

Types of Bias and Tips to Mitigate

Unconscious bias is one of the most significant barriers to supporting skills-based hiring and diversifying the workforce. It can influence our decision-making based on subconscious factors that are not related to a candidate's skills or qualifications. Since bias influences our actions, sometimes without our knowledge, we must be diligent and intentional during the hiring process to ensure that we are aware of our biases and employ techniques to mitigate those biases. Increased awareness can reduce bias in the hiring and decision-making process, while fostering opportunities for getting a qualified, diverse applicant pool and hiring the best candidate.

Types of Unconscious Bias: Affinity, Confirmation, Halo and Group Think

It is important to learn more about and recognize the different types of biases that exist. When it comes to bias, awareness is key. Awareness allows us to manage our biases and build strong, positive habits.

Affinity Bias – An individual sees themselves in others and favors them because of this. This could be because of shared characteristics – such as class, ethnicity, or geography – or shared interests or hobbies.

Confirmation Bias – The tendency to look for evidence that backs up our initial opinion of someone, while overlooking information that contradicts our view.

Halo Effect – The tendency to think everything about a person is good because you like them.

Group Think – When a group of individuals reaches a consensus without critical reasoning or evaluation of the consequences or alternatives.

Helpful Tips to Reduce Unconscious Bias During the Hiring Process:

- [Take the Unconscious Bias Training – Recruitment, Hiring & Best Practices \(MassAchieve\)](#)
- [Unconscious Bias in Employee Development and Advancement \(MassAchieve\)](#)
- Create inclusive job descriptions and postings by highlighting skills and qualifications
- Assemble an effective and diverse hiring committee
- Do the pre-interview work: Ensure recruitment channels are diverse
- Assess candidates using objective, standardized criteria
- Utilize your hiring team to examine decision-making
- Pause and reflect on techniques to minimize bias throughout your hiring stages
 - P.A.U.S.E. Model for Unconscious Bias¹
 - Pay attention to your own judgements and assessments
 - Acknowledge your assumptions, reactions, and interpretations
 - Understand other perspectives, positions, and viewpoints
 - Seek for empowering and productive techniques for the situation
 - Examine and execute your options and make a decision

¹ Ross, Howard J. Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives. 2014.

Your organization can explore more tips and trainings to be intentional on reducing bias in the hiring process. While there is no way to guarantee that unconscious bias will not enter the hiring process, being intentional about using mitigating measures will lessen the likelihood of unconscious bias. Being cognizant of your inherent biases may assist in broadening your understanding of skills-based hiring, focusing on skills and experience, and hiring a qualified, diverse candidate while not overlooking someone.

Takeaway: Awareness is key to recognizing how our biases may impact our decision-making.