



Mitigating Bias Training Hiring Case Study Reflection Guide

In this exercise, we will explore how the five common hiring biases show up in hiring processes and how we might use our strategies to disrupt bias.

Five Common Hiring Biases
<p>AFFINITY BIAS: This is when we favor people who share interests, experiences, or backgrounds with ourselves. "She went to the same school as me, she looks great!"</p>
<p>CONFIRMATION AND OVERCONFIDENCE BIAS: This is when we make an initial decision about a candidate based on the headlines or subtle cues from someone's resume or the first impressions of their interview, then to spend the rest of our time with their materials or with them, confirming those initial impressions. "She was at xyz organization, so I don't think she's going to fit into our culture. Yup, everything she's saying shows me how much she just won't fit."</p>
<p>BANDWAGON BIAS: This is when we're adjusting our own critique of candidates based on what we hear other people saying. Power dynamics play a significant role in bandwagon bias, since we may not want to express an opinion different from someone who may have more positional power or social power than ourselves. "Well, I thought I liked them, but after hearing what my boss said, I'm going to change my response."</p>
<p>CONTRAST BIAS: This is when we assess candidates against each other instead of assessing each candidate against the job criteria. While we review candidates side by side when making decisions, we want to evaluate each candidate on their own merits first. "I can't even consider the second candidate because I really fell in love with the first one."</p>
<p>HORN OR HALO EFFECT: This is when we allow one trait to overshadow everything else, either positively (halo) or negatively (horns). "This candidate has worked with our donor before, so they will be able to hit the ground running. That really makes them more qualified than anyone else."</p>

Four Mitigating Bias Strategies
<p>Group & Self Reflection & Accountability: Identify interviewer & org biases in advance; determine how you will interrupt; hold each other to addressing them when they show up</p>
<p>Utilize Core Competencies to Evaluate & Make Decisions: Clearly define qualifications so that evidence can be gathered to support demonstration of them; ensure interviewers focus on these in all interview evaluations and decision making conversations</p>



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Consistency & Transparency of Process & Information for all Candidates:
Ensure the interview process is clearly laid out, communicated, and followed consistently for every candidate. Avoid skipping steps or modifying for individual candidates.

Equity Practices & Tactics Known to Interrupt Bias Throughout:
For optimal outcome, ensure equity centered practices are used in recruitment efforts, interview design and decision making so that tactics for mitigating bias are not done in a vacuum

Please review the following scenario, as you review, highlight, and note where you see one of the five key hiring biases listed above. You can highlight by scrolling over the text, going to the Insert menu, and selecting “Add Comment” to capture what type of bias the text represents. You’ll note we mention the social identity of the people described in these scenarios. Being aware of social identities is an important step to being able to disrupt practices that lead to inequitable outcomes. We mention social identity to provide an opportunity to increase your awareness of identity and the patterns that show up connected to different identities.

HIRING SCENARIO

Laurence, a White, 32 year old man, is a senior leader at a tech consulting firm. Laurence is committed to the consulting firm’s diversity pledge and helped write the organizational statement of solidarity with Black staff back in summer 2020. The firm’s long term diversity goal is that the firm have similar demographics of the general population of the US. Laurence would love to have more Black, Indigenous, Latine, and female candidates in the pool but there seems to be a pipeline problem. The recruiters just can’t find many viable candidates of color nor female candidates.

Laurence has been a hiring manager for the last two years, and he’s starting to notice some patterns about what candidates will sink or swim at his firm. The tech consulting firm Laurence works for uses a particular framework that was developed by a team at Facebook, where Laurence worked before joining the firm. Many of the most successful tech companies Laurence’s company works with use that framework. Based on his experience working with his current team, Laurence has come to the conclusion that those who are most successful come from the team at Facebook that developed the framework. The team at Facebook looks much like other teams at Facebook, 47% Asian, 5% Black, 7% [Latine](#), 4% multiracial, unknown % Indigenous, and 39% White and 37% female and 63% male (See [Facebook’s 2022 Diversity Report](#)).

Laurence is recruiting for an open role on his team, and the hiring committee that includes Laurence and 3 of his direct reports, Thomas, a White 29 year old man, Keith, a White 35 year old man, and Rebecca, a 26 year old Black woman.



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There are two candidates who have made it through the final round of the interview process and the hiring committee is meeting to discuss next steps. Laurence is most excited about the candidate Peter, a White 31 year old man who is a rising star on Laurence's old Facebook team. Laurence never worked with Peter directly but their experiences are so similar - they went to the same college and grew up in the same part of the country - that Laurence feels like he knows Peter will shine in the open role. During his 1:1 phone interview with Peter, Peter's answers were so strong that Laurence actually cut the interview short and fast tracked Peter in the process. Peter skipped one of the steps in the process and went directly to the final interview panel with a cross-section of the team.

The second candidate who has finished all the steps of the process is Maria, a Black 31 year old woman. Maria has scored well on the rubrics the Talent Acquisition team has created for the role in all the stages of the process. Laurence has his doubts. Maria has never worked at Facebook. While Maria seemed to demonstrate the competencies for the role, the only way Laurence would know for sure if Maria demonstrated the competencies would be if she'd worked on his old team at Facebook.

The hiring committee meets to discuss the two candidates. Laurence asks the committee what they think of the two candidates. Rebecca shares that she thinks Maria is really strong based on how the interviewers assessed her with the rubrics. Rebecca mentions she's not sure about Peter because they don't have the same amount of evidence, since Laurence didn't fill out the interview guide. The evidence was mixed from the interview panel in the final round interview.

Laurence shares that he's confident that Peter can do the role because of his experience so he didn't think filling out the interview guide and rubric was necessary. "Given where Peter went to school and his experience at Facebook I know he can do the work. His experience is more aligned than Maria's is."

Rebecca responds, "But Maria scored so well in every step of the interview process. What makes you think she wouldn't be a good fit for the role?"

Laurence says, "I don't know, I just don't have a strong feeling about Maria. If we wanted to continue to consider her, I think we'd need to have her come in for another interview and do a project. But I don't think we need to do that when we have a strong candidate ready to go in Peter. I think we should go with him. We know he can do the work. And I think we should move fast to snap him up. Peter is an excellent candidate." Thomas and Keith nod in agreement.

Rebecca says, "You've convinced me Laurence. I know you have seen lots of evidence that folks from the Facebook team can be successful. I agree, too."

Laurence takes a final vote and the hiring committee decides to extend an offer to Peter for the open role.



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What do you notice when you read this scenario?	
Where do you see the common hiring biases (i.e., Affinity Bias, Confirmation & Overconfidence Bias, Bandwagon Bias, Contrast Bias, Halo/Horns Effect Bias) in the scenario above?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Affinity Bias:● Confirmation & Overconfidence Bias:● Bandwagon Bias:● Contrast Bias:● Halo/Horns Effect Bias:
How might Laurence and the hiring Committee use the tool "Group & Self Reflection & Accountability" to mitigate bias in this scenario?	
How might Laurence and the hiring Committee use the tool "Core Competencies to Evaluate & Make Decisions" to mitigate bias in this scenario?	
How might Laurence and the hiring Committee use the tool "Consistency & Transparency of Process & Information for all Candidates" to mitigate bias in this scenario?	
How might Laurence and the hiring Committee use the tool "Equity Practices & Tactics Known to Interrupt Bias Throughout" to mitigate bias in this scenario?	