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Interview Biases and How to Eliminate Them





33% of employers state that it takes them a mere **90 seconds** into an interview to determine if they will hire the candidate or not

Whether you work in HR or not, almost all managers become interviewers at some point in their careers. While we all like to believe that we're good at being objective in selecting candidates during the interview, most of us actually form unconscious biases upon meeting potential candidates during interviews. Biases are predetermined impressions and beliefs that we assign to candidates unconsciously which can ultimately alter our hiring decisions. So what are the most common interview biases and how to avoid each one of them?

COMMON INTERVIEW BIASES

BIAS #1

First Impression Bias

We often hear that *first impressions* are lasting. This is true as most interviewers use it as a differentiating factor when selecting candidates. During the interview, judgments are being made on both your appearance and behavior. From the way candidates shake hands and the way they are dressed to the way they talk

and behave. You would be surprised how often recruiters rely on first impressions as opposed to the facts of the interview. Since candidates try to show the best versions of themselves during the interview, first impressions become unreliable when it comes to selecting the best hires.



PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID,
PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU DID,
BUT PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET
HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

- Maya Angelou

BIAS #2 The Horns and Halo Effects

The *Horns Effect* happens when we form a quick negative judgement about the person based on one characteristic that we don't like. As a result, we start to see their other behaviors, personality and answers in a negative light. The problem with Horns Effect is that it has nothing to do with the actual ability of the person to do the job.

Halo Effect happens when you identify one good positive fact about the candidate during the interview, overshadowing everything else that they say or do while being lenient when evaluating their responses. This can result in hiring people that you perceive to be exactly like you.



BIAS #3 Negative Emphasis

Research has actually revealed that interviewers give negative information twice the weight of favorable information. *Negative emphasis* bias happens when you reject a candidate based on a small piece of negative

information that a candidate chose to reveal about themselves during the interview. Negative emphasis can also be the result of other factors such as nonverbal communication, dress code or even silence.



BIAS #4 Cultural Noise

Promoting diversity in the workplace is a very common practice in today's business world; however, recruiters are facing difficulties in the interview room in how to recruit their international staff due to a bias called "Cultural Noise".

Cultural Noise refers to the barriers of successful communication between people of different cultures including differences in language, values,

non-verbal cues, manners, gender, time and many others.

For example maintaining eye contact is considered a sign of confidence in Europe. However, if a Chinese candidate is being interviewed and maintains no eye contact, does this mean that he/she must be disqualified? The answer should be "No", because in China it is considered rude to maintain strong eye contact.



HOW TO RESOLVE INTERVIEW BIASES?

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

You need to understand what interview biases are and how they can negatively affect your decision. Look into providing employees with education and training on the topic.

USE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

An informed decision is always a better decision, that's why you need to incorporate pre and post-hiring assessment solutions such as Testello so you can get solid information about your potential candidates in a more informed and quantifiable manner!

Try Testello Now: www.testello.com

GO BLIND FOR THE RÉSUMÉ REVIEW

Blind CV evaluations are the ideal solution for unconscious biases. The HR Department can send the concerned manager a list of filtered out candidate profiles with deleted names and gender-related info.

REWORK YOUR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Make your job descriptions more neutral and gender inclusive by removing words that might imply that you're seeking a male candidate such as "Competitive", "Aggressive".

STANDARDIZE INTERVIEWS

The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interview is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This will help you evaluate the specific needs of the job they are applying for without bias.

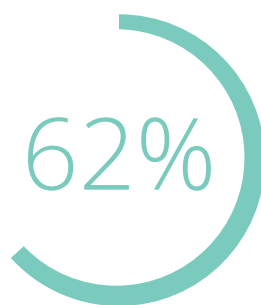
SET DIVERSITY GOALS

Set diversity and inclusion goals that you can work towards and communicate those goals in a clear manner. Make sure that those goals are quantifiable and don't forget to track progress.

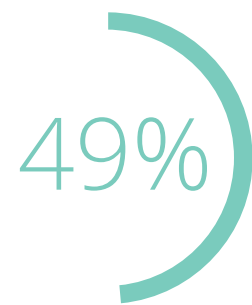
Top Reasons Companies Focus on Diversity



to improve culture



to improve company performance



to better represent customers



THINGS TO REMEMBER

DO

- ✓ Experiment with different wording in your job descriptions by removing gender-biased adjectives.
- ✓ Administer a work sample test to compare applicants as it's an effective indication of future job performance.
- ✓ Keep your personal feelings about a particular candidate in check by quantifying likability by giving it a numerical score.

DON'T

- ✗ Conduct unstructured, random interviews. Standardize the process by giving candidates the same set of questions.
- ✗ Allow demographic characteristics to blind your judgment when assessing the CV. Use a program that hides such information to level the playing field.
- ✗ Forget to set diversity goals. Track how you're doing and make sure that all of your managers are on board.

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