Avoiding Unconscious Bias in Hiring, Management and Promotions

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WHO IS “THEY”
Is Seeing Believing?
Fast Brain vs Slow Brain
Fast Brain vs Slow Brain
Is this book looking towards you or away from you?
What is Bias?

Bias is a blind spot that requires a shift in how we think about other people that we perceive to be different. *It is a belief or attitude we hold in our heads.*

Bias is the very fundamental way we look at and encounter the world.

*Diversity* is about noticing others; *bias* is all about you and your thoughts.
What is Unconscious Bias?

University of Kentucky:

• Unconscious, Subconscious or Implicit Bias refers to the automatic stereotypes or attitudes we hold about groups or people. These biases can be held for or against those most like us and most different from us.

  – Can be based on unconscious thoughts about gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, personality types, or general appearance.

  – A host of brain functions, emotional responses, and cognitive processes that happen outside our conscious awareness but have a decisive effect on how we behave.

    Shankar Vedantam

  – A kind of prejudice you have that you aren’t aware of, that affects the kinds of impressions and conclusions that you reach automatically, without thinking.

    Malcolm Gladwell
What is the Purpose of Bias?
Unconscious Bias

CULTURE

Media images, visibility/invisibility, portrayal

CULTURE

External influences (society)

Unconscious Bias

Micro-Behaviors

Personal Experiences

Influence from others
He thinks I don’t know what I’m talking about and I haven’t opened my mouth.

She’s older than my mom. There’s no way she’ll listen to my ideas.

I really like him, he reminds me of my brother.
An Unconscious Bias Example
FedEx Commercial
What patterns do we read?

Appearance

Gender

Skin tone

Age

Ethnicity

Environment

Facial expression

Body posture

Body type

Clothing
Perceptions

Interpretations

Preferences

Selective Attention

11 million pieces of information at any one time

40-50 pieces of information get absorbed
What Do You Know?

Shirley A. Mohammed
2345 Street Name Apt. 34
Anytown, KY 42222
System One Thinking
“Fast Brain”

System Two Thinking
“Slow Brain”
John Ridley Stroop, 1935
Micro-behaviors:
*Small acts, which are hard-to-see, often unconscious and may be non-verbal*

**Micro-disadvantages:**
*Subtle* behaviors, gestures, language, or other ways in which individuals are overlooked, ignored, excluded or discounted, usually based on identity characteristics.

**Micro-advantages:**
*Subtle* behaviors, gestures, language, or other ways in which individuals are given advantages over others around them, usually based on identity characteristics.
Identifying Micro-Behaviors

**Individually:**

- What micro-behaviors have you experienced personally, as a receiver?
- What micro-behaviors may you have inadvertently sent your colleagues or employees?
- Can you think of biases you have that could translate into micro-disadvantages?

**Large Group Discussion:**

- How do these messages impact overall equity and inclusion at your place of work?
- Where can we grow?
Retrain Your Unconscious Mind
Retrain Your Unconscious Mind

Be open to the fact that you have unconscious biases. Seek to **LEARN**:

- **L**isten for understanding
- **E**ngage with people and groups you may not know very well, or toward whom you have biases
- **A**djust your surroundings so that you spend most of your time in the company of people who have a better attitude than you
- **R**eact with friendliness and honest curiosity to those you perceive as “different.”
- **N**otice when your unconscious thoughts impact your behavior. Be open to giving and accepting feedback about biased behaviors
Take a P.A.U.S.E.
A quick way to check your reaction.

P • Pay attention to what’s actually happening, beneath the judgments and assessments

A • Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations and judgments

U • Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations and judgments that may be possible

S • Search for the most empowering, productive way to deal with the situation

E • Execute your action plan
Questions to Ask Yourself to Check Your Decision-Making

- What are my biases and blind spots?
- What is this person triggering in my background?
- Do I have an automatic feeling or judgment about this person?
- Do I notice any patterns in my decision making that might be impacted by my biases?
- Am I being reminded of someone?
- How might I consciously intervene to mitigate the impact of this bias?
Brain Tricks - This Is How Your Brain Works - YouTube
WHODUNNIT?
How might your biases impact...

- Whom you notice
- Whom you spend time with
- Whom you share information with
30-Day Plan

In the next 30 days, I commit to determining…

What I can do to promote my personal and professional interests in this area.

What the benefits will be.

What the costs of not doing so will be.
Thank you!

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