

How to Reduce Hiring Bias in Six Steps



As humans, we all carry biases, many of which we don't even notice. Here's how to avoid letting your HR team's preconceived feelings and thoughts influence hiring decisions and processes.



Step One: Listen, Learn, and Understand

It's important that everyone involved in workforce management understand what hiring prejudices are and how they influence the choices we make. Take time to educate yourself and your staff about bias. Commit time and resources to training sessions and materials that offer critical insight. Make the issue of bias top of mind and keep it there. Awareness is the first step toward understanding old habits and patterns. It can start the internal conversation that leads to change.

Step Two: Rewrite Your Job Descriptions

Words matter. And in every job listing, the words you choose communicate your organization's values and, yes, its prejudices. Words also determine who will apply to each job.

So, it's time to appraise how you talk. Review your boilerplate copy as well as the content you submit for each job opening. Look for masculine terms, even subtle ones that imply your work environment is "hotly competitive" or "extremely determined." Likewise, be sensitive to copy that places heavy emphasis on "cooperation" and "collaboration" since that tends to draw more female applications.

You can completely eliminate gendered words—or those that seem gendered—or strike a balance by evenly distributing words that feel masculine with those that feel feminine.

Step Three: Be Blind

Personal bias can be triggered by an applicant's name, gender, or address. When you're looking for top talent—and that means diverse talent—level the playing field by using a blind, systematic process for reviewing applications and resumes.

You can do this with software that filters applicants by qualifications and experience. Or by simply training your team to ignore applicants' names, addresses, and other data that could prejudice their decision making.



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Step Four: Test Everyone

To avoid judging people based on who they are, evaluate them on how they'd do. Create a job performance test that asks each candidate to solve work-based problems that fit the available position. A test not only reveals important details on how the prospective employee will handle the job; it forces you and your staff to critique them on that basis, rather than on appearance, gender, age, or ethnicity.

Step 5: Make Every Interview the Same

While some HR professors still prefer a get-to-know-you, conversational approach, research shows structured interviews are better predictors of on-the-job success.

They also help minimize bias by focusing your questions on the issues that directly impact performance.

So, create a template that standardizes the process. Consider using an interview scorecard that grades each candidate's responses based on an agreed-upon scale. Then use the results as a data point in your overall evaluation.

Step 6: Set Goals. And Reach for Them

It can be challenging and controversial, but the best way to conquer bias is to put it front and center in your organization. So set goals for diversity and inclusion. And as you hire new people based on those goals, evaluate how well you do. This will put a spotlight on the importance you place on such issues. And it will lead to a stronger workplace in the process.

The experts at EG Workforce Solutions are ready to share more ideas, feedback, and support to help you reduce bias in your hiring practices

About EG Workforce Solutions

We've been in this business for decades and have developed a deep network of professional connections. Whether they're companies looking for talent, job seekers looking for work, or an up-and-coming store in need of some temporary help, we know the right people to bridge the gap between the hiring and the hired. But what's more, we get to know people. From employers hiring to candidates looking, we take the time to listen and learn. We hear your likes, talents, and needs. We gain an understanding, and with it, we're able to facilitate lasting relationships between businesses and people.



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