**4 Types of Biases and How They are Influencing your Hiring Decisions**

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Hiring the best talent is one of the most important aspects of any business but if you ask anyone, it isn’t very easy. Diversity in hiring and employment allows for the development of a robust, well-rounded team that can perform better under pressure and in different circumstances. At a Diversity in Leadership conference hosted by EY and RBC, [Dr. Mzhzarin Banaji](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~banaji/index.html), Harvard University professor of social ethics and co-author of Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People, further explains that diversity builds the path for dynamic problem-solving, and better decision-making, resulting in a better success rate overall.

In most cases, even while HR managers and CEOs adopt and implement programs that they believe to be free of bias, they still fall short of addressing unconscious biases. Dr. Banaji, explains that “discrimination is veiled, not explicit, but rather more implicit, unconscious, because we ourselves are unaware of it”.

To build a high-performing organization, leaders have to identify and implement ways to reduce – and eliminate interviewing and recruiting biases.

Let’s first identify the **4 main types of biases and how they influence interviewer’s decision-making skills**:

* + **Confirmation Bias** – This is when people create a hypothesis in their minds and look for ways to prove it. It is the innate tendency to seek out confirmation of our preconceived beliefs. For example, when an interviewer forms a distinct opinion about a candidate based on a minute piece of information such as the college they attended, before the actual interview, he or she is succumbing to confirmation bias. Great candidates may not make it to the interview or be perceived as less competent than others because of these assumptions. Organizations may decrease their chances of hiring great candidates due to interviewing confirmation bias.

* + **Effective Heuristic** – The term might be a bit technical but the meaning behind it is simple. This happens when an individual judges someone’s job suitability by superficial factors such as visible tattoos or personal body weight standards. An interviewer may make decisions based on one-dimensional characteristics and not important ones such as problem-solving skills. ERE pointed out alarming biases found in HR professionals by German researchers. The study showed that participants underestimated the ability of obese individuals to achieve supervisory positions while the ability of ‘normal-weight’ individuals was overestimated. Biases like this not only make companies susceptible to legal ramifications but also decrease the potential to add great hires to their workforce.

* + **Expectation Anchor** – This is when an interviewer bypasses proper investigation of a candidate’s background and relies on frivolous expectation anchors whereby favoritism of a candidate occurs. The interviewer believes that the candidate is more suitable for the job than others, which puts a mental block on the interviewer during subsequent interviews. In this case, the expectations of an interviewer are higher for this particular candidate. The person is perceived to be better than others – when that might not really be the case!
	+ **Intuition** – When an interviewer makes a judgment on the basis of his or her “sixth sense”, he is intuitively selecting a candidate or in other words, intuitively rejecting all other candidates. This may happen because not all of the information about the candidate is readily available on-hand. Unfortunately, these assumptions depend on the emotion, intellect and individual makeup of the person taking the interview.

So, why is it important for companies to reduce or eliminate biases from their interviewing process? Although it is obvious for Equal Employment Opportunity compliance requirements and corporate ethics policies, more importantly, it is the opportunity to increase diversity in the workplace.

It is natural to show a preference for people that share similarities and reject people with characteristics that we are unfamiliar with. So, the first thing to do is to get familiar with unknown experiences, cultures, and people.

Hiring managers and recruiters have to reevaluate their recruiting programs and wean out hidden biases. That is where [video interviewing solutions](http://www.wepow.com/features/) come in. Imagine being able to analyze candidates beyond their resumes, before they come in for an in-person interview. You will be able to detect their soft-skills early on and make hiring decisions based on hard evidence, not on biases. Pre-recorded video interviewing creates consistency and transparency, which holds hiring managers and recruiters accountable for their possible discriminatory behavior- and hopefully eliminates it.