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Unconscious Bias: A Quiet Performance Killer

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Unconscious Bias Defined

Attitudes, preferences, & stereotypes that affect our **thinking** and **behavior** in ways that are invisible to us.

4 Types of Unconscious Bias

1. Affinity Bias

The human tendency to gravitate toward those we perceive to be most like ourselves and therefore, away from those we perceive to be less like ourselves. We do this to remain in our “comfort zone”.

Sample Negative Impact: HIRING, PROMOTIONS, CUSTOMER SERVICE

2. Confirmation Bias

The human tendency to see what we EXPECT to see in others, whether it is actually there or not. In other words, we “confirm” what we expect to see.

Sample Negative Impact: INTERVIEWING and SELECTION

3. Conformity Bias

The human tendency to go along with the group; to be influenced by others.

Sample Negative Impact: PROBLEM-SOLVING and DECISION-MAKING

4. Halo & Horns Effect Bias

The human tendency to see 1 good (halo) or bad (horns) thing in a person and think everything is good or bad about that person.

Sample Negative Impact: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION and COACHING

8 Ways to Reduce the Negative Impact of Unconscious Bias

1. Be aware of your biases and stereotypes and the impact they have on your interactions.
 - a. Take tests at the **Project Implicit** website (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>).
 - b. Ask a trusted colleague or friend for **feedback**.
 - c. Identify the unconscious biases that are **impacting your workplace**.
2. **Listen** first and demonstrate **empathy**.
 - a. Active listening: **Sounds like...**
 - b. Self-disclosure: **That's something I can relate to...**
3. Increase **contact** with members of biased/stereotyped groups.
4. Actively engage in **anti-biased** behavior.
5. Use the Nominal **Group Technique**.
6. Increase the **diversity** of decision-makers and methods.
7. **Reword** job descriptions and job postings.
8. Consider implementing **blind** employment practices.

Identify 1 step you will take to reduce the negative impact of unconscious bias:

Masculine Terms

1. Strong
2. Lead/Leader(s)
3. Analysis/Analyze
4. Individual(s)
5. Decision(s)
6. Driven
7. Competitive
8. Expert
9. Objectives
10. Principles

Gender Neutral Terms

1. Able/Proven/Excellent
2. Head/Manage/Manager
3. Study/Test/Research
4. People/Team Members
5. Choices/Outcomes/Conclusions
6. Inspired/Motivated/Energized
7. Results-Oriented/Enthusiastic
8. Professional/Skilled/Adept
9. Goals/Aims/Targets
10. Values/Beliefs/Practices

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D.

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes is a professional speaker, coach and author who has spent more than two decades teaching thousands of people to build powerful relationships in diverse settings. As the owner of T.A.H. Performance Consultants, he has facilitated more than 1,500 keynotes, training seminars and virtual workshops that have taught participants to connect with others despite their differences, to effectively articulate their messages, to connect with diverse audiences and groups, and to reduce unconscious bias. His most recent book is *Making Diversity a Competitive Advantage: 70 Tips to Improve Communication*, which is a tool we can use to build powerful connections in diverse organizations. Dr. Holmes is a Past President of the Arizona Chapter of the National Speakers Association, and he loves to facilitate fun, interactive sessions that provide useful tools and techniques for participants.