

## Recruitment and Selection: Bias Control

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The last few years have seen an increase in movements supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Major organisations, social media and news outlets across the globe have been pushing the diversity agenda. Despite all efforts, there is still room for improvement in most organisations. Policies and organisational systems are yet to adjust to the inclusivity idea. The key driver for a diverse and inclusive workplace begins with the recruitment process. This process is prone to unconscious bias.

Unconscious bias arises from associations made throughout our lives; this influences our judgment of particular personalities, gender, physical appearance or even age. Most people believe they are ethical and good decision-makers however research shows “most of us fall woefully short of our inflated self-perception.” Our Unconscious biases affect who we shortlist, how we interview them, who select and the reasons behind the selection. The first step in avoiding unconscious bias is through making the unconscious, conscious.

### Types of Biases

#### Confirmation Bias

In the early stages of recruitment, most recruiters make quick decisions based on perceived truths and then spend the rest of the recruitment process trying to justify already made decisions. The decisions to select a candidate is most often made within the first 10 minutes of an interview through first impressions, which may either greatly lessen or increase a candidate’s chances of being hired despite their competency.

#### Similarity Bias

Humans are naturally inclined to feeling more comfortable surrounded by people with shared similarities. This is maybe in terms of personality, social status or ethnic group. It is no different in the workplace; recruiters tend to hire people they feel are more likely fit into the work culture or who share more similarities with them.

#### Conformity Bias

The conformity bias, based on a famous study, the Asch Experiment illustrated the effects of group peer pressure and the fear of being ‘the odd one out’. If for example 4 out of 5 of the individuals on the interview panel agree on something on an particular candidate, it is highly unlikely that the fifth interviewee will go against the group.

We all have our own beliefs and assumptions, which result in associating certain characteristics with certain groups and it takes less than a second to make a decision based on our unconscious biases. We reshape the facts to justify what our unconscious has already decided. Through this unfair sifting process, we disregard the real talent, the people who could bring more creativity, innovation and better value to organisations.

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