

Roundtable Discussions Session 2 - Table 13: DE&I and Unconscious Bias

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Abstract:

Your employees make hundreds of decisions every day. Many of those decisions are informed by unconscious bias. Unconscious biases, or implicit biases, are attitudes that are held subconsciously and affect the way individuals feel and think about others around them. Subconscious attitudes can be very ingrained and impact the emotional and rational responses of individuals in everyday situations. During this roundtable discussion, we will explore these subconscious beliefs and ways to overcome them in the workplace.

Discussion Notes:

- Introductions and group members' experience with DEI
- A variety in levels of involvement in DEI, bringing diverse perspectives to the conversation
- All members believed in the importance of DEI, and brought to the forefront the different nuances of DEI and the part that unconscious bias plays

Unconscious Bias and DEI

- We all have unconscious bias
- Unconscious bias is a survival mechanism
- Achieving diversity is an "easier" feat, but achieving inclusivity is more nuanced and difficult due to unconscious and conscious biases
- DEI in the workplace

Positive DEI experiences some have experienced in the workplace

- Intentionally acknowledging and promoting diversity, including women and POC
- Encouraging inclusion and idea sharing at all levels
- Having peers/colleagues who are willing to call you out privately with well intent when something potentially offensive is said to give you the chance to self-correct
- Challenges with DEI in organizations
- Navigating DEI globally, understanding international culture norms and implications
- Need for more inclusivity at all levels whether that be meetings, decision making, information sharing, etc.
- Subliminal and covert mistreatment in the workplace, which is harder to identify
- Promoting psychological safety and speaking up without repercussions
- Unconscious bias is difficult to recognize in oneself
- Leaders not having thorough DEI education and training
- Some companies would rather remain neutral in DEI issues
- Lack of DEI resources within organizations
- DEI and culture initiatives that are promoted by company leadership but then don't trickle down past middle management

Calls to Action

Leadership:

- DEI and unconscious bias training and education to equip company leaders to make intentional decisions that enable DEI in the workplace
- Holding middle management (and all levels in general) accountable for upholding DEI and culture practices
- Provide the proper tools for upper and middle management

All:

- DEI training and education for all, to familiarize everyone with DEI and its significance
- Emphasizing the harm of the bystander effect, creating an environment of speaking up and encouraging others to do so
- Fostering an understanding of how to recognize and address bullying unwanted behavior
- Resources for all employees for further DEI learning

Always keep learning, no matter the background, level of experience, those who stay curious and open to learn are those who embrace the evolution of what DEI looks like