



The Ten Forms of Interviewer Bias

As an interviewer, it's important to be aware of your unconscious biases to ensure you hire candidates based on competency alone. Individual biases can easily influence the selection process and can lead to overlooking the best suited candidate. Here are the ten forms of interviewer bias. Get acquainted with them!

1

Stereotyping

This occurs when we judge a candidate based on our preconceived perceptions of the groups they belong to, including their gender, race, ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation. Stereotyping prevents interviewers from judging the unique individual in front of them.

2

First impression

We can sometimes latch on to the first impression of a candidate, for example their entrance, handshake and first words. This can either lead to us dismissing talented candidates due to a mediocre first impression or glorifying sub-par candidates due to a strong first impression.

3

Non-verbal bias

Sometimes we can judge candidates on their body language rather than their skills, for example their eye contact, smile and general posture. Remember that interviews are stressful situations which can lead to a candidate's body language being vastly different from when they're relaxed. So, it's important to bring the focus back to a candidate's competencies.

4

Inconsistency in questioning

When we don't ask candidates the same questions, we don't give them the same opportunities. It's essential to build up a complete picture of each candidate by asking similar questions.

5

Halo effect

This occurs when we focus so much on one strength or achievement of a candidate, that we judge them as strong in all areas. This can result in overlooking genuine weaknesses of the candidate.

6

Horn effect

And this is the opposite of the halo effect. When a candidate is weak in one area, we can judge them weak in all areas. However, this can result in dismissing a candidate who is on balance highly capable.

7

Similar-to-me

We can sometimes show preference to a candidate because they have much in common with us. For example, they may have gone to the same university as us, be the same ethnicity as us or have grown up in the same area as us. This distracts from the actual competencies of the candidate.

8

Cultural noise

This occurs when a candidate is trying to impress you by saying things you want to hear but is not what they actually believe. Rather than being swept away by these 'right' answers, try to read between the lines.

9

Contrast effect

Our judgement can be clouded when we compare candidates to each other, rather than to a standard criteria. Such comparison can give mediocre candidates who interview after weak candidates, an unfair advantage over strong candidates.

10

Central tendency

This occurs when we are searching for the elusive, perfect candidate. But no one is perfect. As a result, interviewers can find minor faults with every candidate, even those who are high caliber and who are more than capable of doing the job well.

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