

REDUCING UNCONSCIOUS BIASES IN HIRING /

BIAS	DESCRIPTION	APPROACHES TO COUNTERACTING
AFFECT HEURISTICS	Affect heuristics occurs when someone mentally takes shortcuts to reach a conclusion about a candidate's ability to do the job, without carefully examining all the evidence first. In other words, judging someone's suitability for a position based on superficial factors that are irrelevant in how they would carry out the task at hand.	Be aware when making 'snap decisions', especially in the first 15 minutes of an interview. Manage impatience, and actively look for competency alignment in subsequent answers. Do not cut interviews short or skip questions. Use a structured interview and scoring rubric to ensure fair assessment of candidates.
AFFINITY BIAS	Affinity bias is the tendency to connect with other people who share similar interests, experiences, and backgrounds.	Actively be aware of the similarities shared with the candidate to differentiate between attributes that may cloud judgement vs. the concrete skills, experiences, and unique qualities that would contribute to the team as a 'culture add'.
AGEISM BIAS	Ageism is the tendency to have negative feelings about another person based on their age. Ageism is typically experienced by people who are in earlier career stages or later career stages. It can also manifest when interviewers have a pre-conceived idea about the 'best age' for a particular role.	Understand the issue of ageism as well as human rights laws about age. Consider removing education graduation dates from resumes before determining the interview shortlist. Focus on experience and competencies required for the role. Don't make assumptions that people do or do not have the necessary experience because they appear younger, or that they might be 'slowing down' because they appear older. When hiring new talent, keep in mind the benefits of age diversity within the team.
ANCHOR BIAS	This bias occurs when we allow ourselves to 'anchor' onto one certain piece of information about a candidate, or the role itself, and use this information disproportionately in decision-making. For example, when a hiring manager believes that only a carbon copy of the role's predecessor can do the job properly, discounting the majority of candidates as they don't fit the unreal expectations of the recruiter.	If you are rejecting or favouring candidates based primarily on one factor, anchor bias may be coming into play. Try weighting the criteria/functions of the job and align a structured interview and scoring rubric against these criteria/functions. You may find that candidates who lack a particular experience or characteristic have enough other strengths to allow for success. Also challenge your own thinking with diverse perspectives from others.
APPEARANCE BIAS	Research unfortunately shows that people who are rated more physically attractive are perceived to be more successful. A candidate who 'looks the part' may be subconsciously considered more qualified or competent than a candidate who is less conventionally 'beautiful' or looks different than others who we envision being in a particular role. This bias 'aka beauty bias' often combines with other biases, such as race and gender.	If you find yourself thinking that someone 'looks the part', or that another person could be less successful because of their weight, height, hair, skin colour, or other physical characteristics, you may be allowing someone's looks to affect your decision. Photos should never be included on resumes and should be removed or covered if included. Interviews could be done by telephone, to reduce bias before shortlisting. Also consider if you need to meet a candidate 'in person' to make your hiring decision, or whether virtual interviews support greater equity.

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ATTRIBUTION BIAS	Attribution bias occurs when people evaluate or try to find reasons for their own and others' behaviors. This can lead to different rationales for the behaviour of one group of people vs another group, or for your own behavior vs that of others. Attribution bias is often closely linked to performance bias. For instance, some people unconsciously see women as less competent than men, so they may give women less credit for accomplishments and more blame for mistakes.	If you find yourself guessing at reasons why a candidate might have done something or said something, that may be an indication that you are attributing. Do not assume, but rather ask questions to understand actions and motivation. Also try not to judge motivations as 'good' or 'bad' and try not to judge against your own behaviours or motivations. Hearing different perspectives from a diverse search committee can also help to reduce this bias.
CONFIRMATION BIAS	Confirmation bias occurs when something we desire influences our beliefs. When people would like a certain idea or concept to be true, they can inadvertently search for, recognize, favour or recall information that supports their desire for this idea to be true. This error leads the individual to pick out those bits of data that make us feel good because they confirm our prejudices.	Look for ways to challenge what you think you see or hear. Seek out information from a range of sources, to consider situations from multiple perspectives. Having an interview committee with diverse experiences and beliefs can help to reduce this bias. When in doubt, get further information from the candidate, and consider getting unbiased information from referees.
CONFORMITY BIAS	Conformity bias is the tendency to act in a similar fashion to the people around you, regardless of their own personal beliefs or values. This is also known as peer pressure and it can manifest as 'group think'.	Once the interview is done, the hiring team should write down thoughts individually before having a group discussion. Ask people to read what they have written, rather than reacting to what others are saying. This allows each person to contribute their unbiased views. Based on diversity and power dynamics, consider who should present their views first/last, to reduce this bias and allow differing opinions to be heard.
CONTRAST EFFECT BIAS	Contrast effect is when you compare two or more things that you have experienced — either simultaneously or consecutively — causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other.	Create a structured applicant review and interview process so you can compare applications and interview answers as 'apples-to-apples'. Consider a scoring process by pre-assigning weightings to each area of questioning, based on the functions within each job. Use a response rubric to predetermine what you are listening for in great/good/poor answers.
CULTURAL NOISE BIAS	Cultural Noise bias occurs when the interviewee gives responses that they think the interviewer would want to hear, rather than being honest about their actual opinions or feelings.	The interviewer must distinguish between a candidate's "socially acceptable" answer from their true opinion and feelings. The key is to dig deeper by asking probing questions or similar/related questions and seeing if responses are consistent. Use behavioural style interviewing and ask for examples from the candidate's past experience.

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IMPLICIT GENDER BIAS	Implicit gender bias arises from gender stereotypes, which are simplified judgements we make about the characteristics of jobs and the ideal candidates for them. For example, you may unconsciously believe that confidence, dominance, and emotional toughness are essential characteristics of a successful CEO and you may ascribe these as traits primarily to men. Then, during the selection process, your expectations come into play and you may unconsciously look for men to fill CEO roles.	Review job descriptions and postings for gendered language. Use a structured approach for resume review and interviews, to ensure you compare candidates based on competency, skill, and experience, rather than on characteristics. Consider removing names from resumes to reduce gender bias in short-list selection. Ensure a gender-diverse hiring committee to establish different perspectives. Be open to different ways of leading and getting results, and question whether there is truly only 'one way' of behaving that leads to success in a particular role. Monitor gender representation in various roles/levels of the organization to ensure there is balanced representation.
IMPLICIT RACIAL BIAS	Racial biases are a preference towards or against specific ethnic or racial groups. Implicit racial bias can cause individuals to unconsciously assess candidates favorably or unfavorably. This does not mean that the individual is overtly racist, but rather that their subconscious attitudes or stereotypes may potentially result in biased decisions or actions.	Remove name, address, and education institution from resumes, because racial bias often begins by seeing someone's name, community, or education as 'different'. Use a structured resume review matrix to compare candidates based on competency, skill, and experience. Also use a structured interview process with predetermined questions and scoring rubrics. Ensure a racially diverse hiring committee to provide different perspectives. Monitor racial diversity in various roles/levels to ensure your organization has balanced representation.
GENERALIZATION BIAS	Generalization bias can occur when interviewers assume candidates' mannerisms in the interview are part of their everyday behaviour. (e.g. The candidate giggles nervously at the end of each answer.) The interviewer might incorrectly assume what the candidate did once is what they would always do. This bias plays on the phrase "the first impression is the last impression".	Avoid assumptions to promote non-judgemental and fair impressions. Check your impressions by asking related questions to see if the responses are consistent. Probe with references to check whether the behaviour is normally displayed at work. Understand that the goal is to hire the candidate who most closely aligns with the key competencies of the role, not the candidate who is the best at interviewing. Also consider whether the behaviour will truly negatively affect someone's ability to do their job successfully.
HALO EFFECT BIAS	Halo effect is a cognitive bias in which our overall positive perception of a person affects how we feel and think about their abilities and character. For instance, one applicant might stand out because they worked at a specific organization, or because you happened to hear good things about them from someone whose judgement you trust. Or it might be an internal candidate who is performing well in their current role, and who is well-liked.	Consider the candidate without the "halo" to objectively see how their experience and skills compare to other candidates who may not have had the same privileges or opportunities. Ask how you would view the person if you hadn't received positive input about them...or if you'd received the same input about other candidates. For internal candidates, do they have the experience and skills that make them the best candidate for the new role, compared to external candidates?

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LIKEABILITY TRADE OFF / PERSONAL FILTERS AND COMPETENCE BIAS	Likeability bias is constructed in terms of how well someone will align to the team culture and how many peers say they'd like to work with them.	Are you unconsciously trying to hire someone who 'fits in'? If you find yourself using the word 'fit', it may be a signal that you have bias in play. Look for candidates who meet job expectations - be sure that race, gender, or other 'differences' are not factors in your 'feelings' that someone would 'fit in'. In fact, diversity of style and experience is most often beneficial to the team. If likeability must factor in, give it a 'score' so it's just one factor of many, rather than allowing 'fit' to dominate the decision.
MATERNAL BIAS FILTER	Motherhood triggers false assumptions that women are less competent and less committed to their careers. Maternal bias can involve doubting that due to family or marital status, or number and age of children, or to children's needs that a candidate will be seriously interested in the job. It can also contribute to judgements on professional commitment to devote the time and attention needed to do the job effectively.	If you find yourself questioning the interest, commitment, or ability of an applicant to succeed based on their personal identity or choices, ask yourself why. Are you perhaps ascribing you own lifestyle choices, preferences, or experiences to another person? Or did you have an experience with another employee that you are projecting onto this candidate? A diverse hiring committee will allow you to have diverse perspectives.
NORMATIVE BIAS	This bias occurs when we make assumptions about and show preference for "traditional" behaviours or choices rather than giving consideration to diverse choices that may be 'outside the norm'.	Ask yourself if you are rejecting a legitimate way of demonstrating knowledge merely because it is new to you. Educate yourself about the benefits of diverse career paths and transferable skills. Ensure diversity of experience is acknowledged in the required skills and competencies; include individuals with non-traditional backgrounds on the hiring committee.
PERFORMANCE BIAS	Performance bias occurs when the abilities of candidates in dominant groups are judged on their potential, while others are judged on their accomplishments. This type of bias assumes that some people are much better at certain tasks than others, based on stereotypes. Performance bias is often combined with racial and/or gender bias.	Set objective standards in advance, such as using consistent questions and scoring criteria. Institute gender/race blinding practices, such as removing names and reference to gender from resumes, or having 'blind' task-based testing where appropriate. Having a diverse hiring committee with different perspectives can also help to reduce this bias. For internal promotions, use pre-set KPI thresholds, or have a neutral 3 rd -party review 'blinded' performance reviews.
REGENCY BIAS	Recency bias happens when the interviewer recalls the most recently interviewed candidates more vividly than candidates who interviewed earlier in the process. This happens because our brains are hardwired to remember specifics of the most recent information provided.	Try to schedule interviews on the same day or on back-to-back days. Take thorough notes of each candidates' response to each question. Write complete notes during the debrief following each interview, noting your impressions and observations about each candidate's strengths and areas of concern, so that you can clearly review and understand them later in the process. Before making decisions, review together the debrief notes from each candidate interview to ensure that you don't assign more value or credibility to most recently interviewed individuals. Using a scoring rubric or matrix can also help reduce this bias.
STEREOTYPING	Stereotyping is forming an opinion about how a person of a specific gender, religion, race, appearance, or other characteristic think, act, respond, or would perform the job, without having any evidence that this is the case.	Ask every candidate the same questions and note their responses accurately. Be reflective about what stereotypes you may unconsciously hold and consider the perspectives of others who may view a situation or response differently than you do.