

Culture, Diversity, & Implicit Bias: Avoiding Discrimination and a Hostile Work Environment

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Avoiding Discrimination and a Hostile Work Environment

- The norm is to talk about . . .
 - ✓ Training
 - ✓ Policies
 - ✓ Consistency
 - ✓ Documentation
 - ✓ Termination Checklist

All of That is Important, BUT

- In this day and age, we need to give as much thought about how to go about disciplining an employee or terminating employment, as the case may be, as we do about whether discipline / termination is legal and appropriate
- An employee who feels a positive connection to the organization, who feels respected, is much more likely to take to heart any criticism and is much less likely to bring a legal claim

Benefits of a Respectful Workplace Include:



Improved employee morale, job satisfaction, and teamwork



Lower absenteeism and turnover



Increased productivity



Employees are better equipped to manage conflict collaboratively

How Do We Create a Respectful Workplace?

- Culture
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Leadership

Six Elements Necessary to Cultivate a Great Company Culture

- **Purpose** means connecting employees to your organization's reason for being or the difference you make in the world
- **Opportunity** means providing employees the ability to learn new skills, develop, and contribute
- **Success** means giving employees the opportunity to innovate, do meaningful work, and be on winning teams
- **Appreciation** means acknowledging and recognizing employees' outstanding work and unique contributions
- **Well-being** means paying attention to and constantly working to improve employees' physical, social, emotional, and financial health
- **Leadership** means connecting employees to purpose, empowering them to do great work, and creating a sense of camaraderie

Diversity vs. Inclusion

An employer can have a **diverse** workplace without having an **inclusive** culture.



<https://www.bounteous.com/insights/2019/06/04/invite-invigorate-inspire-culture-diversity-and-inclusion/>

The Numbers

Over half of U.S. employees say their company should do more to increase diversity and inclusion

- **60%+** of millennials say their employer should do more

The Numbers

- **61%** of employees have experienced or witnessed discrimination based on age, race, gender or LGBTQ identity in the workplace
- **1,000,000+:** The number of discrimination complaints that have been filed with the EEOC since 2010 (most common: retaliation, racial discrimination, and sex discrimination)

The Washington Post; Glassdoor; The Harris Poll

Implicit Bias

- To have a truly diverse and inclusive workforce, a business needs to have a better understanding about how implicit bias is potentially impacting the organization
- We live in a time where we quickly put people in boxes

20 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT SCREW UP YOUR DECISIONS

1. Anchoring bias.

People are **over-reliant** on the first piece of information they hear. It's a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person's mind.



2. Availability heuristic.

People **overestimate** the importance of information that is available to them. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to 100 and smoked three packs a day.



3. Bandwagon effect.

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of **groupthink** and is reason why meetings are often unproductive.



4. Blind-spot bias.

Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.



5. Choice-supportive bias.

When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that **choice has flaws**. Like how you think your dog is awesome – even if it bites people every once in a while.



6. Clustering illusion.

This is the tendency to see **patterns in random events**. It is key to various gambling fallacies, like the idea that red is more or less likely to turn up on a roulette table after a string of reds.



7. Confirmation bias.

We tend to listen only to information that confirms our **preconceptions** – one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.



8. Conservatism bias.

When people favor prior evidence over new evidence of information that has emerged. People were **slow to accept** that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that the planet was flat.



9. Information bias.

The tendency to **seek information** when it **does not affect action**. More information is not always better. With less information, people can often make more accurate predictions.



10. Ostrich effect.

The decision to **ignore dangerous or negative information** by "burying" one's head in the sand, like an ostrich. Research suggests that investors check the value of their holdings significantly less often during bad markets.



11. Outcome bias.

Judging a decision based on the **outcome** – rather than how exactly the decision was made in the moment. Just because you won a lot in Vegas doesn't mean gambling your money was a smart decision.



12. Overconfidence.

Some of us are **too confident** about our abilities, and this causes us to take greater risks in our daily lives. Experts are more prone to this bias than laypeople, since they are more convinced that they are right.



13. Placebo effect.

When **simply believing** that something will have a certain effect on you causes it to have that effect. In medicine, people given fake pills often experience the same physiological effects as people given the real thing.



14. Pro-innovation bias.

When a proponent of an **innovation** tends to **overvalue its usefulness** and undervalue its limitations. Sound familiar, Silicon Valley?



15. Recency.

The tendency to weigh the **latest information** more heavily than older data. Investors often think the market will always look the way it looks today and make unwise decisions.



16. Salience.

Our tendency to focus on the **most easily recognizable features** of a person or concept. When you think about dying, you might worry about being maulled by a lion, as opposed to what is statistically more likely, like dying in a car accident.



17. Selective perception.

Allowing our expectations to **influence how we perceive** the world. An experiment involving a football game between students from two universities showed that one team saw the opposing team commit more infractions.



18. Stereotyping.

Expecting a group or person to have certain qualities without having real information about the person. It allows us to quickly identify strangers as friends or enemies, but people tend to **oversee and abuse it**.



19. Survivorship bias.

An error that comes from focusing only on **surviving examples**, causing us to **mishandle a situation**. For instance, we might think that being an entrepreneur is easy because we haven't heard of all those who failed.



20. Zero-risk bias.

Sociologists have found that we **love certainty** – even if it's counterproductive. Eliminating risk entirely means there is no chance of harm being caused.



What is Implicit Bias?

- The unconscious association of stereotypes with particular groups
- In no way related to a person's intelligence, cognitive ability, or other personality traits
- People may act on the basis of stereotypes or prejudice without meaning to do so

Identifying & Interrupting Implicit Bias

- *Seven Powerful Bias Interrupters*
 - Give evidence
 - Benefit of the doubt
 - Waiver of objective rules/consistency
 - Likeability, modesty, deference
 - Assumptions regarding parents and what they are able to do
 - “Culture Fit”; “Executive Presence” – What does that mean?
 - Honest feedback
 - Notice
 - Opportunity to correct

Building a Respectful & Inclusive Workplace

RACE
GENDER
CULTURE
RELIGION
ETHNICITY
LANGUAGE
EDUCATION
NATIONALITY
GENDER IDENTITY
PHYSICAL ABILITIES
SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Challenges to Creating a Respectful Workplace

Getting used to differences

Coordinating work styles

Learning to communicate

Developing flexibility

Adapting to change

Manager's Role in Creating a Respectful Workplace

- ✓ Set clear expectations of behavior
- ✓ Be a positive role model
- ✓ Create a positive work environment
- ✓ Make it how you do business
- ✓ Push back on disrespectful behaviors
- ✓ Maintain open communication

How To Demonstrate Mutual Respect in the Workplace

Listen to your employees

Act on your employees' suggestions

Give timely praise on a job well done

Share company mission, vision, goals and objectives

Learn about your employees' professional and personal goals

Celebrate workplace milestones

Tips for Creating a Respectful Workplace

- Respect Differences
- Never Assume
- Encourage Teamwork
- Use the Variety of Experiences Among Coworkers
- Learn – *and use* – Acceptable Terms
- Treat Genders Equally
- Avoid Sexist Comments
- Show Interest in Coworkers
- Learn Names and Use Them Frequently
- Look at Coworkers' Abilities – Not Disabilities

By Way of Example, Phrases to be Mindful of . . .

- No offense, but. . .
- Don't be such a prude
- That was a ballsy move
- Wearing the pants
- Don't worry your pretty little head
- It's not a big deal
- Someone is whipped
- Why do all (men/women) . . .
- Grow a pair
- Boys will be boys
- It was just a joke
- Smile
- Working mom (versus working parent)
- When will you take time to start a family?
- For a woman/man you are a great . . .
- Office mom
- It's time to man up
- Are you sure you can handle this?
- "Debbie Downer" or "Negative Nancy"

Leadership

#1 Practice the qualities of leadership

#2 Create a culture of appreciation and respect

#3 Combat Defensiveness

- Doing so will give you credibility when you need to have a difficult conversation with your employees

Qualities of Leadership

- 1) Passion** (You really care about what you are doing)
- 2) Humility** (You are not perfect either)
- 3) Curiosity** (You do not know everything)

Some Examples

- Acknowledging you need their help
- Focusing on solving problems and not placing blame
- Admitting when you are wrong
- Employees feel that their opinions count

Culture of Appreciation and Respect

- Regularly express appreciation, gratitude, and respect for your employees
- Appreciation is different from Recognition
 - **Recognition** is an event – e.g. an award for 10 years of service
 - **Appreciation** – ongoing acknowledgement that we are glad you are here
- The Ten Pennies . . .

Defensiveness

- We all tend to become defensive – it is human nature – when we feel attacked or threatened
- People do not like criticism especially when coupled with a sense of contempt
- Employees tend to react when they are defensive by blaming, minimizing, shifting focus, or shutting down

Combating Defensiveness

- Have compassion
- Genuinely listen and be curious (about their experience and feelings)
- Use “I” or “we” statements, as opposed to “you” statements
- Do not label the person or pass judgment
- Refrain from becoming defensive yourself
- Shift the discussion to finding a resolution
- Do not hesitate to take a break (without blaming the other person)

Perception vs. Intention

- Need to take into account co-workers' personal history
 - Affects how they perceive each situation
 - “Triggers” can cause well intended behavior to become unwelcome

Perception vs. Intention

- Some gauges to measure whether your own conduct is consistent with the law and your organization's policies:
 - Would you want your spouse, partner, child, or parent to be subjected to the same type of behavior?
 - Would you be willing to engage in the same conduct in front of a family member?
 - Would you be embarrassed to tell the same story in a courtroom in front of a judge and jury?