

DEI: Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Abstract:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are three closely linked values being implemented by organizations with various levels of success to be supportive of different groups of individuals. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that DEI not only strengthens organizations but also improves their ability to respond to challenges, win top talent and meet the needs of different customer bases. However, unconscious bias occurs every day in the workplace, impacting both output and collaboration. In this roundtable, we aim to share our experiences, challenges, and successes with DEI: unconscious bias in the workplace (our industry). In addition, we will discuss potential strategies to combat unconscious bias in the workplace.

September 25, 2023

Facilitator: Jackie Shainis

Scribe: Vaidehi Bhagat

Notes:

Diversity in hiring, how has DEI impacted how hiring has been done? Anything to mitigate?

Follow-up Question: In the academic world, liberal arts are under attack from legislature (Florida has budget stripped) - What can people in academia say as “the industry wants” versus the people in government who are restricting

Typically when someone works for a company and applies internally they get an advantage, which doesn't provide outside perspective but money spent on trainings can be decreased if someone is hired internally

Can make people feel singled out based on DEI and not like they were accepted on merit but because it's pushing DEI

In industry all activities are together and even if there is a DEI program, the acceptance requirements are the same

Mitigate by:

- Removing names from resumes to eliminate bias especially when similar resumes are compared
- Clear company goals and standards to help discourage stereotyping and bias
 - Unconscious bias trainings are very important and pushed across the board - required

- Resource groups within the company and outside of the company ex. Women in STEM
- Company has DEI programs that are company endorsed that promote discussions and engagement at every level (sponsored HHs, collaborations with high schools, and underrepresented communities). Podcasts to give employees a platform to share/discuss experiences.
- Include DEI in yearly goals that are a part of performance review
- Work with PBRG - people in business resource representative groups (Hispanic Americans, black Americans, Asian Americans, etc)

How do we ensure all are welcome in our work environment and culture? Do you feel your team has adapted to be inclusive?

- Metric wise HR can know if you're diverse
- Giving people the chance to speak their opinion - asking people their opinions during meetings and collaborations and push leadership to ask those questions and encourage other managers to as well
- Mystery coffee - meet new people from the company and gain greater scope and perspective of the company and employees
- Skip level meetings - meet with people above your level to answer/ask questions about career development, company policies, etc
- There might be unconscious bias within levels (willing to hear people at the director level but not associate) - try to listen and engage with people at all levels

What kind of workplace decisions can be impacted by unconscious bias?

- Education can impact unconscious bias
- Salary levels misalignment with current employees and new hires
- Being more vocal about what you want and can't necessarily expect promotions or opportunities with just hard work
 - Present more
 - Learn to advocate for yourself
- Create transparency for salaries
 - Europe and now NYC, legally need to post salaries
- Sharing resources for promotions - having comparisons available so people can see what they need to do to move up and develop their career
- Speak up culture - asking leadership to share information if it's not available and promote an environment where this type of information is open to everyone
- Offering transparency to groups you know are not fully in the know

Decisions to hire international students or those who may need a work visa are heavily impacted

- First question when applying for a job is do you need a sponsor or work visa, which leads to automatic rejection
- OPT or CPT - optional training - companies will not need to pay additional ~\$40,000 to hire you because the university or government can support the trainings (H1B allow you to work up to 6 years and apply for green card)
 - Many people are not aware of this option
- Applications should include a sub question to clarify on sponsorship questions so
- international candidates are not excluded before their resume even reaches hiring managers

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Scribe: Alanna Broszeit, Regeneron

Facilitator: Jacquelyne Shainis, Pfizer

Notes:

Examples of unconscious bias in the workplace:

There is unconscious bias leading to unequal salary: Perhaps initially the salaries of employees are equal, then due to unconscious bias related to race, gender, sexual orientation, etc raises and bonuses are not given equally. The “rungs of the ladder are greased”.

Additionally, promotions are another area where unconscious bias can be observed. Each level of calibration during the promotion process can introduce new people with their unique unconscious biases. Promotions are often given to those with a high degree of visibility, and those opportunities may be limited to marginalized people. Finally, marginalized people may experience less of a sense of safety than non-marginalized people. This can lead to detachment and a loss of productivity in the workplace. While this is unrelated to unconscious bias, it should still be considered by management when supporting a direct report’s career development.

Some other thoughts about DEI in pharma:

DEI as a catch phrase seems to be overused and should be used with more caution. Companies, management, and people should show by their actions that they align with DEI principles and practices. These days it seems like DEI is a box for companies to check or to back track in case of bad press. However, no matter what the initial motivation, DEI training and resources are helpful to everyone.

Colleagues are grateful that there is a DEI table this year at CE-Pharm. The DEI table wasn’t as popular as the other tables, and seemed to be less visited by Chairpersons and other tenured colleagues at CE-Pharm. Perhaps in the future, support of DEI in CE-Pharm can be showcased and encouraged and additional opportunities given.