

Unconscious Bias: An Introduction

DEI Assessment

What this is:

A guide on how to assess your companies current DEI initiatives and progress.

Why is matters:

Every company is at a different state in their journey of diversity, equity and inclusion. By assessing what you currently have in place and identifying gaps, you can begin to prioritize where you will focus your efforts.

Example:

See Attached link

Unconscious Bias Training

What this is:

Resources to consider for unconscious bias training

Why it matters:

Unconscious bias training is often one of the first steps a company takes to become more diverse and inclusive. However, there is debate about the effectiveness of unconscious bias training. It will be important for HR professionals and leaders to consider what can be realistically expected from the training and how it fits into the overall DEI efforts before company-wide training modules are implemented.

Example:

Bias

Unconscious bias is inevitable and allows us to make it through the day with short cuts that don't require us to process every bit of information to make decisions. However, in a work setting our biases are getting in the way of objective decision making.

Unconscious bias is the way our brain is hardwired to take short cuts. Teaching us about this bias and then expecting us to change our behavior based on this knowledge is a pretty big leap.

Hundreds of studies dating back to the 1930's suggest that anti-bias training doesn't reduce bias, alter behavior or change the workplace.*

An alternative is to hold unconscious bias training, not with the expectation that employees will now change their behavior based on what they've learned, but rather by focusing training on an understanding of unconscious bias and a focus on systems as opposed to individuals.

The key to improving the effects of training is to make it part of a wider program of change.

If the goal of your training is to help people understand bias and normalize it so that they are more open to creating policies and processes that mitigate bias, that is a very different approach than training people on bias and then expecting them to change their behavior. If we can accept, we are human, therefore we are biased, we can be more open to changing how we work to mitigate bias.

Unconscious bias training should:

- Focus on awareness
- Be ongoing, not a one time training
- Encourage focus on changing structures around hiring, promotion, pay and performance reviews.

Another important consideration is whether the training should be voluntary or mandatory. By making the training mandatory, employees may view it as “yet another compliance training” that is only somewhat relevant to them. By making the training voluntary, there is no company-wide shared understanding. Regardless of which option you choose, it is important to recognize that training is only one piece of the broader solution and not the solution in and of itself.

*<https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/dobbin/files/an2018.pdf>

Resources:

[Google Training Video](#)

[Harvard Implicit Association Test](#)

[Paradigm](#) (provides scalable training options)