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| **Mitigating Biases in Interviewing** |
| **Recognizing Biases During Interviewing**  It is important for leaders to recognize how biases may affect their decision-making when selecting employees. Interview bias may occur intentionally or unintentionally. We must mitigate biases to ensure equality and effectiveness in the selection process. |
| **Common factors to avoid when interviewing:**   * Stereotyping – Occurs when a candidate is judged based on generalizations and social conditioning rather than actual facts.   − *Example:* Assuming that women who have families are not interested in positions that require substantial travel or that men prefer construction jobs over receptionist jobs.  − Do not assume certain candidate traits will make the applicant better or worse at their jobs.   * Inconsistency in questioning – Asking different sets of interview questions to different candidates for the same job based on their ethnicity.   − *Example:* Asking only Hispanic candidates about their bilingual skills or asking only black candidates about their criminal history.  − Do not wait until you meet the candidate to craft the interview questions; instead, prepare one set of questions in advance and ask the same questions to all candidates. *\*Clarifying follow-up questions to prepared set of questions do not apply\**   * First impression error – Forming an opinion based on the first thing you notice about the candidate (positive or negative).   − *Example:* Giving more credence to a candidate who has on your favorite brand/style of shoes.  − Do not allow your first impression upon seeing the candidate to cloud the interview. Review the candidate’s resume prior to the interview and focus on his/her weaknesses and strengths.   * Halo and horns effect – Halo effect occurs when evaluating candidates based on their likeability or the positive feelings you have about them, rather than their professional qualifications for the job.   − *Example:* Giving preference to a candidate who shares your leisure interests or graduated from your alma mater, rather than focusing on his/her knowledge, skills and abilities.  Horns effect is when you immediately judge a candidate on the basis of one unfavorable trait.  − *Example:* During the interview, the candidate uses a word in the wrong context, and you immediately disqualify him/her as a result of that one error.  − Do not lose sight of the importance of equality and effectiveness in the interview process. Evaluate candidates based on their knowledge, skills and abilities to perform successfully in the position.   * Contrasting effect – Comparing how candidates measure up against one another.   − *Example:* Strong candidates who interview after weak ones may appear more qualified than they actually are because of the contrast.  Do not compare candidates against each other. Focus on the individual candidate and evaluate based on job requirements and his/her own qualifications. |

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| **Recognizing and Mitigating Unconscious Biases in Talent Management** |
| It is important that leaders recognize the powerful impact unconscious thinking processes can make upon decision-making. Leaders are responsible to commit to mitigating bias in performance management and career development to ensure we are increasing the strength and diversity of talent pipelines and are supporting their Company’s success by promoting the strongest employees. |
| **Leader or Rater Bias**  Rater bias occurs when the leader rates an employee based on the leader’s comfort level with that particular colleague. For example, bias is present when a rater unconsciously conducts performance reviews with greater comfort when conversing with employees of the same gender than those of the opposite. Recognizing our own discomfort and how it impacts our ability to fairly rate employees gives us the opportunity to pause, question, and reassess our decisions so we may strive for objectivity.  **Awareness:**   1. What kind of biases have I experienced myself? How has that affected me? 2. What is this person triggering in my background? 3. Does this employee or their situation remind me of someone else? 4. Do I have an automatic feeling or judgment about this person? 5. Are there differences in work style or approach between me and the person I am evaluating? Can these differences influence my rating of the colleague? 6. What are this colleague’s career development aspirations? Is this what I imagine, or what the employee has told me? 7. What strategies and tactics can I put in place to engage fully, and consciously put my filters aside?   **Summary:**   * Know your biases and identify them before the review begins. * When soliciting input from others about an individual’s review, explore views that are opposite from your own. Adopt an open mind and a sense of inquiry rather than automatically dismissing or discounting opposing views. * Check your assumptions prior to the conversation, especially those concerning work style and other differences. * Give performance reviews the importance they deserve. Remember that haste and distractions make for unnecessary negative impacts. * Use a performance management assessment aid to guide through the process. |

# Recognizing and Mitigating Unconscious Biases in Talent Management

## Structural Bias

Biases that are found in and reinforced by the organizational structure can be detrimental to the strength of their Company’s diverse talent pipeline. Most often, structural bias is shown through competency models where preferred behavior is implied since the models have been known to over-represent masculine leadership characteristics and under-represent female characteristics. Employees’ perception may be that masculine leadership traits are most valued in the company.

## Awareness:

* Question whether the values that get reflected in these contribution areas contain any kind of inherent gender or cultural bias.

− Recognize what skill sets are highly valued and weighted heavily in the company and ensure inclusiveness in the opportunities given to develop those skill sets.

* Question whether any of the rating areas seem to favor one gender or cultural leadership style over another.

## Summary:

* Have clear and transparent rating areas and weighting processes. When unmanaged, personal preferences of leaders as to which contribution areas are most important become part of the structural bias.
* Understand that every organization has an image of a leader. Structural inequities can reinforce this image through biased competency models and contribution areas, penalizing non-dominant groups.
* Leaders must evaluate whether their competency models are inclusive.
* All leaders must clearly understand how the rating areas are weighted in the final evaluation, and whether everyone weights them equally.
* Identify any gender or cultural biases that are inherent in the organization and how they may be impacting the objectivity of the reviews.
* Expose these structural biases prior to performance reviews and continually address them throughout the review process.

**Questions to Mitigate Personal Biases**

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| **Individual Exploration** | **Leader Exploration** |
| **Realize You Have Biases**  Remember that all human beings have unconscious preferences and biases, which is completely normal, and that those preferences and biases impact most, *if not all*, of the decisions we make,  *including those regarding people.* | |
| 1. What groups make you most comfortable (appearance, racial, cultural, religious, etc.)? 2. What groups or situations make you most uncomfortable? 3. What kinds of people make you most nervous? Are these personal traits or group traits? 4. What kinds of people do you try your hardest to please? What characteristics do they share? | 1. Does your team attract a certain type of person? 2. Do I consistently build diverse teams with individuals who represent a variety of thoughts, races, cultures, age groups and genders? 3. When I choose people for tasks, do I provide an equal opportunity for participation? 4. How could you engage and explore the unconscious biases that impact your team and the decisions you make? 5. Are there patterns among the kinds of groups and/or people that are successful in your   team, business/function, and/or at your Company? |
| **Recognize What Powers Your Decisions**  Remember, unconscious preferences and biases can influence your decision-making in both negative  *and positive* ways. In making people decisions, ask yourself, “How might my perceptions or biases be  influencing my decisions?” Moreover, be open to the possibility that those influences could be present in your decision-making. | |
| 1. Ponder several of your recent major decisions. How were they influenced by your feelings about others? 2. Do you take extra time during periods of stress to ensure you make a fair decision? 3. If you are feeling nervous in a social situation do you ask yourself, “What biases are driving my feelings?” | 1. Do you often rely on your “gut” or intuition to make major decisions? 2. Do you seek additional objective data to balance your decisions? 3. Do you have a pattern of surrounding yourself with people who have made a good first impression on you? What was that impression based upon? 4. Do you give yourself enough time to ensure that your decisions are free from impulse and   reaction? |

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| **Individual Exploration** | **Leader Exploration** |
| **Engage with People You Consider Different**  If you discover that you may have negatively biased tendencies in relation to a particular group,  make a conscious effort to learn more about that group and, where you can, expose yourself to positive images and other input related to the group in question. | |
| 1. Do your personal hobbies or activities regularly expose you to diverse people or groups? 2. Do you attend local cultural festivals, eat at ethnic restaurants, or go online to research the origins of other interesting new cultures/groups? | 1. How do you encourage and support multiculturalism within your work team? 2. Do you make conscious efforts and choices to include a broad array of people in your decision- making process? |
| **Explore Awkwardness and Discomfort**  When you interact with a person who is part of a group with which you have had little interaction, be aware that you may be especially susceptible to stereotyping, which could lead to false and, perhaps, negative assumptions about that person. Make a conscious effort to learn more about that individual as well as his or her group, recognizing that interaction with one person does not predict or explain  his or her group norms. | |
| 1. Are you aware of situations in which you are reluctant to share cultural information about yourself? What are they? How can you communicate this information to others to increase your comfort level? 2. Do you attempt to build relationships with employees who are different from you? 3. Have you shared with them about your background and perspectives? Is this welcomed or resisted? Why? Have you asked   them how they prefer to be approached? | 1. In what ways are you sensitive, oversensitive, or not sensitive enough to issues of privacy on your team? 2. Are you willing to model appropriate kinds of sharing before asking others to do so? 3. What do you do in the team environment to create new contexts for understanding, safe space for sharing, and opportunities to demonstrate respect and tolerance? |