

REDUCING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Solutions For Dramatically Improving Your Hiring Results Across All Candidates

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Goals for today - To make you think

1. To show **the negative business and recruiting impacts** of unconscious bias or UB
2. To highlight **the most common areas where biases occur** during recruiting
3. To make you aware of the many **bias reducing options and solutions** that you should consider
4. To **answer all of your questions** and have a little fun



What is unconscious bias? (UB)

A definition

Hiring on the “Forbidden Planet”

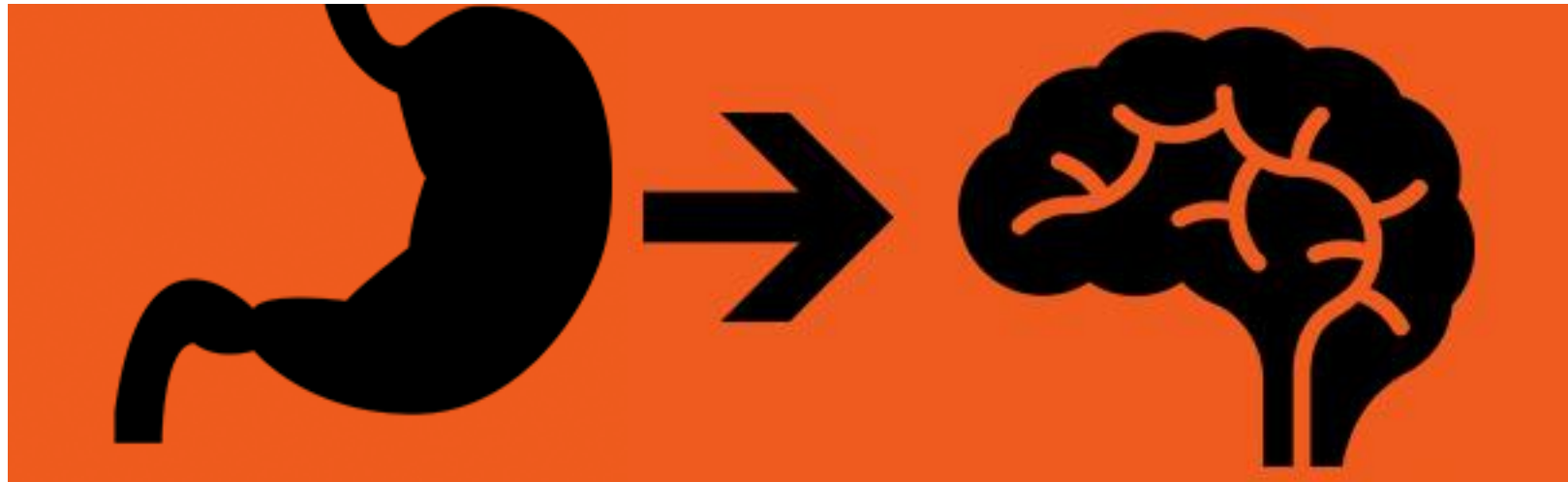
- It is a **bias that we are unaware of**, and which happens **outside of our control**
- It is a bias **that happens automatically**
- It is triggered by **our brain making quick judgments and assessments** of people and situations
- It is **influenced by our background**, cultural environment and personal experiences (Source; ECU: 2013 *Unconscious bias in higher education*)
- **We have 2 brain systems** and UB's occur mostly when we make fast decisions under pressure (system 1)



Many select based on a quick “gut feeling”

But it has nothing to do with your gut...

Instead it's really a set of positive and negative biases imprinted on your brain and released during pressure for a fast decision (System 1)



Definition of hiring bias

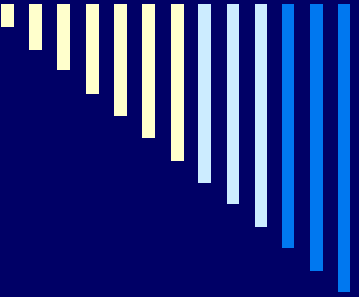
Hiring bias covers one additional problem area...

- **The screening out of otherwise qualified candidates that would perform well in the job...**
- **Using non-validated factors - low or no bias screening factors that don't predict on-the-job performance (e.g. you work at troubled company, GPA's etc.)**

How about a quick example of UB... when you're hiring for attitude

Don't stereotype or assume... instead find out





**Does your hiring processes
need a major overhaul?**

We know that UB contributes to the failure of our hiring processes... but we don't know precisely how much

What % of all new-hires fail within 18 months?

“46%” (Source: Leadership IQ)

What % of all hourly employees quit /fired within their first 6 mths?

“50%” (Source: Humetrics)

What % of management new-hires fail within 18 mths?

“Between 40 and 60%” (Source: Harvard Business Review)

What % of firms miss the mark on high managerial talent?

“In 82% of their hiring decisions” (Source: Gallup)

What % of executive new-hires fail within 18 mths?

“Nearly 50%” (Source: The Corporate Leadership Council)

What % of new-hires are an unequivocal success?

"19%" (Source: Leadership IQ)



Let's look at an example
illustrating the existence and the impact
of unconscious bias

Unconscious bias occurs in many areas...

What's in a name?

5000 identical medical resumes were sent out

- The name on the baseline resume was **Kristen**
- The same resume was sent out with the name **Aisha**
- **Was there a change in response rate?**
- Aisha's response rate was more than **5 times lower** (13% down to 2.2%) (University of Chicago/MIT study)

100 identical sales resumes were sent out

- The name on the baseline resume was **Adam**
- The same resume was sent with the name **Mohamed**
- **Was there a reduction in response rate?**
- **Mohamed landed 3 times fewer interviewers...** only 4 compared to 12 for Adam (BBC's *Inside Out*)

Unconscious bias occurs in many areas... including with names

Foreign names

- Does having “a foreign name” increase the difficulty of getting a job?
- Yes... having a foreign name meant **a more difficult employment search** in 17 out of 17 countries analyzed

Hiding gender has an impact on assessment

Are men or women better coders? (on GitHub)

- When gender was made public, code acceptance rates for code written by women were **62%**
- When gender was hidden, code acceptance rates for code written by women **increased by nearly 10%** to **71.8%**

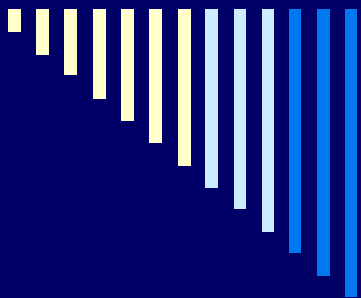


**In which recruiting areas...
does unconscious bias have the highest
negative impact on hiring accuracy?**

The highest-impact areas for bias

1. **Corporate careers page** – language & pictures **may discourage** diverse applicants
2. **Job postings / job descriptions** – language and non-validated factors discourage diversity applicants
3. **Resume / LinkedIn profile screening** – (6 sec.) names, pictures, dates, education & factors that don't predict cause early exits
4. **Selecting candidate slates** – names, dates, **salary history**, education & other factors that don't predict cause early exits
5. **Interviews** – **first impressions**, body language and questions covering not-validated factors screen out cause early exits
6. **Offer phase** – gender, confidence & experience impact \$

Today we will focus on the 2 underlined areas



Action steps for reducing unconscious biases

4 categories of solutions

Categories of solutions for UB

- I. Just ignore it**
- II. Increase awareness of biases** - educate yourself about your biases and their negative consequences (UB training)
- III. Avoid / Hide triggers** – minimize situations where you must make people decisions quickly under pressure (mask bias inducing items like names)
- IV. Substitute data-driven decisions** – have ironclad procedures that force people decisions to be made with data using system 2 (a technical skills test)

Many organizations start with... unconscious bias training



Implicit Association Test (IAT)

Increase awareness of UB factors

Unconscious bias training explored

1. **Many firms offer UB training** – Google was first and Facebook now offers their online version for free

<https://managingbias.fb.com/>



2. Google has proof that UB training **raises awareness and employee motivation** to stop UB...
3. But **no one has produced proof that UB training alters biased hiring decisions...** and it can **increase defensiveness** (Can knowledge or awareness override the unconscious?)

Unconscious bias training doesn't work

Training is not the answer because...

“All the research tells us that we can't educate ourselves out of these long learned and deep-seated preferences”

Training is designed to increase awareness of these UB areas

UB training may reveal unconscious biases in many areas

- Gender
- Race
- National origin and international prospects
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Disabilities
- Employment status
- Educational level

If you were told that for
example you had all 9 of these
UB's...
would you be defensive

So “Plan B” is to...
modify your process to minimize opportunities for UB

An example – An unconscious bias against dogs

Plan “A” – take dog anxiety reduction training classes

Plan “B” – change direction whenever you see a dog



So “Plan B” is to alter your hiring processes

**Biases that occur when you are screening resumes...
have the highest overall negative impact**

Why? Because once a resume is rejected for biased reasons... the candidate is lost forever... so you may never know what you missed

(Follow them on LinkedIn)

(Steve Jobs was rejected by HP)



“Men on average list 16% more skills in their resumes than women with similar experience and roles” (Source Entelo)


What are the consequences of unconscious bias in resume screening

- 1. Unconscious bias reduces diversity & revenue...** (Every 1% increase in gender diversity is correlated with a 3% increase in revenue and every 1% increase in racial diversity correlates with a 9% increase in sales (U of Illinois))
- 2. When you use bias or factors that don't predict on-the-job success... you will hire employees that will likely produce at least 10% less**
- 3. Individuals that feel they've been rejected for no legit reason will post negative reviews, they may sue & not buy your product** (Virgin Media - Cable company lost \$5M Annually)

What are the consequences of unconscious bias during resume screening

4. Your **lack of diversity among your employee base** will discourage both diverse and non-diverse people **from applying in the future**

Conclusion – reducing bias during resume screening costs little...
but it has huge economic rewards



A list of the most common opportunities for bias during resume screening

With some solutions

Common bias factors during resume screening

The Name – a name might indicate... gender, race, national origin, an international prospect or even age (Liam/Sophia vs James/Mary)

Possible solutions (i.e. **anonymous resumes** are used at Deloitte)

- **Mask names manually using MS word's hidden font, white color font or black boxes... & then assign a number** to all resumes
- **Automatic masking software** like mobile app Blendoor or most commercial security software

Common bias factors during resume screening

Dates – dates of **education** can reveal your age... and **employment dates** can discriminate against women because they often have fewer years of experience

Possible solutions

- **Automated masking software** like the app Blendoor hides candidates' **dates**, age, photos and names
- **Date masking manually using** word's hidden font, white color font or black boxes

Common bias factors during resume screening

Photos – recruiters double check for consistency with LinkedIn profiles, but they usually have photos... as do most international CVs

Possible solutions

- **Masking software** like Unbias.io which is a Google Chrome extension that automatically removes **faces and names** from **LinkedIn profiles**
- **Manual photo masking** using black boxes

Common bias factors during resume screening

Diversity sourcing – many sourcing approaches simply don't find enough diverse candidates

Possible solutions

- **Vendors like Entelo** will search available public resumes and make **educated guesses about whether a prospect is diverse**. Piazza Careers does the same for college hires
- **Vendors like Textio and Unitive** have software that help you increase the attractiveness and reduce the bias level in your **job postings**



Gender impacts skills reporting in resumes

“Men on average list 16% more skills in their resumes than women with similar experience and roles” (Source Entelo)

Action – don’t be shy, list all of your skills

Common bias factors during resume screening

Non-predictive factors – recruiters & hiring managers all too often use non-validated selection factors

Examples

GPA's “are worthless as a criteria for hiring”

Test scores “are worthless”

College “that fancy college you attended? It doesn't matter”

Possible solutions

- **A resume scoring sheet** (required) that only contains valid selection factors
- **Educate them** by showing that by using these criteria they **wouldn't rehire** many on their own team
- **Measure quality of hire** & validate selection factors

Additional common resumes screen out bias factors

These non-validated factors might not predict anything job related (So be cautious)

- **Spelling errors** – this may not be relevant for some jobs and for international prospects, it is a given
- **Address or city** – shouldn't reflect on every person living there... or automatically mean commute problems
- **Job jumping** – may be candidate growth or a military family
- **Working at a troubled firm** – they might be the exception
- **Unemployed status** – avoid stereotypes and find out
- **Omitted resume dates** – may not predict anything
- **Resume length** – # pages or a functional format might not reflect on the job performance

Place the most biased assessments **later on in the hiring process**

Improvement area #3
Fix the interview process where UB's occur

**Interviews provide the most
opportunities for unconscious biases**

Realize that most interviews simply don't work

“Interviews are a terrible predictor of performance”

“Many managers, recruiters, and HR staffers think they have a special ability to sniff out talent. They’re wrong...”

*It’s a complete random mess... We found a zero relationship”
(Google)*

Why traditional interviews are becoming less effective

- 1. Everyone knows the questions in advance** – questions and answers are available online by firm on glassdoor.com, so most answers are “prepared rather than being genuine”
- 2. Practice makes perfect** – with the abundance of Internet help sites and a candidate’s own practice mobile phone videos, practice makes perfect
- 3. Lying on the Internet** –unpunished social media deception habits spill over into interview behavior
- 4. “I did it all” answers** – direct company references are difficult, so candidates have learned to take full credit
- 5. Ignoring the sales component** –competition for diversity, now requires a superior selling approach

The 10 easiest and most effective ways to reduce bias during interviewing

1. **Standardize the assessment of fit** – variations in fit assessment **are the #1 UB impact area** (use cultural add)
2. **Discourage early decisions** – first impressions **are the #2 UB impact area**... they are often wrong... so teach them **not to make decisions until the end of the interview**
3. **Scoring sheet** - require the use, filling out and turning in of a candidate assessment scorecard based on the KSA's for this job
(assess interviewer accuracy later)
4. **A structured interview** – each question must correspond to a KSA... and all questions must come from the validated and approved master list (Google and Facebook have question banks) **ask no brainteaser questions**

The 10 easiest ways to reduce bias during interviewing

- 5. Give them a real problem** – give them an existing problem from their job (or “**find the problems**” in this process) & ask them to walk you through the steps (like how you would assess a **chef**)
- 6. Rooney rule** – require diversity representation in the interview slate
- 7. Blind auditions** – where appropriate, have them perform behind a screen (Symphony orchestras)
- 8. Use a hiring committee** – appoint a trained & seasoned permanent hiring committee for key jobs (Google)
- 9. Minimize candidate stress** – alert them about what to expect >

Alleviate anxiety to improve performance and to reduce no-shows

Blackberry... describes each hiring step

Want to work for BlackBerry? Here's what to expect

This simple online application will start you on your way to an exciting, Bold career with BlackBerry. When you fill this out, it will give us the details we need to determine where your skills and experience fit best.

As part of the online application process, you'll be asked to attach a copy of your résumé/CV. It's important that you complete this application correctly to ensure it can be submitted successfully.

Once your application and résumé /CV have been submitted, they'll be reviewed by one of our recruiters. Depending on your skills and experience, you may be contacted for an interview.



Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Online application

To apply for a position at BlackBerry, fill out the online application form. This will provide us with details of your relevant skills and experience.

As part of the online application process, you will also be asked to attach a copy of your resume. It is important to complete this application correctly to ensure it can be submitted successfully.

Once your application and resume have been submitted, they will be reviewed by a BlackBerry recruiter and depending on your skills and experience, you may be contacted for an interview.



The 10 easiest ways to reduce bias during interviewing

10. Limit the use of knockout factors – forbid quick elimination based on non-predictive factors. **Train them not to over-react to:**

- Tattoos \ piercings
- Handshakes
- Any body language issues
- Disabilities
- Voice variations
- Dress
- Eye contact
- Assessing their negativism, energy level, confidence or aggressiveness

Other easy tips for improving on interview results

- **Reduce scheduling issues** – utilize remote live video interviews and offer off-hour interviews
- **OK the answers** – agree in advance on what are the great answers
- **The leader withholds their opinion** – wait until the very end if you want an honest team assessment
- **Diversity referrals** – ask employees to seek them out & reward
- **Online technical assessments** – these skill assessment tools are abundant, cheap and effective
- **Videotape and save** – knowing that the interview can be reviewed later can help to ID and reduce obvious biases
- **Be careful with attitude** – when they know what you want, be prepared for a lot of acting >

Zappos pre-identifies fakers prior to the interview

Because they put such a high value on “authentic” customer service that must be continuous...

They assess your behavior during the shuttle ride



SW Air used a similar approach

Advanced approaches to reduce bias during interviewing

- 1. Pipeline analytics** – use data to identify the high bias areas in the funnel (e.g. HireVue data found that hiring managers get as many as 80% of their assessments wrong)
- 2. Hire them for a project** – night, holiday or weekend hiring can reveal performance & teamwork
- 3. Neuroscience assessment** –science/AI can assess facial expressions on recorded interviews (HireVue)
- 4. Vendors interviews** – trained experts will do the screening for you or substitute a technical skills test (GapJumpers)
- 5. Hiring team software** – use team-oriented software to improve communications (Workable)
- 6. VR simulations** – are the future of assessment

Common bias factors during resume screening

- 7. Alter the voice** – a candidate's **voice tone / pitch, volume, voice inflections and accent** all quickly gain a reaction from our instantly reacting unconscious biases

Possible solutions

- **Voice modulation software** offered by Interviewing.io has the capability of changing or masking voices on phone interviews so that demographic features can't be recognized (managers often resist)
- **Text / Questionnaire interviews** – eliminate voice and visual indicators with these two alternative interview approaches

Job search tips



Apply anyway

Men apply for a job when they meet only **60% of the qualifications**
But women apply only if they **meet 100%** of them (Source: An HP internal report).

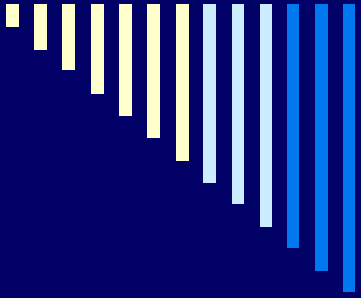
Nearly twice as many women indicated the top reason they didn't apply was because "I was following the guidelines about who should apply" (15% for women compared to 8% for men)



A reminder action checklist

- ☒ Offer unconscious biased training
- ☒ Use a resume assessment scoresheet
- ☒ Mask at least the candidate's name
- ☒ Use structured interviews
- ☒ Use an interview assessment scoresheet
- ☒ Standardize fit assessment
- ☒ Consider online technical assessment
- ☒ Utilize a data-driven approach
- ☒ Benchmark Google (read Work Rules)

Use any remaining time on selling hiring managers on the \$ impacts from changing



Did I make you think?

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