Unconscious bias happens anytime we make snap judgements based on readily available criteria rather than objective information.

In this guide you'll learn about 11 common forms of bias in recruiting and ways to avoid the bias.
You may have a bias about one or more of the following:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Culture
- Neurodiversity
- Sexual Orientation
- Socioeconomic Status
- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Education level
- Disability
- Intersectionality
- World View
- Weight

"63% of surveyed job seekers indicate they'd be reluctant to accept a job from a company if no employees from underrepresented groups are involved in the interview process."

- YELLO 2019 DIVERSITY REPORT
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affinity Bias</td>
<td>pg. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageism</td>
<td>pg. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution Bias</td>
<td>pg. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Bias</td>
<td>pg. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity Bias</td>
<td>pg. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halo Effect</td>
<td>pg. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horns Effect</td>
<td>pg. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast Effect</td>
<td>pg. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Bias</td>
<td>pg. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Bias</td>
<td>pg. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Bias</td>
<td>pg. 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AFFINITY BIAS

Tendency to gravitate toward people similar to ourselves. That might mean hiring or promoting someone who shares the same race, gender, age, or educational background. We tend to hire for ‘culture fit’ when we really should be looking for a ‘culture add’. We meet someone we like and we think they’ll get along well with the team, but it’s not helping the team ultimately grow and diversify. Similarities shouldn’t automatically disqualify a candidate, but they shouldn’t be the deciding factor.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Actively take note of the similarities you share with the candidate so you can differentiate between attributes that may cloud your judgement vs. the concrete skills, experiences and unique qualities that would contribute to your team as a ‘culture add’ rather than ‘culture fit’.
AGEISM

Bias

Discriminating against someone on the basis of their age. Ageism tends to affect women more than men, and starts at younger ages.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Train your department to understand the issue of ageism and debunk the myths about workers of different ages. Diversity of age is an essential piece in the diversity recruiting efforts.

Contrary to stereotypes, workers age 50 and up are among the most engaged members of the workforce... they also offer employers lower turnover rates and greater levels of experience.

- AARP.ORG
ATTRIBUTION BIAS

Assuming that a person's actions depend on what "kind" of person they are rather than the social and environmental forces that influences that person.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Rather than assume a candidate is unfit for the job because they were late to the interview, seemed distracted, etc. ask the candidate what happened that caused them to be late. It could be completely innocent and unprecedented. If there is something on their resume or something they said during the interview that caused you to draw conclusions about the candidate, ask them further clarifying questions. Don't forget interviewees are often nervous and may misspeak or stumble. Give them a chance to share their full story with you before you judge.

"When we asked [employees] who at their company was in the best position to increase diversity, 45% of respondents stated hiring managers."
- Glassdoor
CONFIRMATION BIAS

Inclination to draw conclusions about a situation or person based on your personal desires, beliefs and prejudices rather than on unbiased merit. This can occur when a hiring manager or interviewer forms an initial opinion on a candidate (based on their name, where they're from, where they went to school, etc.) and then uses the interview process as a way of confirming these beliefs rather than getting to know the candidate.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

It's important to ask standardized, skills-based questions that provide each candidate with a fair chance to stand out. Helps prevent the screening committee from asking too many random questions that may lead to confirmation bias.

"Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians."

- McKinsey & Company
Tendency people have to act similar to the people around them regardless of their own personal beliefs (aka peer pressure). This occurs when the screening committee comes together to review a candidate’s application and/or the interview. The conformity bias can cause individuals to sway their opinion of a candidate to match the opinion of the majority. However the majority isn’t always right and it may cause the team to miss out on a great candidate because individual opinions become muddled in a group setting.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Before everyone gets together to review the candidate, have everyone write down their notes on the candidate and submit the feedback individually. Then everyone can come together and review everyone’s submissions.

"Without diverse leadership, women are 20% less likely than straight white men to win endorsement for their ideas; people of color are 24% less likely; and LGBTQ+ are 21% less likely."

- HBR.ORG
HALO EFFECT

This can come into consideration at any point of the hiring process. Perhaps you see a candidate worked at a highly regarded company or graduated from an elite school. However, we shouldn’t judge a candidate based on their name-brand education.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS:

This can be dangerously blinding when it comes to reviewing candidates. When reviewing a stack of applications, you are probably looking for something unique that makes a candidate stand out from the rest. When you do this, also consider the candidate without that one gleaming attribute and see how their experiences, skills and personalities compare to other candidates who may not have had the same privileges or opportunities.
HORNS EFFECT

Tendency people have to view another person negatively after learning something unpleasant or negative about them. This is essentially the opposite of the Halo effect. This can cause hiring teams to weed out candidates based on something trivial as the candidate working with a company you personally dislike or the candidate displays a particular quirk or mannerism during the interview you find annoying. Such traits may alter your perception of the candidate entirely even though it’s a small factor and it may not even be relevant.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS:

If you have a negative feeling about a candidate, take the time to figure out exactly where that ‘gut feeling’ is coming from. It may be something superficial or insignificant that shouldn’t affect their chance at the role.
Comparing two or more things you have come into contact with, causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other. This can be a mind-bender, but it's also one of the most common types of bias in recruiting. When you're reviewing a lot of candidates, it can be easy to compare one application to the next in the stack and determine which one is better from the other. Same goes for interviews.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Create a structured application review and interview process so you team can compare applications and interview answers as apples to apples rather than apples and oranges.
**BEAUTY BIAS**

Social behavior where people believe that attractive people are more successful, competent and qualified.

**WAYS TO AVOID BIAS**

Create a structured interview process which helps reduce the risk of bias. It’s also helpful to have an initial phone screening rather than a video call or in-person interview.

**GENDER BIAS**

Tendency to prefer one gender over another. *One study found that both men and women prefer male job candidates, so much that in general a man is 1.5x more likely to be hired than a woman.*

**WAYS TO AVOID BIAS**

When reviewing resumes and interviews, be aware of your bias and ask yourself why you prefer one candidate over the other. Always compare candidates based on skill and merit rather than traits that can cloud your judgement of them.
NAME BIAS

Tendency people have to judge and prefer people with certain types of names – typically people prefer names that are of Anglo origin. This is one of the most pervasive unconscious bias issues in the hiring process. One study found that white names receive 50% more callbacks for interviews than African American names. Additionally, applicants living in nicer neighborhoods also receive more callbacks for both white and African American names. Another study found that Asian last names are 28% less likely to receive a callback for an interview compared to Anglo last names.

WAYS TO AVOID BIAS

Just like with gender bias, don’t take someone’s name into consideration when reviewing their application. Make a concerted effort to realize your potential biases and only assess the candidate based on their qualifications and skills.