

Unconscious Bias

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for everyone



Discussion Points

Defining unconscious bias

Why we all have unconscious bias and why it's vital to our existence

Considering how unconscious bias presents itself in the workplace and its effects

Begin identifying strategies to deal with unconscious bias.



Defining Unconscious Bias

“Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgement and assessments of people and situations influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences”

University of Warwick



11 MILLION pieces of data at any given second!

Our unconscious mind works behind the scenes to allow our conscious brain to focus on what's important.



Key Research Points

- We all have and demonstrate unconscious bias
- It affects our behaviour subtly and unintentionally
- We're unaware of it
- We tend to favour people like us
- There's greater unconscious bias towards people we perceive as different
- It doesn't go away if you ignore it
- It plays a greater part when people have an overload of cognitive information or in an emotional state.

“

“There is a growing body of evidence backed by leaders in the field holding the view that our unconscious plays a significant part in the way we engage with people and the decisions we make about them”

From: Unconscious Bias, Shire Professional Chartered Psychologists, CPID publication.



Impact of unconscious bias in the workplace

- Perceptions of fairness
- Staff morale
- Brain drain and lack of diversity
- Risk of grievances and tribunal claims
- Organisational Reputation

Impact of unconscious bias in the workplace

- what might you be missing out on?

- The best person for the job
- Staff motivation and engagement
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Higher performing and productive workforce

“

“All of us have implicit biases to some degree. This does not necessarily mean we will act in an inappropriate or discriminatory manner, only that our first “blink” sends us certain information. Acknowledging and understanding this implicit response and its value and role is critical to informed decision-making and is particularly critical to those whose decisions must embody fairness and justice.”

From: Blink - The power of thinking without thinking by Malcolm Gladwell



It's all about perception

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Mitigating the effects...

- There is a debate over how to identify and measure unconscious bias
- However, evidence suggests it is possible to address its influence
- There is no easy answer or magic bullet
- Range of strategies that contribute to mitigating the unconscious bias.

Let's look at some proven strategies...

- **Recruitment**
 - Application form vs. CV
 - Where and how roles are advertised
 - Select in, rather than select out
 - Anonymous short-listing
 - Objective and evidenced selection process
 - Role of assessors: self-awareness of bias, time, aggregated scoring, create an intent
- **Progression**
 - Clear job descriptions
 - Objective and evidenced performance appraisals
 - Challenge subjective use of language

Let's look at some proven strategies...

- **Team cohesion**
- Micro affirmations
- Diverse teams
- Fostering ability to empathise

- **Organisational structure and values**
- Culture of equality, put policies into practice
- Reduce stereotypes – examples of individuals in non-stereotypical contexts
- Review organisational aims, objectives and value statements

In Conclusion

- Start the discussion
- Review policies and practices
- The written work, promotional material, places you advertise all have a part to play
- Think carrot, not stick
- Take action – small acts make a difference
- Reflect on your own unconscious bias

Further support



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