Recognizing Your Unconscious Biases and Harnessing the Power of Diversity & Inclusion

Speaker: Nicole F. Smith, M.Ed., CDBC
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Rising Awareness of Unconscious Bias

Discrimination is often an unconscious act
- How we believe that the norms and experiences of our own social group are or should be the same for every other social group. And then the realization they are radically different. How do you act or react?

Misperceptions = unconscious bias
- Main reason why fostering change in the workplace, in your community is difficult.....why?

Awareness of Unconscious Bias

......unconscious bias are unconscious feelings we have towards other people – unconscious feelings that play a strong part in influencing our judgement of certain people and groups in many different areas of life.

Are you biased?

We generally are convinced that our behavior, thoughts and decisions are rational but in reality, most or all of your decisions are made emotionally through your upbringing, the groups we belong to, and the experiences we have in our lives.
Individual Exploration

**Tell The Truth to Yourself**

Embrace the fact that it is normal for all human beings to have unconscious preferences and bias and that those preferences and biases impact most, if not, all of the decisions we make, including those regarding people.

**“mindset”** [noun]:
A set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines one’s behavior, outlook and mental attitude.

**GOOD NEWS!**

Research has found that when we are made aware of our own hidden implicit biases, a type of cognitive correction takes place and we are able to implement more controlled, unbiased behaviors.
Types of Diversity
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Cultural Background
- Age
- Socioeconomic class
- Regional Origin
- Education
- Physical Ability
- Military Background
- Religion
- Personal History
- Language/Accent
- Thinking/Cognitive Styles

If nobody’s speaking up, somebody probably needs to.

Groupthink is a phenomenon where people tend to confirm with group decisions to avoid feeling outcast, leading to errors in decision making.
**Breaking Group Think**

**Diversity**: The benefits of diversity can be lost. The diversity of thought is often overlooked as an element of diversity. Thinking differently is an important individual characteristic that must be valued to avoid the trap of groupthink. Listen to people who disagree with you. Try to see the situation from their point of view. Then, find areas of agreement and use them to create a new perspective.

**Avoid Groupthink**: Strive for inclusion, not assimilation. The ideal state is one of inclusion: where members feel they belong to a group but retain their uniqueness.

**Foster inclusion**: question your group’s unspoken rules. “Is it safe to be unpopular?” “Is there a penalty for candor?” and “Are there things we do not discuss?”

**Intentionally inclusive**: You do not intentionally include; you will unintentionally exclude. Awareness of your conscious and unconscious biases affects your decisions and way of thinking. Question yourself. Ask, “Why do I think this?” “Is there another point of view?” “Is there something I’m missing?”

**Courage to offer a dissenting opinion to avoid groupthink**: Group’s climate needs to be safe to do this, however.

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**Diversity & Inclusion**

To respond effectively to global trends and changing demographics in the United States, it is essential to have both diversity and inclusion... and remove biases.

**Diversity** refers to differences of all kinds, including, but not limited to, gender, age, personal values, educational opportunities, personal history, and physical ability.

**Inclusion** refers to creating a climate where differences and similarities are respected and people are welcomed into the workplace, have their voices heard, and contributions recognized. Organizations can be diverse, but not inclusive, which often results in lower engagement of underrepresented groups, higher turnover, and increased opportunity costs from failing to leverage all employees’ contributions. Conversely, organizations can be inclusive, but not diverse.
Diversity impacts how potential hires evaluate employment opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>African-Americans</th>
<th>Asians</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Hispanics/Latinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider Diversity as Important</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Diversity is being invited to the party, Inclusion is being asked to dance.

Verna Myers

Tips for ensuring everyone is “invited to dance, fairly”

- Use inclusive language
- Remember, every person counts
- Leave your assumptions at the door

Diversity & Inclusion drive innovation and are critical components of organization success.

- A diverse and inclusive workforce is crucial for organizations that want to attract and retain top talent.
- A diverse and inclusive workforce is necessary to foster creativity and support organization strategies.

D&I Drives Innovation and Performance

Diverse customers’ buying power valued over one trillion dollars

Buying Power

- Women control over $20 trillion of consumer spending.
- Multicultural consumers spend an estimate of $3.4 trillion.
- People with disabilities and their network spend about $2.4 trillion.
- LGBT consumers spend about $884 billion.
- Veterans spend about $1 trillion.


*Data based on US yearly figures.

The Business Value of Diversity in Organizations

1. A diverse workforce drives economic growth.
2. A diverse workforce can capture a greater share for the consumer market.
3. Recruiting from a diverse pool of candidate means a more qualified workforce.
4. A diverse and inclusive workplace helps businesses avoid employee turnover.
5. Diversity brings a more creative and innovative workforce.
6. Businesses need to adapt to our changing nation to be competitive in the economic market.
7. Diversity is a key aspect of entrepreneurialism.
8. Diversity in business ownership, particularly women of color, is key to moving our economy forward.
9. Diversity in the workplace is necessary to create a competitive economy in a globalized world.
10. Diversity in the boardroom is needed to leverage a company's full potential.

The Business Value of Inclusion in Organizations

1. Employees who feel their voice is heard...
   - 4.6x more likely to feel empowered to perform their best work
2. Employees who say their company provides equal opportunities...
   - 3.8x more likely to say they are proud to work for their company
3. Employees who say there are bale to be their authentic self at work...
   - 2.8x more likely to say they are proud to work for their company
   - 4.4x more likely to say they are empowered to perform their best work

Solution – How?

“Change doesn’t just happen, especially when uncomfortable topics are discussed such as diversity. Proactive, Consistent, Relentless Focus is needed in the form of a team who’s accountable for progress in the form of leader who take a stand and make a real investment.”

Jennifer Brown, Author of Inclusion: Diversity, The New Workplace, and The Will to Change
Be part of the solution
Increase your self awareness of D&I and unconscious bias
• Understand the shift: affirmative action, laws, compliance, and quotas
• Understand the definition of D&I
• Know the benefits and consequences
• Adapt to different working styles

Understand key demographics that affect your organization
• What is changing globally (and locally) for the area you are in?
• Pay attention to the responses given to social topics

Help others realize their potential
• Help leaders appreciate the uniqueness everyone brings to the table
• Make decisions based on skills and abilities (not age, gender, culture, etc.)
• Make diversity a priority
• Implement diversity awareness training
• Treat every person as a unique individual
• Include and encourage participation by all

Core Qualities for Inclusive Leadership
• Treats all people with respect and fairness
• Recognizes one’s own biases, conscious or unconscious
• Demonstrates openness to multiple cultural values and norms
• Seeks connections with others from diverse cultures or backgrounds
• Creates a culture that is transparent, receptive, respectful and responsive to diversity and inclusion
• Effectively mediates cultural differences, conflicts or misunderstandings
• Demonstrates cultural competency and embraces diversity and inclusion as organizational values, weaving them through all operations
• Communicates the organization’s commitment to diversity and inclusion internally and externally

Closing Thought
“The first step toward getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are.”
-Unknown
IDENTIFYING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

This section is focused on supporting you in developing a deeper understanding of the filters through which you view and interpret yourself and others. These filters are created through our upbringing, the groups we belong to, and the experiences we have in our lives.

A self-assessment can be very useful in bringing to the surface your core operating beliefs and norms. When we can identify them, we have more power over how strongly they impact our business decisions and in what ways.

Record your initial responses as you ask yourself these questions. Doing this without looking for the right answer will provide you with more authentic responses rather than ones that are politically correct.

UNCOVERING MY WORLD VIEW
#1 – INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Select three key events in your life, as far back as you can remember, that may have impacted how you engage with the world.

How might they impact your relationship to trust, safety, ways you relate to others or to authority, etc.? How might they impact the way you behave in the workplace? Record them here, along with their implication in the workplace.

1. 

2. 

3. 

EXAMPLE
“I grew up in a military family and attended 19 different schools from elementary through high school. I make friends quickly but don’t get too invested in relationships. I read people really quickly.”

TELL THE TRUTH TO YOURSELF

Embrace the fact that it is normal for all human beings to have unconscious preferences and biases and that those preferences and biases impact most, if not all, of the decisions we make, including those regarding people.
Was there a time when you recall feeling “different” from those around you for any reason (physical size, appearance, family status, being new in the community, etc.)?

______________________________________________________________
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______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

How might you imagine that the experiences could have impacted how you see yourself and the formation of your personality (feel free to speculate)? What are the organizational implications of these differences? Do you relate more, less, or differently to people you perceive as “different”?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

#2 – SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

What was your (formal and informal) education path? What core values did you learn from education? How do these values shape your views today? When you interview others or learn about colleagues’ education, what is your relationship to their education?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

EXAMPLE
“I was the first kid in my school to have divorced parents. I felt judged by both teachers and kids.”

EXAMPLE
“I learned to be very private with my personal life, and I think this could impact how I’m seen by my colleagues. Together with being raised in a military environment and moving around a lot, people might think I’m standoffish and aloof, which isn’t how I see myself.”

EXAMPLE
“Anyone who went to my alma mater gets extra ‘points’ in my book.”