

6 Types of Unconscious Bias

to Avoid When Recruiting

Unconscious biases are mental blind spots that shape our decisions based on social stereotypes. Recognising and guarding against them allows us to recruit employees fairly and build the best team for our businesses.



Here are 6 common types of unconscious bias that may impact decision-making when hiring, and ways to overcome them to strengthen your ability to make fairer and more informed decisions during recruitment:

1 Affinity Bias



WHAT IT IS: Preferring individuals similar to you, e.g. in personality or educational background

WHAT TO DO: Actively note such similarities you share with these individuals and make it a point to examine if they possess true merit

2 Conformity Bias



WHAT IT IS: When your views are swayed too much by those of others, e.g. agreeing with the majority of the interview panel even if your original opinion differed

WHAT TO DO: Make it a point to voice out your opinions and views – they may actually draw attention to facts about the candidate that others may have missed out

3 Confirmation Bias



WHAT IT IS: Actively looking out for information to confirm possibly erroneous beliefs based on stereotypes or past incidents

WHAT TO DO: Ground your assessment of individuals on the basis of facts and merit, e.g. skills, experience or ability to perform the job

4 Attribution Bias



WHAT IT IS: Jumping to conclusions regarding the cause of a negative trait or behaviour, e.g. a candidate arriving late for the interview implies he/she is tardy

WHAT TO DO: Avoid making assumptions, always give the benefit of the doubt and ask clarifying questions

5 Halo Effect



WHAT IT IS: Focusing on one particularly positive feature about the individual which skews any opinions of other aspects, e.g. favouring a candidate from a renowned school or company

WHAT TO DO: Consider how candidates with such positive traits compare in terms of skills, experience and ability to perform the job

6 Horns Effect



WHAT IT IS: Opposite of the Halo Effect; focusing on one particularly negative feature about the individual, which clouds your view of their other qualities

WHAT TO DO: Consciously avoid concentrating on aspects you personally dislike, that have no impact on the candidate's ability to perform the job