

Unconscious Bias



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What to Expect

- What is Unconscious Bias?
- Possible Causes
- New Concept - Selective Attention
- Selective Attention
- Self-Awareness
- Awareness to Action
- Best Practices in the Workplace
- More Best Practices
- Questions to Follow Up On



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Learning Points

- Defining Unconscious Bias
- Learning about Unconscious Bias
- Exploring the role of self awareness
- Discussing action steps to change



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Questions to Start:

- Are we aware of our unconscious biases? Do we accept them?
- What types of biases are you aware of?
- Do you have experience with your own or have seen biases in others?



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What is Unconscious Bias?

- Our unconscious biases are simply our *natural people preferences*. Biologically, we are hard-wired to prefer people who look like us, sound like us and share our interests. Social psychologists call this phenomenon "social categorisation" where we sort people into groups.
- This preference bypasses our normal, rational and logical thinking. We use these processes very effectively (we call it *intuition*) but the categories we use to sort people are not logical, modern or perhaps even legal. (ecu.co.uk)



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Possible Causes

- In addition to cultural backgrounds, pop culture norms, perpetuating stereotypes
- Bypassing rationality & logic
- Assumptions "positive or negative"



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New Concept - Selective Attention

- Selective attention is a cognitive process in which a person attends to one or a few sensory inputs while ignoring the other ones.
- Selective attention limits you from seeing the bigger picture
- By including a variety of experiences, expertise, and points of view in our working groups and teams, you get benefits and perspective that you wouldn't have seen otherwise!



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Selective Attention

- How do you think selective attention can be beneficial?
- Confronting selective attention is an important step in addressing unconscious bias
- So addressing unconscious biases not only prevents losses in diversity, but also can contribute to innovative thinking and *increase* productivity



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Self-Awareness

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it Fate"

Carl Jung



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Awareness to Action

- Offer awareness training (Should be a safe place for organization members to become mindful in decision making)
- Label the type of bias which may occur
- Conversation (all levels) about what biases are present in the company and steps that may be taken to minimize them



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Best Practices in the Workplace

- Commitment to Respectful Workplace
- Encourage Networking
- Structural Racism
- Cultural Awareness and Intelligence (Alternate perspectives)
- Valuing Diversity/Inclusion (Understanding that we each share the same characteristic of "Difference")
- Performance appraisal (Feedback on work performance)



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More Best Practices

- Appropriate Role Models (such as Wharton's first black dean and Princeton's first black valedictorian)
- Creating a culture where people feel safe asking appropriate probing questions
- Encouraging employees to share their stories/backgrounds



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Questions to Follow Up On

- How do we measure/determine unconscious biases?
- The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a tool developed jointly by Harvard University, University of Washington, and University of Virginia



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Thank you!

- Remember that you are not alone – we are all a participant of unconscious bias at one point or another
- You took an important step today
- Confronting unconscious biases is a continuous process, not one single event.



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Thank you for attending
today's session!

Unconscious Bias



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