



# CHECK YOURSELF


How can you identify your unconscious biases when you're not even aware they're influencing you? *HRM* asked Jill Noble, trainer and facilitator at Pivotal HR, to share her insights.




**THE HALO EFFECT**  
Our overall impression of someone is influenced by one positive character attribution.  
E.g. you think someone dresses well, so you assume they'll be great in front of clients.




**CONFIRMATION BIAS**  
The tendency to search for information that confirms your prior opinion on a matter.  
E.g. you got along with a candidate, so you go searching for examples of their good work.




**ANCHORING BIAS**  
When making a decision, you rely too heavily on the initial information received.  
E.g. after a bad interview, you view the next candidate more favourably.




**GROUPTHINK**  
People in a group conform to each other's ideas to avoid rocking the boat, often resulting in an irrational/bad decision.




**STATUS QUO BIAS**  
When you'd prefer things stayed the same.  
E.g. you hire a replacement much like the person who just left because you liked and worked well with them.




**AUTHORITY BIAS**  
We're less likely to challenge the decision of a person in a position of power. We blindly follow them and assume they will always make the right call.




**ASSOCIATION BIAS**  
Latching on to an innocuous quality/behaviour as a reason not to hire/promote someone.  
E.g. she came to the interview with wet hair; we won't hire her.



**BLIND SPOT BIAS**  
We think we're immune to our own biases and therefore don't look out for them in talent management processes.



**DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT**  
An inability to recognise your own lack of ability (plus the related bias where experts underestimate their ability).



**HOT TIP**

“Our biases fluctuate. If our brains are relaxed and open – if we’ve eaten, slept, meditated, for example – then a bias that might have been quite high last week could be relatively low today. It’s not a constant thing.”

Source: Interview with Jill Noble and TitleMax

## YOUR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS CHECKLIST

Learning how to challenge your own biases when recruiting is a long process that requires hard work, research and practice. To get you started, Jill Noble shares some important things to keep front of mind.

### BEFORE YOU INTERVIEW A CANDIDATE

- When you're designing the criteria for your role, forget about the incumbent or the other people in that team. Just think about the competencies and skills a person would need to do that job (a single source of truth you return to at every stage of the process).
- Once you've homed in on the competencies, run them by others in the organisation to ensure they truly reflect the role.
- Create a list that distinguishes between skills of the job that are trainable and untrainable. Again, run this by others for feedback.
- When screening applicants, focus on minimum required qualifications and technical skills required.



### AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Debrief with interview panellists and justify all your thoughts aloud; invite people to challenge your perception.
- Keep a list of the agreed-upon criteria for the role in front of you when calling referees, to ensure you're asking fair and relevant questions.
- During the induction period, manage the person in accordance with that criteria list and offer training for those previously identified teachable skills.
- When you notice yourself having a gut feeling or inkling about someone, ask yourself if you can back it up with evidence. If you can't, disregard it.

### DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Everyone on the interview panel needs to have participated in forming the selection criteria.
- Avoid asking positively skewed questions that lead towards confirmation bias.
- Use a structured interview approach.
- Always question your first impression.



“When you create a competency framework for a role, use that at every stage of the process: telephone screening questions, the face-to-face interview, when comparing candidates and when calling referees.”

Source: Jill Noble interview; Google's unbiasing hiring checklists.

Jill Noble facilitates AHRI's Managing Unconscious Bias short course. Book into the next course, on 11 June, to learn how to eliminate biases from your talent management processes. Visit the AHRI website for more details: [bit.ly/392knXB](https://bit.ly/392knXB)