OVERCOMING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

How to Build a More Inclusive Team & Enhance the Guest Experience

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Laura is the president of Tahoe Training Partners, a human resources and management training solutions consulting firm located near Lake Tahoe, California founded in 2007. The company’s strength is partnering with companies to customize education and talent development solutions for team member, front-line leader, manager and executive populations in both field and corporate environments to drive business results.

As a senior human resources executive in the hotel, resort and gaming industries, Laura aligned strategic leadership vision with the brand promise so that engaged team members could consistently deliver extraordinary experiences in complex, dynamic, multi-site organizations. Whether partnering with clients to build a culture of discipline and execution, breathe life into a brand and deliver on a business and sales strategy, reengage a high-performance team, or prepare for and implement change, her insightful and thought-provoking approach is encouraging, inclusive, collaborative and practical. Laura is recognized as a leader who can sustain inspiring and productive business relationships with executives, managers and operating units to get things done.

With an extensive background in learning management and knowledge transfer, strategic development, design, and execution of core and accelerated development solutions, Laura has been the architect of innovative training environments in hospitality companies, ski resorts, retail, health care organizations, municipalities and government agencies, as well as nonprofits and manufacturing environments.

Certified for fifteen years as a Covey Leadership Center facilitator in the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, the Four Disciplines of Execution, Great Leaders, Great Teams, Great Results, and the Five Choices to Extraordinary Productivity as well as a variety of proprietary workshops, Laura is nationally recognized as an engaging facilitator and presenter. Her motivating and interactive approach to talent development is the hallmark of Laura’s workshops. Audience evaluations note the rapid development of useful skills, the take-away of practical tools and the frequent participant comment “Time Well Spent”. Clients also cite the value of advisory and facilitation services which include executive coaching, strategic planning, facilitation of Board of Directors, leadership and management meetings, and customized organizational retreats.

In dynamic work environments where management and team talent needs to be developed or adapt quickly, success is in the systems. Laura collaborates with leaders to design the programs, dashboards, employee engagement surveys and 360-degree feedback using “20/20 Insight Gold” and other practical management and training tools that make a difference in a fast-paced business cycle. Laura works directly with intact teams to improve net promoter scores, customer service, increase sales and to direct the energy of interpersonal and interdepartmental conflict into creative solutions. Teams often value time spent building bridges back to harmony, trust and productivity by making more selective choices about where to invest their valuable time, attention and energy. Understanding communication styles and establishing team purpose, interdependent goals, expectations, standards and rules of engagement often provides the foundation for a reenergized sense of unity and shared mission.
While progress is being made, management in American organizations, including the ski business, needs to recognize and accept that they have unintentionally created a good-old-boys’ network, making upward mobility more accessible for white men.

All humans are biased. Even those with the best of intentions behave in biased ways without ever realizing it. This institutionalized behavior has disparate impacts on people of different backgrounds. Our team members may unconsciously demonstrate a preference for certain guest demographics as well.

Today we will explore how people make, and sometimes act on, snap judgments based on the other person’s race, gender, sexual orientation, or other protected class without any conscious intention. We are all looking for high performing talent. Mitigate the next potential missed opportunity by:

- Recognizing our biases and where they come from
- Exploring Institutionalized bias and ways to mitigate its progression.
- Learning from America's history of prejudice in public spaces.
- Making all team members and guests feel welcome, included and valued.

Contact: Laura Moriarty, SPHR, SCP 530.573.0224
Being able to perceive what makes us unique—and different from each other—gives us the gift of seeing each other as full human beings.

**In Your Life, Where Do You Have a Sense of Belonging?**

Feeling welcome. Feeling included. Feeling like yourself. Describe the place. Why does it make you feel like you belong?

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Stanley Nelson's documentary on the story of access to public spaces in America

Jot down some of your first thoughts and emotions after seeing this video.

What did you notice?

What did you learn?

How do you feel?
The first time you...

Recall when you first experienced your racial identity. It may have been when you were a child. It may have been last week. If a scenario doesn’t apply to you, feel free to leave it blank and move on to the next one.

1. ...noticed your racial identity.

2. ...noticed how your race affected your beauty standards.

3. ...felt your accent impacted people’s perception of your intelligence or competence.

4. ...altered your communication style (dialed it up or down) to avoid playing into stereotypes.

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5. ...had a friend of a different race who regularly visited your home.

6. ...felt distracted at work because of external events related to race.

7. ...had a senior role model in your organization with a similar racial identity as your own.

8. ...went to work with your natural hair without comments or questions from others.

9. ...felt your race affected your ability to build a rapport with your manager.
When we address emotions as they relate to our biases, we build muscle that helps us override them.

RECOGNIZING AND OVERCOMING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Where do your biases hide?

What are your social filters and categories?

Which assessments and judgments do you make unconsciously?

What can you do differently?

#1 Frame Your Bias
Be specific

#2 Challenge Your Bias
How do I know this is true?

#3 Set Aside Your Bias

THE BLIND AUDITION

Appearance, height, weight
Physical attributes
Education level
Tattoos, body art/jewelry
Various religions/Atheists
Gun owners
Accents/English as a second language
Welfare recipients
Gender, gender identity & expression
Age
Cultural background
Cultural Clothing, e.g., hijab, yarmulke
Disability
Other?

Contact: Laura Moriarty, SPHR, SCP
Our unconscious brain processes 11 million bits of information in a second.

In that same time, our conscious brain processes only 40 bits.

We process more info unconsciously than consciously.

Our brains do this because they must. If we had to process everything consciously, the day would be so exhausting we'd never get through it.

To help us function, our brains take shortcuts.

When these short cuts are applied to characteristics, traits and behaviors of a certain group of people, they are called stereotypes.

Stereotypes are shaped by experiences, through the media and the broader culture we live in.

The risk is when we hold negative stereotypes, unconscious bias can arise.

When we are under pressure, are short on time or don't pay attention, unconscious biases are triggered more easily.

We can hold biases about race and age and religion. Gender and sexuality and body type. Ability and mental health and class. And many other attributes.

Biases aren't always easy to identify. They make us feel exposed. Maybe even critical of ourselves. But they are worth of reflection.

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Most of us think we treat other people fairly. Upon reflection, do you notice ways in which you treat people differently? The point here is not to judge whether that is a good or bad thing, but merely to notice.
Jot down some of your first thoughts and emotions after seeing the video.

What did you notice?

What did you learn?

How do you feel?
WHAT TYPES OF BIAS ARE THERE?

SYSTEMIC BIAS
Patterns of behaviour, policies, or practices that are part of the structures or culture of the organization, which create or perpetuate disadvantage for certain groups.
Examples include:
- Advertising job openings through word-of-mouth
- Not promoting racial minorities because they are “not suitable for management positions”
- Informal mentoring and networking that support the advancement of some groups and disadvantage other groups

INDIVIDUAL BIAS
Biases that we know we have, that we consciously think about and may or may not say to others. For example:
- Not hiring a young woman for a job because the manager thinks the young woman may get pregnant and go on maternity leave shortly after being hired
- Thinking that an individual is too old or too young for a particular job
- Removing resumes of people with “foreign-sounding names” because you think these applicants don’t speak English well

CONSCIOUS BIAS
Biases that we don’t even know we have, but which guide our judgements and actions. For example:
- Perceiving tall men and women to be more competent and better leaders
- Interpreting behaviours by women and men differently
- Letting more toward, make more eye contact with, give longer interviews to, and say nicer things to White than Black applicants

UNCONSCIOUS / HIDDEN BIAS
An individual’s internalized preferences for, or assumptions about, groups of people.

GET STARTED
- Review and update the job description
- Develop the job ad

ADVERTISE THE JOB
- Share job ads with community partners
- Conduct outreach recruitment
- Accept resumes and applications through email, online application, and mail

PREPARING FOR THE ASSESSMENT
- Identify the selection criteria
- Identify the pre-screening criteria
- Determine which criteria will be assessed in the interview and through testing
- Develop interview questions (including tests to assess the candidate’s diversity competencies)
- Develop tests
- Develop the marking guides (include the questions, the ideal responses, and the maximum score for each question)
- Develop an overall scoring sheet
- Convene the interview panel and ensure it includes people from diverse backgrounds and communities
- Prep the interview panel members

CONDUCT THE BACKGROUND CHECK (AS APPROPRIATE)
- Check references
- Verify credentials
- Conduct police records check
- Request medical examinations

ASSESSING CANDIDATES
- Prepare interview panel members to ensure a bias-free interview
- Conduct the interviews, recording each candidate’s responses to the questions
- Appropriately open and close each interview
- Score candidate’s responses to each question
- Review all interviewer scores and develop the overall score for each candidate
- Administer the test to each candidate under the same conditions, unless accommodation is needed
- Mark each test using the marking guide
- Include the test scores in the candidate’s overall score to determine the final score
- Identify the top candidates
- Apply a diversity lens (as appropriate) to make the hiring decision

MAKE THE JOB OFFER
- Negotiate salary and start date
- Prepare the written job offer
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates

PRE-SCREEN THE APPLICANTS
- Assess each applicant against the pre-screening criteria to determine who will be invited for an interview
- Conduct pre-screening interviews to further narrow down who will be interviewed
- Invite those short-listed to the interview, asking if they require any accommodation for the interview or test

REQUIREMENT FILES
- Complete the file
- Securely retain the file for at least 18 months

START THE NEW EMPLOYEE OFF RIGHT
- Arrange for formal and informal orientation
- Assign a buddy
- Ask of any accommodations are needed

#BIASFREEHIRING
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What is the single most important thing you can do to overcome your biases?

What is the single most impactful thing you will commit to doing to champion diversity and inclusion at your resort?
Key terms

Belonging

An authentic feeling of empowerment and participation in a group, experienced when a person feels safe, valued and accepted.
Source: Adapted from the Perception Institute

Bias

Embedded stereotypes that heavily influence our decision-making without our conscious knowledge.
Source: Perception Institute

Categorization

Our brain’s automatic process of organizing people, places, traits and behaviors into collections based on our limited individual experiences and understanding of the world, and focused by our brain’s strong desire to create systems of logic from ambiguity.
Source: Perception Institute—Transforming Perception

Confirmation Bias

The evaluation of information or behavior based on existing perspectives while ignoring or failing to see evidence to the contrary.
Source: Kahneman, 2011

Discrimination

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

Exclusion

The process or state of being set apart from other people or things.
Source: Adapted from the Perception Institute

Explicit Bias

The attitudes and stereotypes people consciously hold and endorse.
Source: Kang et al., 2012

Identity Differences

Aspects of people such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability or class that result in our sorting ourselves and others into groups.
Source: Perception Institute

Contact: Laura Moriarty, SPHR, SCP
**Implicit Bias**
The automatic association of stereotypes or attitudes with particular social groups.
Source: Banaji & Greenwald, 2013

**In-Group Bias**
Implicit or explicit preference for one’s own group over other groups.
Source: Tropp & Molina, 2012

**Inclusion**
The considerate process of creating an environment that welcomes, respects, values and supports all individuals, in an effort to respect their unique qualities.
Source: Adapted from the Perception Institute

**Institutional Racism**
The ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups, creating unbalanced advantages for whites along with oppression and disadvantages for people from groups classified as nonwhite.
Source: Racial Equity Guide

**Othering**
A set of dynamics, processes and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities.
Source: The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging

**Prejudice**
A prejudgment or unjustifiable (and usually negative), attitude of one type of individual or group toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with unique characteristics.
Sources: Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder’s Tool Kit. Claremont, Calif.: Claremont Graduate University. via Racial Equity Guide

**Racial Anxiety**
The body’s heightened levels of stress and emotional experience due to interactions with people of other races, often a byproduct of living in a racially homogeneous environment. Most often, people of color experience this anxiety due to their concern that they will be the subject
of discrimination and hostility, where white people most often worry that they will be assumed to be racist.

Racial Equity
The aspirational condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.
Source: Center for Assessment and Policy Development via Racial Equity Guide

Stereotype
The beliefs and opinions people hold about the characteristics, traits and behaviors of a certain group.
Source: Steele, 2010

Stereotype Threat
Concern that our behavior may confirm stereotypes about a group we belong to, often causing us to behave in ways that confirm the very stereotypes at the root of our anxieties.
Source: Perception Institute

SOGIE
Sexual Orientation, Gender Expression and Identity.
Source: See Genderbread person page 11

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