




The PWR Advisory Guide to Breaking Unconscious Bias and Leading Inclusively

A Guide for Leaders and Organisations

PWR Advisory

Did you know unconscious bias could be costing your company millions of dollars a year in lost opportunities and unrealised revenues?

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Where Does Bias Come From?

● The brain receives 11 million pieces of information every second but is only able to process about 40 of them at a time.

● In trying to cope, we make quick, **automatic** judgments based on mental models, to aid **faster** decision making. It's the brain's way of coping with the deluge of information it is constantly bombarded with.



Where Does Bias Come From?

- Our mental models are formed by our life experiences, history and the media we have been exposed to. But they are not always accurate and that is how bias arises – from automatic judgements we make from associations previously stored up in the memory.
- It is also where **stereotypes** come from – a set of beliefs and expectations about particular groups of people.
- All of this raises the risk that we will sometimes make **wrong decisions** about people because our mental models and stereotypes are inaccurate. In other words, we are operating out of bias.
- The danger is that although we may be unaware of it, **unconscious bias** drives our attitudes, actions and decisions.



Why is Unconscious Bias Important?

In the workplace, unconscious bias puts some **people** at a disadvantage compared to others and **excludes** them from opportunities. This can happen e.g. during the hiring process, at appraisal time, during promotion, or during selection for high profile projects.

It can also happen during **meetings** where certain people are denied the opportunity of contributing fully to discussions.

For instance, research shows that women are 3 times more likely to be interrupted in conversations or get talked over.¹

How Companies Benefit from Diversity and Inclusion

- 70% more likely to capture new markets
- 45% more likely to increase market share
- 19% increase in revenues
- 9% higher EBIT margins

Why is Unconscious Bias Important?

● The people most likely to be affected by our bias are people who are **different** from us e.g. in terms of their gender, or age, or religion or ethnic origin.

● We usually gravitate towards people similar to us by default and this can cloud our **judgement** as we may unknowingly exclude other people

You may find that in a particular unit or department, a large majority of the staff are from the same ethnic group as the head of the unit/department. Why is this so?

The Impact of Bias on Employees

People who experience bias at work are more likely to:

- Leave the company
- Withhold ideas and solutions
- Not refer potential talent to the organisation
- Be unwilling to go the extra mile on the job

Why is Unconscious Bias Important?

People living with **disabilities** also suffer bias because they typically get treated differently. They are often times ignored or overlooked for opportunities offered to other people.

If left unchecked, unconscious bias can cause the organisation to lose out on the business benefits of a diversified workforce and it reduces the likelihood of achieving an inclusive organisational **culture**.

The Impact of Bias on the Organisation

- Increased absenteeism
- Higher employee turnover
- Lower customer satisfaction
- Reputational damage to the company
- Difficulty attracting top talent
- Lower employee engagement

\$550 B - Annual cost of employee disengagement to US companies

Why is Unconscious Bias Important?

Companies are increasingly seeking to build **diversity** – across gender, age, ability and more - into their businesses.

But it takes an inclusive leader to unlock that **value**. Diversity without inclusion is a wasted **opportunity**.

Leadership which is welcoming of different kinds of people with differing perspectives, makes all the difference.

Through their actions and behaviour, **inclusive** leaders reduce the occurrence of bias. The result is that employees feel valued and respected.

47% of millennial talent say that they actively look for inclusive employers

The Case for Inclusive Leadership

An inclusive workplace doesn't just have a diversity of talent, rather the workforce is fully involved, empowered and therefore committed to the organisation.

Inclusive leaders harness individual potential and provide **psychological safety** for the people they lead. As a result, employees are more engaged, collaboration is stronger, productivity is higher and innovation thrives.

Percentage of people who reported having experienced bias at work in a recent Deloitte study

GENDER BIAS

46% of women reported experiencing gender bias

DISABILITY BIAS

54% of people with disabilities reported experiencing disability bias

GENERATIONAL BIAS

48% of Gen Zs and **44%** of Millennials reported experiencing bias based on age

68% of respondents said the bias they had experienced had negatively affected their productivity

Source: The bias barrier - Allyship, Inclusion and other behaviours. 2019 State of Inclusion Report, Deloitte

4 Tips on How to Lead Inclusively

Look Within

Introspection and critical self-reflection can raise our **awareness** of our own biases. A key question to ask is “Am I being open minded and curious?”

Slow Down

Go slower on your judgements and reactions to people. **Question** your evidence and thinking, and look out for bias.

Be an Ally

Watch out for when someone is being excluded or put at a disadvantage, and speak up. Call out the bias and **advocate** for the person on the receiving end.

Role Model

Consistently model inclusive leadership to your team and in turn hold them **accountable** for how they interact with others. Consistency is key.

Organisations with inclusive cultures are:

2X as likely to meet or exceed financial targets



3X as likely to be high performing



6X more likely to be innovative and agile



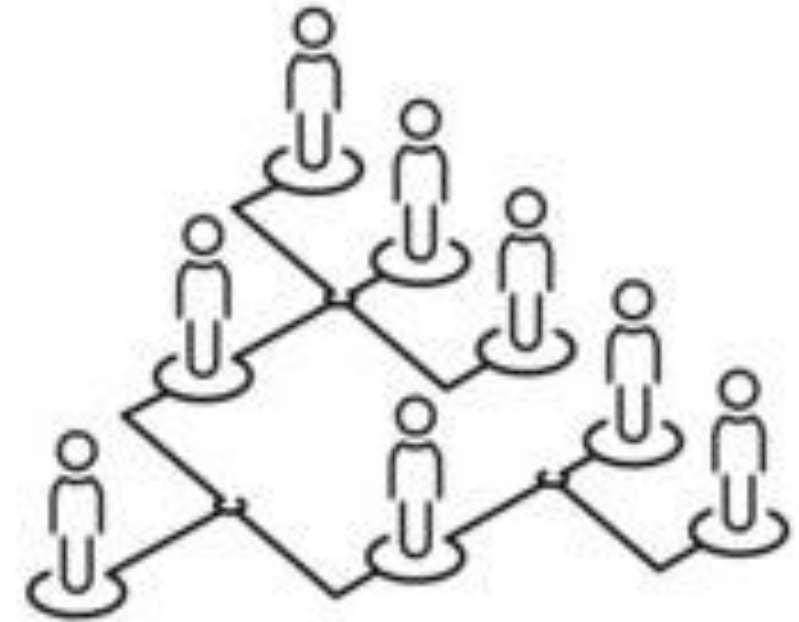
8X more likely to achieve better business outcomes




Source: Which Two Heads Are Better Than One? How Diverse Teams Create Breakthrough Ideas and Make Smarter Decisions, Juliet Bourke, 2016

4 Tips for the Organisation

- Provide unconscious bias and inclusive leadership **training** for managers especially since they are the biggest drivers of organisational culture.
- Review and de-bias policies, processes and practices.
- Watch internal and external **communication** including adverts, website and brochures to ensure the language is inclusive.
- Build inclusion nudges into the organisational culture, processes and structures to **remind** people of what to do and what not to do.



How We Can Help

- 
- What biases are showing up in your organisation?
 - What is the impact on your employees, customers, suppliers and your other stakeholders?
 - How is this affecting your bottomline?
 - How much value are you leaving on the table?

The PWR Advisory **Unconscious Bias and Inclusive Leadership Solutions Suite** will help you diagnose the problems and develop best practice solutions tailored to your specific needs and organisational culture.

We will work with you to measure the impact and we will provide follow up support.

To find out more, call us today on +234 704 137 8695 or email us at info@pwradvisory.com

Who We Are

PWR Advisory is a diversity and inclusion consulting firm. We operate across Africa.

- We assist corporate organisations harness diversity and build more inclusive workplaces to drive performance and profitability.
- We support career women in embracing their leadership identity, and raising their visibility and representation in the marketplace.
- We provide data and research services to investors, regulators and other institutions interested in diversity and inclusion



Why Choose Us?

- Nigeria's leading diversity and inclusion full service provider with a stellar reputation and a strong footprint.
- Competent and professional team with combined D&I experience of over 30 years gained locally and internationally.
- We understand the issues and challenges both from an organisational and individual perspective, and we know the cultural context and nuances.
- We deploy global best practice and fit-for-purpose solutions tailored to your specific needs and objectives.
- We work with you to identify your areas of concern, develop suitable interventions with KPIs, execute, measure effectiveness and refine where necessary and provide post implementation follow-up.
- Your needs and satisfaction are our greatest concern.
- Extensive Human Resources Management experience available for your support in other areas

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