

Common Biases in the Workplace

The human brain takes in millions of pieces of information in one second but only processes a handful. Our brain categorizes information and filters out “noise,” it creates shortcuts or quick judgements or preferences; this is unconscious bias.

Biases influence what we hear, remember and value. They exist in people and in the systems and processes we design and use every day, impacting all of our big decisions (recruitment, work allocation, performance management, pay and promotions) and day-to-day interactions. These affect perceptions of fairness amongst our colleagues and clients, levels of employee engagement and customer satisfaction, and general workplace culture.

Here are a few common types of biases we see in the workplace:

Stereotype Bias



Believing certain attributes about a person to be true because they belong to a specific group.

Performance Bias



The assumption that some people are much better at certain tasks than others, based on stereotypes.

Confirmation Bias



Only seeking out information that confirms one's beliefs, attitudes or perspective.

Self-Serving Bias



Giving oneself credit for successes and blaming external factors for failures.

Anchoring Bias



Being influenced by the first pieces of information that one receives.

Availability Heuristic



When one believes there is a higher probability of something happening because they see it occur more often than not.

Halo/Horn Bias



Unconsciously allowing positive (halo) or negative (horn) initial impressions to influence one's overall perception of something or someone.

Bandwagon/Group Think



When someone consciously or unconsciously adjusts their opinion, attitude or behaviour to match the perceived consensus of a group of people.

Optimism/Pessimism Bias



People's decisions and judgements can be influenced by their own positive or negative perspectives and mood.

Affinity Bias



The tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds

Misinformation Bias



Being influenced by memories of an event rather than the facts of the event itself.

Dunning-Kruger Effect



When one overestimates their knowledge or ability in a specific area.

Information Bias



The tendency to seek more information even when it can't affect decision-making.

Framing Bias



Being influenced based on the way information is presented rather than the information alone.

inclusivity