

Seeking a New Career or Advancement

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Preparing Your Resume

Job Searching and Professional Networking

Interviewing

On the Job

Diversity and Inclusion

In the simplest terms, diversity means something that is different from the norm. Diversity in the workplace represents how organizations and their employees connect, engage, and respect people across all types of differences. More companies are beginning to emphasize their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) metrics as a way to stand out from their competitors. Companies with good DEI metrics tend to have higher employee retention rates, more satisfied employees, and increased innovation.

Diversity starts at the very top with a company’s executive leadership. Examine the leadership at the company you want to work for. The people working at the executive level is typically a good indicator of how diverse and well-represented their employees are as well. If a company’s executive leadership does not embrace diversity, the employees will experience greater difficulties in creating and maintaining that culture. Some questions to ask yourself as you are conducting research on companies:

- Does the company share their progress openly?
- Do they provide education and training opportunities to learn more about DEI and how people in the workplace are impacted?

There are several ways to assess whether or not a company practices diversity and inclusion. Here are a few resources to explore and gain better insights on the company:

- The company’s website. Assess their core values, history, mission statement, and keywords. See if their website includes any photographs of their employees.
- Their social media page(s). What kind of pictures and content do they post publicly? Check for photos of their employees, community outings, whether or not they recognize or celebrate various events or historical moments such as pride month, black history month, or world mental health day as a couple examples.
- Interview former employees. Conduct informational interviews to learn more about a company in general and ensure that workplace culture will be a good fit for you.

Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Unconscious or implicit bias refers to the attitudes, stereotypes, judgements, or prejudices that we have unconsciously in our brain. This bias makes our reactions, thinking, and predisposition to information, actions, or environments alter in a particular way, whether it be positive or negative, without self awareness of its occurrence. It occurs beyond our control and could impact our decisions, actions, and understanding.

Unconscious bias is present, to some degree, in every single person and is developed from an early age through the course of one's life. Unconscious bias is associated with many characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and educational background. Some of the common types of unconscious bias are:

- Affinity bias, which refers to preferences when choosing people to connect with. These people share similar interests, experiences, and backgrounds to your own.
- Attribution bias, which refers to the ways you perceive your actions in comparison to others. This bias is mostly in association with how you perceive success and failure.
- Ageism, which refers to negative feelings or discriminations against someone based on their age.
- Beauty bias, which refers to relating a person's physical appearance to their success, competence, and/or qualifications.
- Gender bias, which refers to a preference for one gender over others.
- Ableism bias, which refers to perceiving able-bodied people as the norm and people with disabilities should strive to perform at the same level as able bodied people without necessary accommodations. (examples: reserving a meeting space that is not wheelchair accessible, assuming people have to have a visible disability to be considered disabled, framing disability as something tragic or as an inspiration)

In order to identify our own biases, it’s important to know what are some of the causes of unconscious/implicit bias. Bias occurs because, as human beings, we are susceptible to tendencies and are creatures of habit. For example: humans tend to seek patterns, our brains are known to simplify the world, we get influenced by culture and/or media.

The truth is that no matter what the causes are, we are susceptible to implicit bias, and this could affect our relationships at work, the way we behave on certain occasions, the decisions we make, and how we react in our work environment.

The first step that we can take to remediate this behavior is to recognize that we are susceptible to bias and to identify it. The next step is to take actions that reduce the implicit bias at work. Some corrective measures that can be taken are:

- Increasing education. Educating employers and employees about the different types of unconscious bias and how to recognize it is one of the most effective methods to reduce this bias at work.
- Creating an inclusive work environment. Having an inclusive work environment will help to broaden perspectives and balance any prejudices.
- Taking into account the types of bias when making decisions. Check your decision for any cultural, racial, ability, or gender stereotypes.

Key Takeaways

- We are all human, each with our own thoughts and opinions. It is important to recognize we do not all think the same way.
- Unconscious/Implicit Bias is an unavoidable result of being human and can influence daily decisions in our personal and professional lives.
- Make sure to be conscientious about unconscious/implicit bias when in the workplace by being open minded.
- A culture of diversity, equity and inclusion starts with executive leadership in any organization.
- Continuous education and training is very important and effective for reducing bias at work and promoting a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

✓ Completed Go to next item

