

Unconscious Bias

Raising your Awareness

The Essentials



BCS Unconscious Bias Awareness

Handbook 2014

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Unconscious Bias - What is it?

The Oxford dictionary lists the word as:

Prejudice, partiality, inclination, learning, bent, disposition, propensity, tendency, and proclivity.

However, when we are speaking about people being biased we mean this:

Bias is an inflexible positive or negative belief about a particular category of people.



It is not our behaviour or words that are biased; it is attitudes that can be biased. The key factor of a biased attitude is that it is inflexible.

Why is understanding Unconscious Bias important to our society?

An organisations whose workforce or members are from a diverse background are potentially more creative and innovation than one where all the team members share the same cultural background. Businesses and organisations need to reflect the community they now service.



The advantages of an inclusive environment

Studies on both sides of the Atlantic show that customers and



stakeholders want to do business with organisations that effectively demonstrate and manage diversity within their business. What does it mean to manage diversity? It means they have hiring processes which attract and retain people from all backgrounds. Their

suppliers and vendors also come from a diverse background and most importantly they treat **ALL** people with respect and courtesy.

How can we be mindful of our own biases?

Many of us are reluctant to admit our biases because we feel that to have a bias means we are no longer “good people”. Take heart, although



biases are not desirable, it is not, unless extreme, an indicator of bad character.

Becoming mindful of our biases all starts with self-awareness. It is a key and important first step. It is important to recognise that as human beings, our brains are able to make decisions for us, which can go against our conscious beliefs.

One way for us to be mindful is to become aware and to observe the thoughts that come into our minds in response to a kinship group. Do your thoughts reflect a biased attitude? Ask yourself, would I have reacted differently if the person I am observing is from a different kinship group?

Have you found yourself being “friendlier” to one particular group over another?

When you have to give an assignment do you have the propensity to give the best assignments to your own kinship group?

Have you shown a biased preference for one gender over another when interviewing candidates ignoring their skills?

What is the impact of our un-checked biases?

Failing to check our biases can affect the institute in a number of ways.

- It may affect our ability to attract and the best people to the Institute.
- It could also affect our ability to retain good people having spend cost resources attracting them to the institute.
- Failing to check our biases could also reduce the chances of individual success along with creativity and productivity.
- Failure to check our biases could also affect they way teams within the Institute work together.
- Ultimately it will place the institute at risk of litigation, because biases, if found to be inequitable is deemed unlawful within the UK.



Our biases could cause legal issues even when our attitude started out as good intentions and kindly acts.

The reputation and record of BCS The Chartered Institute for IT is one we are very proud of and we are demonstrating our commitment by ensuring everyone within the institute

has undergone Unconscious Bias awareness training.

BCS as the Gold Standard for Diversity and Inclusion within the IT Sector

The Institute's aim is to set the gold standard for diversity and inclusion within the profession, allowing the UK IT sector to capitalise on the potential innovation and subsequent profits.

In order for this to happen we need to ensure the culture supports our goals.

An organisation is a culture. It is a group of people brought together around a common set of beliefs and values.

It is not our products or services that bind our Institute together. It's not size and might that make our organisation strong and respected.

It is the culture. The strong sense of values and beliefs that **everyone from the CEO to the Receptionist all share.**

You can play your part by taking the first step, audit your own biases and actively choose to override what you thought you knew about people who are different from yourself.



Supporting Gender Diversity in IT

Top tips for organisations

Gender diversity can bring many benefits to an organisation, including increased productivity. BCS, The chartered Institute for IT, has put together some top tips based on good practice taken from unconscious bias training. Use these tips in conjunction with your diversity policy.

BCS 10 Tips for Gender Diversity

Remember that women almost never say they can do the job on offer in an Interview, whilst identically qualified men do.

Many women aren't good at hearing good news but are often obsessive over bad news or criticism, so be careful how you deliver it.

Women think they will get promoted by working long hours and doing more than is asked of them. They don't realise this isn't always the case, and sometimes feel uncomfortable, selling themselves to senior people and/or networking with them out of the office.

Women are not usually good negotiators. They often find it very hard to ask for a salary increase or higher package when offered a job. However, men are generally often very good at this and it can lead to unwitting or unnoticed pay gaps. Employers need to watch for this and ideally conduct regular independent pay audits – and publish the results.

It is helpful to insist that all candidate lists for promotion or recruitment include at least some women.

Unconscious bias training is more or less standard across most companies these days. If you aren't already offering it, talk to BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, for advice on how to go about it. Any training undertaken should be offered to everyone, especially those involved in recruitment and middle and senior management layers of your organisation.

Double check the wording of your recruitment advertisements. Are they gender friendly? Will they specifically attract women? Are they likely to catch the eye of more experienced women returning to work after a career break who wouldn't mind starting again at the bottom of the ladder?

8. Have you got three women on your Board? It makes a real difference in productivity and in profits. Ideally you will have 40% women on your Board and in your Executive teams – because that will really put you on the map and attract other high calibre women to your organisation.
9. Women really make the most of mentoring opportunities, and will return the blessing for those less experienced than themselves, so make sure that you are proactive about offering mentoring throughout their careers.
10. Women are much more ambitious than you think, but are less likely to put themselves forward for roles (see Tip number 1), so good succession planning which values the skills of transformative leaders will ensure that recruitment doesn't happen 'in my image'.

Useful facts and figures:

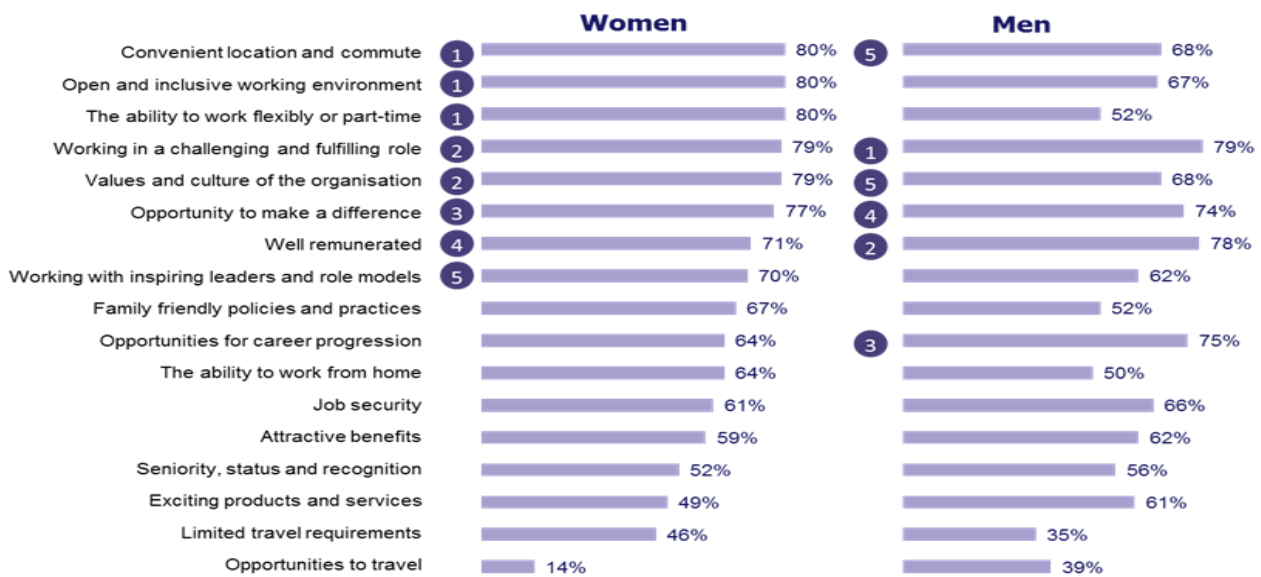
When recruiting and supporting women through their technology careers, companies will want to ensure that males and females in the workplace are motivated by different factors. The following chart, taken from: The Women in Technology, The Employment Value Proposition Research Findings Research, funded by BP, by Capability Jane*, shows how different motivators are important for males and females in the workplace.

These differences will influence advertising and interviewing techniques when companies are trying to attract a diverse workforce. Equally companies can ensure that they retain their technical women by a deep understanding of their motivators as show in the table.

Survey Questions: Please let us know which of the following factors are important to you.

Women in Technology: The Desired "Female Employment Proposition"

Question: Please let us know which of the following factors are important to you.



Source: Capability Jane

These statistics show wide disparities in some areas, for example; 'Opportunities for Travel' is favourable to 39% of male respondents, but only interesting for 14% of females. If a company is trying to attract a diverse workforce, advertising that your role has 'Opportunities for travel' or has the chance to work with 'Exciting products and Services' may create a gender bias in the applicants. Equally, supporting women through their careers with 'family friendly policies', 'flexible working' options, and ensuring that roles are 'challenging and fulfilling' should help to ensure that both males and females are retained within the workplace.

*Figures taken from: the Women in Technology, The Employment Value Proposition Research Findings Research, funded by BP, by Capability Jane, Specialist in Diversity & Flexible Working Resourcing and Consulting. The research set out to understand: What are the important career drivers for high qualified women? How does this differ to that of men? The research was conducted using a specifically tailored survey and sent out to Capability Jane network. The survey was completed by 374 highly-qualified individuals in technology, 206 men, and 168 women.

Supporting BAME Diversity in IT

Top tips for organisations

BCS 10 Tips for BAME Diversity

BAME's would like evidence that an organisation has diversity policy and practice in place.

2. BAME's would like help in completing application forms if English is not their first language.
3. Consider setting BAME recruitment targets to ensure your organisation reflects the diversity of the community in which it operates. Use the Office of National statistics (ONS) neighbourhood statistics data to get the population breakdown of BAME people in your catchment area.
4. The provision of adjustments for health, religion and culture differences would help BAME applications.
5. Use of BAME people in your materials (role models are seen as very important to black applicants).
6. Ensure that your organisations diversity and inclusion policy can be seen by all visitors.
7. Review your assessment centre processes and check they are not biased to any particular ethnic group and are accessible.
8. Ask BAME job applicants relevant questions relating to the job vacancy and steer away from irrelevant questioning such as the applicant's religion or culture.
9. Ensure that recruitment agencies and head hunters are aware of your organisations commitment to diversity and inclusion. Ask for evidence as to how they proactively demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion.
10. Consider 'unconscious bias' training and or cultural awareness training for all staff and suppliers involved with the recruitment process to raise awareness of attitudes and to ensure job applicants are assessed on merit and not race.

***BAME = Black, Asian and Minority ethnic people**

Background:

The following is a summary of the key research findings from a survey commissioned by The Race for Opportunity (RFO) and Diversity Works for London (DWFL) and carried out by SPA Future Thinking of more than 2,500 people who have looked for work in the UK in the last twelve months.

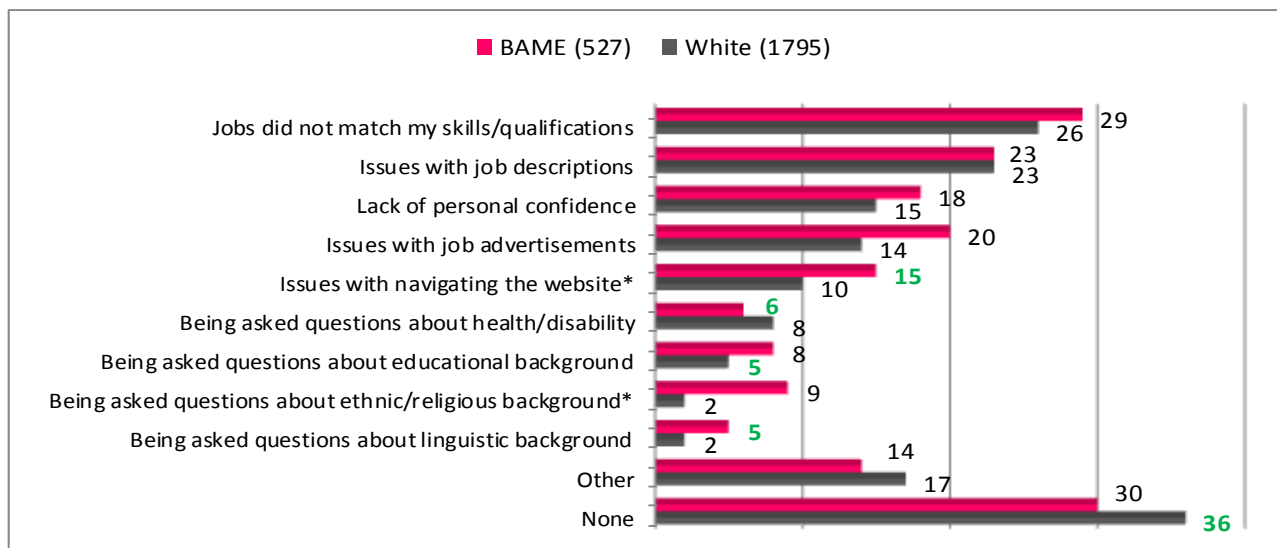


FIGURE 1: Barriers encountered in getting a job by applying directly to an employer.

■ Significantly, higher than other group. * Further information available from the RFO Website.

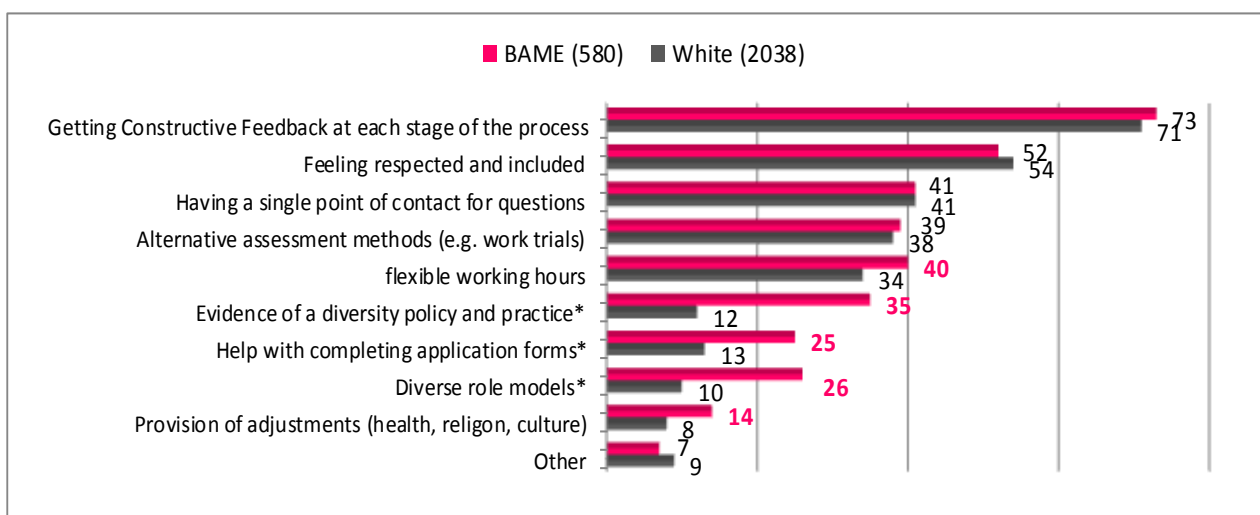


FIGURE 2: What would make the biggest difference to your experience of the recruitment process?

■ Significantly, higher than other group. * Further information available from the RFO Website.

Resources

The Value of Difference - Eliminating Bias in Organisations
Binna Kandola

The Invention of Difference - The Story of Gender Bias at Work
Binna Kandola

The Fruits of inclusion: A Smart Business Guide to Creating a Sustainable Diversity & Inclusion Programme .
Dr Linda J Burrs

Blink - The Power of Thinking without Thinking
Malcolm Gladwell

Gender Bias As related to Women in the Workplace
Nancy Elder Walden, Ph.D.

Gender Responsible Leadership - Detecting Bias, implementing Interventions.
Catharine Herr Van Nostrand

Take the Implicit Bias Test at:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

