



If you attended our Lunch and Learn webinar on Unconscious Bias with Margaret Adewale from The HR Dept, you've hopefully already picked up some useful guidance. Here's our summary of the useful hints and tips.

What is unconscious bias?

Treating people unfairly, often without realising, and making prejudiced decisions that are not based on a person's ability to do a job or fulfil a role. It can include deep seated prejudices based on:

- Instinctive assumptions
- Life experiences
- Stereotyping

This can include a preference to someone because they are like them (similarity and affinity bias) or counting against people who are different to them in some way and is most common during interviews. Other types of unconscious bias include:

- **The Halo and horns effect**

Placing a candidate or employee 'on a pedestal' based on something such the university they attended (halo effect), or similarly instant prejudice if someone has worked for a company they have had a bad experience with (horns effect).

- **Contrast effect**

A tendency to compare one candidate to another, or one interview to another, rather than focusing on who is best to do the job.

- **Ageism**

Up to 58% of workers believe they have been discriminated against because of their age, especially over 50's. Some organisations often 'waiting for someone to retire' and older employees ignored and not promoted. This bias can favour young, driven employees. Women and ethnic minorities often feel the double impact of bias here.

- **Conformity Bias**

Similar to peer pressure, where others opinions (such as an interview panel) sway the behaviours and views of another. This can be mitigated by making opinions anonymous in some situations.



- **Confirmation Bias**

People want to confirm an opinion they already held and 'be proved right', such as a view held about a candidate before an interview.

- **Beauty Bias**

Employing someone based on how attractive they are, which can affect an organisations performance as they may not have selected the best person for the role.

- **Name bias**

Making a pre-judgement on someone's name such as race or gender, this occurs most frequently during CV screening.

How can you avoid unconscious bias influencing decisions?

As yourself honestly what might be your own biases? Being aware and more conscious of the different types of unconscious bias will help. Read through and consider them before and during the recruitment process and ask yourself if any of these may be influencing your decisions? Try to:

- Recognise it
- Be honest with yourself
- Treat everyone as an individual
- Reflect on why you feel that way
- Introduce equality and diversity policies and procedures in the workplace

The most important thing is to focus on the best person for the job.

Legislation

Although there is no current legislation specifically for unconscious bias, decisions made because of unconscious bias can be viewed as falling foul of the Equality and Diversity Act 2010.

What are the benefits?

Better recruitment and retention, better innovation and creativity, team morale, productive, empowered and valued employees.



“Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance and belonging is dancing like no one is watching.”

Q&A's

Are competency-based recruitment processes and interview questions encouraging unconscious bias?

Competency questions can still be important, depending on the role, but it is better to use this on the shortlisted candidates, rather than introduce it to everyone at the first stage.

What sort of training is available about unconscious bias?

Trainers can come into organisations to talk to teams, webinars (such as the recording of this lunch and learn), reading materials and online courses are all available. It's also important to introduce policies and sure that employees are aware of and can access. Training is important for the organisation as a whole – try not to single anyone out as they may feel they don't need it.

Further support and resources

[Outsourced HR Company - Support Services & Advice - The HR Dept](#)

[Understanding unconscious bias | The Royal Society - YouTube](#)

www.inclusivityworks.org



The GEM Project is jointly funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund.