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<u>3 UNCONSIOUS BIASES THAT AFFECT WHETHER YOU GET HIRED</u>

A wise professor of mine once said: "It's the resume that gets you the interview, it's the interview that gets you the job." This article discusses a few unconscious biases made by individuals doing the hiring for positions these days, and how they affect the outcome of the interview. In a perfect world, we would like to think that people will hire us if we are qualified for the job, however in this competitive market (and taking into account that the employers are also human) it is things such as these small biases that may begin, or limit, our future within a company.

According to Professor Madan Pillulta, who teaches organizational behavior at London Business School, it is these three main unconscious biases, among others, that affect hiring decisions these days. They are as follows:

We gravitate towards people who are similar to us. This could be due to a variety of things. People may see themselves reflected in another person and enjoy that, assessing their personality, background, appearance, etc. However, diversity is a crucial part to any thriving organization, so if everyone looks, thinks and acts the same... it is setting the business up for failure due to lack of innovation.

The next point was that we base our decisions on stereotypes of people's competencies. The author uses an example of hiring an Indian employee over another for a math-based position, due to the stereotype that Indians are often proficient in math. Even more complicated than that could be hiring decisions based on gender. These can be more deeply engrained in a person's subconscious opinion, and more prominent within basic hiring decisions when both candidates were equally competent.

Finally, the author mentions that people may hesitate to hire others if they see them as a "threat" to their status within the organization. This is especially emphasized if the position of hiring manager (unbeknownst to candidate) is somewhat unstable. Overall, these three biases are unfortunate, but completely possible. Pillutla suggests maybe eliminating the interview process, and instead bringing in candidates to work for a day, and judging their performance and fit that way. He admits that it is a little out of the ordinary, but also worth trying.

I am currently a student thinking about graduation and the real world within the next few months, so this article was both enlightening and discouraging for me. It is a good insight into what goes on within the minds of hiring managers, apart from how they are viewing you on paper. At first I read this article and wanted to be upset, because all these biases take away from actually viewing the person in the purest sense: by their competencies and accuracy of fit for the job. However, if you look at daily life, you may see that you operate with unconscious stereotypes. I know that I certainly do, and that I'm not proud of some of them.

As a personal experience as a woman within the business school, I can directly relate to entering an interview and knowing I have the competencies equal to my male peers, but I also have the observation skills to know who may be more likely to "get along" with males. This can be classified as somewhat gender bias, but also relating to the similarity of personality bias, depending on the candidate. However, it is a well-known fact that many co-op employers need to somewhat equally employ men and women over the course of time, eliminating some of the

possibility of gender bias. This, of course, may still apply in post college life, but not always, depending on company "quota".

Relating to the final point, about how employers may see the individuals they interview as a threat, I think this is a very real issue, scary for many older, less adaptable current employees who have been assigned to interview incoming college graduates and similar placement possibilities. These candidates are often fresh out of school, up to date on the latest technologies, will work for less, and are most likely younger that the interviewer. It is understandable, but needs to be looked past for the better of the organization. After all, a range of ages and experiences within a company can prove to be quite conducive, ensuring job security all around.

Pillutla recommended using the method of eliminating the interview process and having the employee come in and work for a day. This is one thing I simply have to argue with. I have started a variety of jobs, in food service, finance, and retail, and I can confirm that the first day of each did not represent my most stellar performance. How can someone expect to perform well when he or she hasn't even had the chance to start the learning curve? I think a middle ground could be a one to two week trial period, however that would waste time and money for both parties.

I know that you cannot always be your best self in a short interview, due to nerves or other circumstances, and I also know some of these biases are unavoidable. However, the people assigned to do the hiring should have developed an accurate enough read on people to judge if they will succeed, and if they are limited by their own biases, then that is unfortunate, however if the candidate is

competent, they will most likely succeed elsewhere, and hopefully have to deal with less biases during their employment.

This subject relates to organizational behavior in many ways. First, we can examine the roles of diversity and multiculturalism in an organization. Diversity of course is not just gender and racial, it can be diversity of thought, abilities, experience, and so on. If the employer has a certain personality, matched with a certain set of opinions, they may deter from hiring someone who may be externally similar to them, but think differently is a series of ways. Multiculturalism, which is everyone represented in his or her full self, is important to an organization. However if the candidates "self" does not match what the employer envisions for the organization, they may look past abilities and reject them, based on personal opinion, not company fit.

From what I understand, a modern version of a successful leader would look past these biases, or not have them at all. They would pick candidates that could do the best work, fit in with the culture, but also bring a variety of skills and thought processes to the company. These leaders are able to look at their organization and accurately choose not the candidates that they will get along with best or are similar to them, but the ones that can ensure success individually and for the organization as a whole, by bringing their variety of talents, skills, and traits to a group or team.

This article is important to read because it can do a couple things for the reader: It can alert them to possible unconscious biases they may have, prepare them for future interviews, and also be there for them to keep in mind when they may be in the position to do hiring of their own. On a different subject, it also may

alert them to certain privileges that may have while entering areas of the workforce.

These privileges are in no way to make the reader feel guilty, but meant as a way to

examine their work colleagues around them and treat them with respect, and

appreciate the path they have taken to get where they are as well.

The best gifts college graduates have entering the workforce are their youth,

and their mind (additional wise words taught to me in class). Yes, it is true that

these biases discussed above exist. However, if you read the news, you can see that

people are constantly working to break down barriers to redefine workplace roles.

If you enter an interview with the confidence to redefine, the confidence will

emanate, and you will find your right place in the working world.

The article can be found at the link below:
http://www.businessinsider.com/unconscious-biases-in-hiring-decisions-2015-7