NOTE: You can print a copy of this handout or take notes digitally during the session.

Reducing Unconscious Bias in Customer Service

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Unconscious Bias Defined

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

2 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: EMPATHY AND EXTRA MILE

2. 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: ENGAGEMENT

3 Customer Interaction Dimensions

1. **Engagement**: Extent to which the customer contact person is willing and able to facilitate the exchange of goods and services.

2. **Empathy**: Extent to which customer contact person demonstrates empathy (i.e., how the customer is treated during the engagement).

3. **Extra Mile**: Extent to which the customer contact person is willing to go "above and beyond" the call of duty (e.g., solving a customer service problem).

8 Ways to Reduce the Negative Impact of Unconscious Bias on Customer Service

1. Be aware of your biases and stereotypes and the impact they have on your customer 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 customer service**.

2. **Listen** first and demonstrate **empathy**.

   a. Active listening: **Sounds like…**

   What I hear you saying is…

3. Provide **active listening** skills training.

4. Understand the ways you can demonstrate **empathy**.

5. Actively work to recruit a high quality, **diverse** customer service staff.

6. Create opportunities for customer contact people to interact with **culturally different** individuals.

7. Provide specific customer service **protocols** that customer contact people learn and use.

8. Use specific metrics to formally **assess** the customer experience on a demographic basis.

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

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Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D.

Dr. Tyrone Holmes is a professional speaker, consultant and author who has spent nearly three decades teaching thousands of people to build powerful relationships in diverse settings. He has facilitated over 1,500 live and virtual presentations that have taught participants to reduce the "noise" in their lives, to effectively communicate their messages, to connect with diverse audiences and groups, and to reduce the negative impact of unconscious bias. Dr. Holmes served as a full-time faculty member at Eastern Michigan University in the Department of Leadership and Counseling, and at Wayne State University in the Department of Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations. He is also a Past President of the Arizona Chapter of the National Speakers Association. Dr. Holmes has earned the designation of eSpeakers Certified Virtual Presenter, Certified Virtual Host and most recently, Certified Virtual Master Presenter.