<sup>1</sup>
- "The I'm Not Biased Bias" the smarter you are the more likely you are to fall victim to this bias - Adam Grant<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1:</sup> https://www.enterpriseappstoday.com/stats/employee-referral-statistics.html

<sup>2:</sup> https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2018/03/you-dont-know-yourself-as-well-as-you-think-you-do/554612/

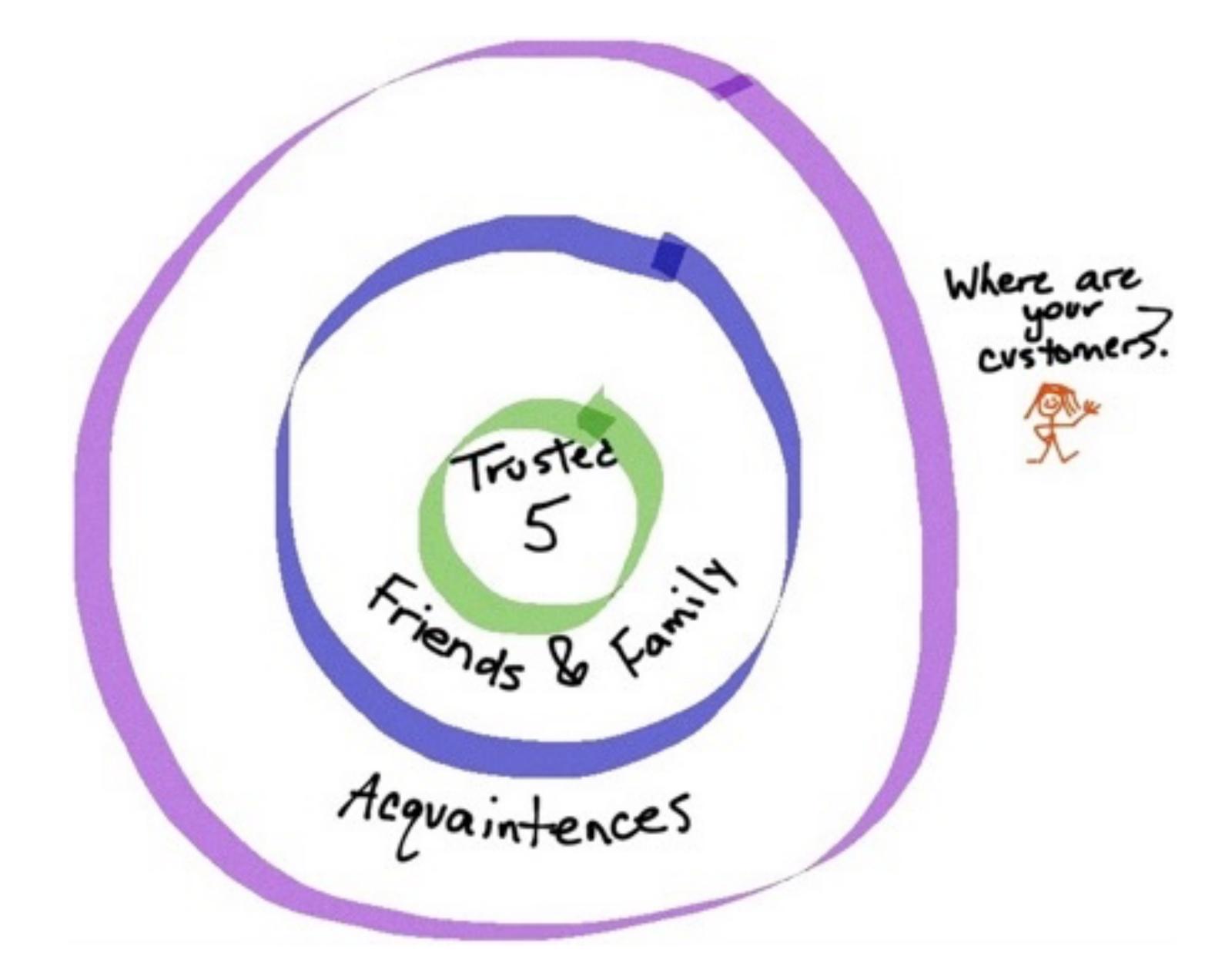
#### Affinity Bias Exercise

High Trust In the left column, without opening the page, fill in up to 10 initials of friends or co-workers you trust highly. (No family for this exercise.)

#### Affinity Bias Exercise

High Trust	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Foreign born	Age	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Education	Marital Status	Religious denomination	Other?
		After y what			one that /.	, open	the pag	je up	fill in	
		Do yc	u see	an	y patter	ns?				
					<b>42</b>					

#### Circle of Trust



#### Hiring outside the trusted few:

- Go to where they learn, work and play. Find them and follow them.
- Join tech ladies: over 120K candidates listed there at hiretechladies.com/partnership
- Join Women in Product at <a href="https://womenpm.org/">https://womenpm.org/</a>
- Join Mogul: recruitment focus is diversity: <a href="https://onmogul.com/employers">https://onmogul.com/employers</a>
- elpha.com has a talent pool of 50,000+ skilled women
- Join meetups, women attend! (AgileRTP, ScrumRVA...)
- Other?

#### Back to the product opportunity

- What if we can improves lives of half the population, simply by ceasing to design everything as if it'll only be used by men?
- Go back to your notes from your first interview, and create as many Design Challenges as you can per table.

#### Design Challenge Framework Example

#### Why: The goal

To allow women to wear what they want while using a lavalier

## Where/When -context

Speaking at events where a lavalier is required

#### Who/The Persona

Women who don't often wear belts

## What/The Solution

A lavalier that does not weigh down clothes

#### In summary:

- Pay attention to where you're focusing your attention
- Mentor/be mentored
- ¬ Know what your affinity biases are
- Despite these create a diverse team that could stand a better chance of representing your customers with empathy
- Take action on that product that isn't working for you- speak up, and build a better product that suits your needs
- Be curious and never stop learning
- What sort of example do you want to set for kids, grandkids?

### What is your 1 key takeaway?



□ What can you apply in the real world?

### Thank you!

Please keep in touch, call/text/email any time for help!

Feel free to pass along this quiz on women in tech - it makes a great icebreaker!



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Women inventors Miroverse Icebreaker:







