Diversity Scotland

equity • inclusion • belonging

Inclusive Recruitment & Conscious Inclusion

Post-Session Handbook

Film Hub Scotland

BFI FAN
BFI FILM AUDIENCE NETWORK

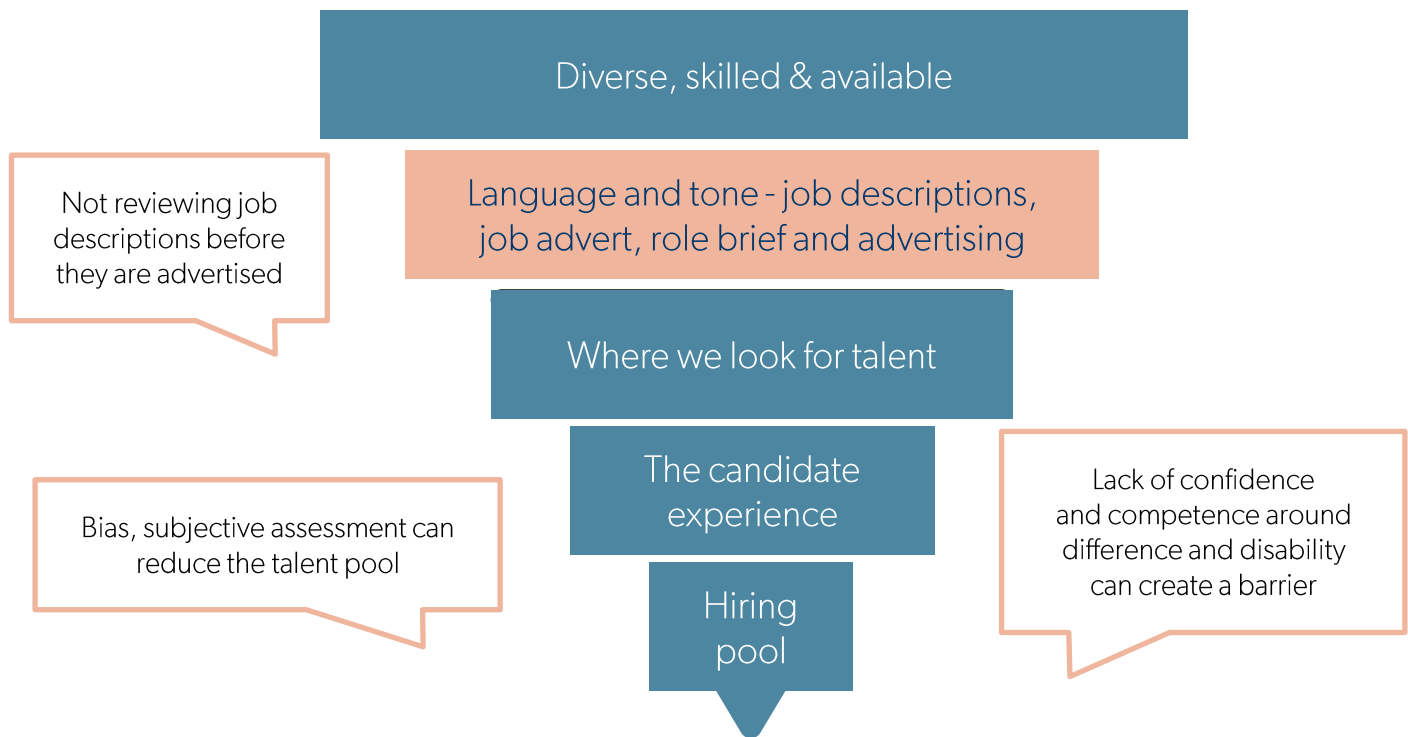Equality
Inclusion
Equity
Diversity
Belonging

What is inclusive hiring?

Inclusive hiring is the practice of designing jobs in a way that minimise bias, and creating an equitable application, interview, selection and offer process for candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Rather than one single step or process, there are many activities that can contribute to inclusive hiring.

Recognizing diversity

Embracing a wide range of qualities and perspectives candidates bring

Leveling the playing field

Fighting against recruitment bias and discrimination

Ensuring fair hiring practices

Limiting factors restrict our talent pool

Diverse, skilled & available

Language and tone - job descriptions, job advert, role brief and advertising

Where we look for talent

The candidate experience

Hiring pool

Not reviewing job descriptions before they are advertised

Bias, subjective assessment can reduce the talent pool

Lack of confidence and competence around difference and disability can create a barrier

When we talk about hiring for diversity, we mean making a conscious effort to attract a more diverse set of candidates at the very top of the funnel, and then ensuring no single group is disadvantaged by any steps taken in the hiring process.

Job Descriptions are the foundation point – getting this right up front is key - by not reviewing job descriptions the likelihood is bias creeps in at a later stage.

Visually this is presented like this to illustrate it starts really broad and at each step it narrows and if not inclusive narrows considerably.

If BFI FAN is underselling the great opportunities within the business then today should focus our thinking around that in order to ensure we attract and retain great talent and consider how we can achieve this through inclusive job design.

Ethnicity example

- When the final candidate pool has only one racialised candidate they have virtually no chance of being hired.

- If there are at least two racialised people in the final candidate pool the odds are 194 times greater.

- Referral programmes tend to favour white men more than any other demographic. Source: **Payscale**

- When men were asked about their professional networks, 63% of them state it's comprised of 'more or all men'. Source: **McKinsey**

- Don't rely on your network to hire – identify all the places where people from marginalised groups job search. **This tactic helped Pinterest attract 55% more candidates from the Global Ethnic Majority.**

This is why we need to start with a diverse talent pool.

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle

An inclusive recruitment lifecyle should encompass the following in each of the key stages:

Job Design: Structures roles to be accessible and equitable, removing barriers and appealing to diverse talent from the start of recruitment.

Attraction: Drawing diverse talent by promoting an inclusive culture and values that resonate with varied backgrounds and experiences.

Application: Accessible, unbiased process, making it easy for a diverse range of candidates to showcase their skills and experience.

Selection: Fair, objective assessments to identify the best talent while reducing bias at every stage.

Let's now take each of the stages individually for a more in-depth review.

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Job Design

Inclusive job design is based on defining inclusive and objective criteria for a role that's free from bias and adverse impact and that is consistently and rigorously applied and measured.

The golden rule, is that the candidate specification is not discussed until the organisational and role analysis have been completed.

This avoids building a brief around a stereotypical view of the candidate required, or around an individual.

To build a role around an individual that is not based on sound organisational analysis is contrary to all best practice guidance and expertise in organisational design and is to be avoided.

First step the inclusive job design framework is **organisational analysis**.

This covers the organisation and the aspects facing the part of the business within which this role sits. Whilst asking these questions, the organisational structure, roles and responsibilities of other relevant posts within the structure should be reviewed.

- What are the key priorities for the next 3-5 years?
- What are the main challenges facing the organisation and the role?
- What changes can you see affecting the way this role is delivered in the future?
- What are the opportunities for the business?

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Job Design

The second step the inclusive job design framework **Role Analysis** which looks at the role in isolation.

This ensures that when it comes to shortlisting, key stakeholders are clear of the details and practicalities of the role and are more likely to foresee any challenges that may arise later in the process.

- What is the main purpose of this role?
- What are the key deliverables?
- What are the major responsibilities of the position? Estimate how much time will be spent on each responsibility.
- What are the critical success factors for the role?
- Clarify the metrics of the role: number of direct reports, total headcount, budget, turnover, key measurable business targets, etc. This will greatly facilitate selection decisions, knowing the scope and scale of the role and what level of experience might be required to undertake the role.

ROLE

INDIVIDUAL   ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEM
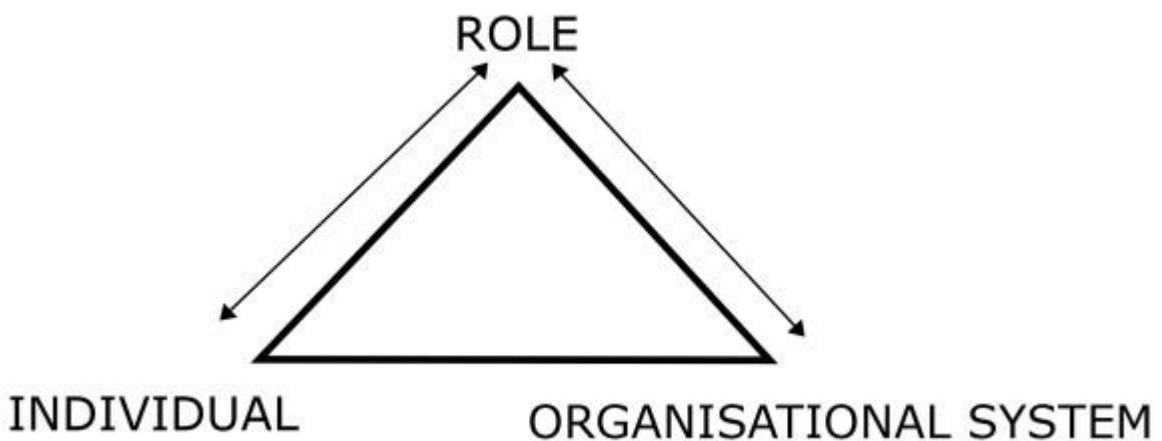
The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Job Design

The third step the inclusive job design framework is **Candidate Specification**.

Ensuring all aspects of the candidate specification link directly to the outputs of the organisational and role analyses and must be able to stand up to scrutiny as either essential or desirable criteria to ensure delivery of the developed brief.

- What specific experience must the candidate have?
- What technical expertise and knowledge must the candidate have?
- Consider soft skills and competencies, as well as hard skills and competencies to ensure no adverse impact on women, people with a disability, younger and older candidates e.g. instead of 'good communication skills', be specific, 'communicate a clear vision to unify everyone's efforts and make each individual feel a key part of the team'.
- What would good look like against each element of the candidate specification, agree that with all stakeholders? For example, a good team leader may be interpreted by one stakeholder as pushes the team to the limit to get results. For another stakeholder it may mean is motivational for team members, adopting style according to the audience and development needs of the individual.

Barriers to inclusive job design

Below are example of some commonly used terminology and the potential issues related to them:

Years of experience – immediately impacts on younger people but also on those who are new to the market. Years of experience does not reflect the skills that an individual has required and therefore is not a reliable measure of talent.

Previous experience in the market – this criteria fuels the status quo, preventing more diverse talent from outside of the sector from entering the civil service

A degree – lack of social diversity and adverse impact for racialised people of colour. 2017 only 11% in Oxford came from disadvantaged backgrounds. 2016 only 35 students who identify as Black ended up going to Oxford, and only 40 attended Cambridge. Not an indicator of future job performance

'Strong' 'Drive' – Language and tone – words such as 'drive' and 'strong' are proven to appeal more to certain groups and therefore will not attract more diverse talent

Full-time - Working patterns: Roles are typically designed to be full time with limited consideration to a more flexible working opportunities such as job shares or part time hours. We will explore flexibility in job-design more later on today

Well networked – relies on a candidate having prior experience in the market and does not reflect their ability to fulfil the role. There is clear evidence that networking and client portfolios are established through existing connections, resulting in a closed sector.

Barriers to inclusive job design

Some more commonly used terminology and the potential issues related to them:

Client relationships built – A missed opportunity to attract those with transferable skills – as demonstrated in the evidence provided, there is a requirement for a range of skills that are transferable from other sectors and be failing to include these in job adverts, the candidate pool is narrowed

Full clean driving licence – you often see this as a standard catch all in role profiles where it is not a job requirement and alternative modes of transport can be used. Adverse impact on some disabilities

Colloquialisms – 'double hatted' etc. to be avoided, can be misinterpreted and impact on ENFL

'Make yourself heard' - communication skills and anything with a physical implication to be avoided

UK government knowledge and experience limits them to uk applications or people with uk expertise, this is knowledge that could be acquired so we need to push back where possible

Job Design - Gendered Language

Gendered language in job adverts can reinforce stereotypes and discourage applicants from a diverse range of backgrounds, particularly women and non-binary people, from applying.

Words with masculine or feminine connotations can signal an unintended preference, making roles feel exclusive or unwelcoming.

This undermines efforts to build a truly diverse workforce by deterring qualified candidates who don't feel represented, impacting inclusion and limiting the pool of talent considered.

The table below givers examples of some masculine-coded language alongside some alternatives

Masculine-coded	Alternative
Ambitious / Driven	Motivated
Autonomously	Empowered to
Decisive	Conclusive
Independent	Impartial
Manager	Influencer
Determined	Purposeful

Inclusive Job Design Checklist

- Consistent format across all – use a standardised template across your network

- Supported with org charts – to show how the job relates to other jobs

- Language and tone inclusive

- Looks forward not backwards

- No acronyms

- No colloquialisms

- Don't include years of experience or education unless a legal or regulatory requirement

- Short and punchy – between 6-10 statements

- Attractive and engaging

- Outcome not task focussed

- Realistic and achievable

- It must be measurable and quantifiable

- Unless absolutely necessary for the role, ensure that the language does not deter or impact on people with marginalised characteristics,

- Contains only essential criteria and is not a wish list

- Is practical so takes into account scale and context to ensure a realistic approach

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Attraction

The next stage is attraction where you should seek to draw diverse talent by promoting an inclusive culture and values that resonate with varied backgrounds and experiences.

EVP (employer value proposition) is the articulation of the **employer brand**, answering the question "why should I work for your company?" as well as "why should I stay at this company?".

Employer brand is the reputation, **EVP** is the narrative.

An Employer brand helps organisations differentiate what they offer in the talent marketplace, and recruit, retain and engage the talent they need to succeed.

Well before a candidate becomes aware of the organisation as a potential employer, they gather information about the employer brand from the news, social media, job boards, internet searches, acquaintances, or other touch points.

Good employer branding policies provide a differentiation factor that sets the organisation apart in the minds of candidates in terms of identity and Employer Value Proposition (EVP), what you offer to candidates.

The CIPD points out that you have an employer brand whether you consciously develop it or not, it's based on the way the organisation is seen as a 'place to work' by potential recruits, current colleagues, leavers, and retirees.

Employer brand is not just about reiterating the organisational mission statement and values, but is predicated on the real, lived experience of the workforce: "People who like the job they do and the place they work to become advocates for it".

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Attraction

EVP (employer value proposition): is the unique set of benefits which a colleague receives in return for the skills, attributes and experience they bring to the organisation.

Each new colleague brings something unique to the organisation, and corporate culture shapes everything from colleague motivation to major decisions. Publicising inspirational values encourages colleagues to feel a connection with the organisation and letting them help shape the culture ensures they feel valued and involved.

The employer value proposition is what motivates and engages colleagues, a strong EVP will help to retain top performers and attract talented people.

If your employer brand is, in some sense, a promise that you make to your current and future colleagues, Employer Value Proposition is how you keep that promise.

Your EVP is all of the ways that you provide value to your current and future colleagues.

This can be everything from free lunches and a cool office space to educational opportunities, the chance to make impactful decisions on a meaningful project, or opportunities to gain recognition within one's chosen field.

Not every EVP will appeal to every possible candidate, so the trick is to work towards providing value in ways that will appeal to your target hiring demographics (to say nothing of your current team).

If your employer brand is a story, your EVP is the setting and characters of that story—i.e. the elements that make the story possible, rather than the story itself.

Building and Promoting an Inclusive Employer Brand

<u>Internally:</u>

Start with your colleagues – without their buy-in and support, it'll be impossible to build a culture of inclusion and establish your employer brand. Promote diversity and inclusion initiatives among colleagues and identify allies and partners who will get involved and help spread the word.

Here are some things those in Talent Acquisition / Resourcing can do to build an inclusive culture and make sure this shines through in your employer brand:

<u>Know what your employer brand is and help shape it</u>
- Regularly check out employee review sites like Glassdoor, request feedback from candidates after interviews, and ask to view employee survey results.
- Consider how the colleague and candidate experiences your company creates are affecting your recruitment efforts, and work to make necessary changes—even if that means escalating the feedback to your leadership team.

<u>Work closely with your diversity and inclusion partners</u>
- Meet regularly to discuss goals, progress, strategies, and challenges.
- This will provide a forum to consider ideas for improvement, both within the recruiting function and throughout the rest of the organisation.
- It will also ensure that you are aligning your efforts with diversity and inclusion leaders.

<u>Run internal events that talk about diversity and inclusion</u>
- Hold company-wide events that discuss why you're prioritising diversity and inclusion, what you're doing in those areas, and share the progress you've made as an organisation.
- Join Colleague Network Group meetings to learn what you're doing well and where you can improve.
- If you find that certain groups are underrepresented in specific departments, work with the leaders of those departments to uncover the forces and processes that have contributed to that reality. Then develop strategies to address these areas.

<u>Share your wins internally</u>
- Publicly promote and applaud recruiting and hiring behaviors that further diversity recruitment.
- Publicly address behavior that hurts your diversity recruiting efforts and provide one-on-one training to correct it. Doing so will keep your diversity and inclusion initiatives top of mind for all colleagues while creating room for growth and improvement.

Attractions – Job Adverts

Hiring better starts by writing better. Good writing is, in many cases, the key to promoting inclusion. According to research, job openings advertised using inclusive language get filled 17% faster and attract 23% more candidates from under-represented, marginalised and minoritised groups.

The 9 Inclusive Job Advert Principles:

1. **Avoid extreme language.** This type of language can discourage applications from certain candidates. Words like "expert" can exclude interesting profiles. It is better to use sentences like "experience working with this technology to manage XYZ".

2. **Avoid words that may convey stereotypes.** Words like "compete" or "dominant" reflect masculinity and may deter women from applying to a certain job offer. It is better to use words like "motivation" or "tireless" instead.

3. **Avoid unclear or unnecessary requirements.** You might have an unending list of qualifications in mind for a given role, but in order to highlight your commitment to inclusion, it's important to trim the list down. That's because studies show that while men are likely to apply to jobs for which they meet only 60% of the qualifications, women and people from minoritised or marginalized groups are much more likely to hesitate unless they meet 100% of the listed requirements. Instead of including all of the "nice-to-haves" that a dream candidate might possess, stick to the "must-haves," and you'll likely see an increased diversity in your applicant pool.

4. **Convey a growth mindset.** Companies that are committed to the development of their talent are more likely to attract candidates from underrepresented groups. Expressions that reflect fixed qualities such as "natural-born analytical thinker", "extremely intelligent" or "constantly outperforming" discourage aspiring candidates who may have high growth potential. The opposite happens with expressions such as "passionate learner" or "motivated to take on challenges". As an added bonus, recent research conducted on 60,000 job adverts found that Time to Fill was 1.5 times faster with more growth mindset language!

Attractions – Job Adverts

The 9 Inclusive Job Advert Principles continued:

5. Use "you" and "us". According to Textio, a platform that predicts the type of response job offers will get based on their wording, offers that use "you" and "we" are filled faster. Expressions like "you love finding the best solution to a problem" to address candidates are much better than impersonal ones like "the ideal candidate".

6. Avoid using masculine nouns and pronouns. Using the second-person singular allows to avoid using masculine nouns and adjectives. However, when a direct reference is unavoidable, it is advisable to use gender-neutral nouns, such as "the person" or "the candidates".

7. Write as concisely as possible. Job ads should be brief. Ads written concisely are usually filled faster and usually draw in more applications.

8. State the company's purpose and values. Emphasising the company's values and mission is a good practice that should be taken into account when drawing up the advert, as it can help the candidates determine if it's a place where they would like to work.

9. Demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion. It is very advisable to devote some space to describing the company's commitment to looking for all kinds of talent to build a diverse workforce in which all social groups are represented.

Attractions – Specialist Job Boards

It's worth noting that although specialist job boards should be seen as 'silver bullet' solutions they are helpful.

Some examples of these can be found below:

Disability:
- Evenbreak
- Disabledperson
- Disability Job Exchange

Race:
- Ethinicjobsite
- AFBE

Gender:
- Women in Tech
- STEM Women
- Workingmums

EDI Generalist:
- Diversity Scotland
- Diversifying.io
- Diversity Scotland

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Application

The next stage is candidate application. The application process should be accessible and unbiased, making it easy for a diverse range of candidates to showcase their skills and experience.

Designing an Accessible, Inclusive Application Process

Multiple Formats:
- Offer candidates flexibility with CV-free options, such as structured portfolios, recorded introductions, or skill-based project submissions.
- In creative industries, traditional applications may not fully capture an applicant's potential.
- Allow submissions that showcase practical skills—such as project examples, short reels, or even video intros—instead of or alongside CVs.
- This approach helps candidates demonstrate relevant skills in ways aligned with their strengths, making it a fairer evaluation tool.

Accessible, Concise Forms:
- Create concise forms with essential questions only.
- Ensure accessibility with screen-reader compatibility and mobile-friendly design.
- Many applicants abandon applications due to excessive form length or lack of accessibility.
- Keep forms brief, limiting questions to core qualifications and skills.
- Prioritise screen-reader compatibility and mobile optimisation to ensure applicants can easily complete forms, regardless of their device or accessibility needs.

Guidance on Adjustments:
- Clearly outline how candidates can request adjustments and who to contact, encouraging applicants to communicate any needs comfortably.
- Many candidates hesitate to request adjustments due to concerns about stigma.
- Clearly communicate that reasonable adjustments are available and encouraged, listing a direct contact for any requests.
- This visibility signals inclusivity and removes barriers for candidates with disabilities or other specific needs.

Application – Breaking Down Barriers and Enhancing Equity

Anonymous Applications:
- Consider anonymising applications by removing identifiers (e.g., name, gender) to reduce potential bias in early screening.
- Removing identifying details in the initial review stage, where possible, helps focus evaluations on skills and experience rather than personal information.
- This approach reduces the impact of unconscious bias, creating a fairer, more objective selection process.

Recognising Diverse Experience:
- Recognise practical experience from freelance or informal projects, especially valuable for creative roles.
- Talent in the screen and film industry often comes with non-linear career paths. Value relevant skills demonstrated through freelance, informal, or self-directed projects.
- By recognising non-traditional backgrounds, you'll widen the talent pool and better align with the industry's dynamic nature.

Transparent Follow-Up:
- Provide prompt responses to all applicants, including those not shortlisted, to maintain a positive candidate experience and foster future engagement.
- Many applicants feel ignored if they don't receive a response. Build trust by offering respectful follow-up, even for those not shortlisted, to acknowledge their efforts.
- This consideration strengthens your organisation's reputation and keeps candidates engaged, supporting a more diverse talent pipeline.

The Inclusive Recruitment Lifecycle – Selection

The final stage is candidate selection. The selection process should be fair and have objective assessments to identify the best talent while reducing bias at every stage.

All decisions made during the assessment and selection of job applicants should be EVIDENCE-BASED. Recruitment policies and practices should be robust enough to ensure that personal preference/bias doesn't creep in to hiring decisions.

Refer to your job description, person specification and competency profile for each role and list the essential shortlisting criteria, which could include:

Educational qualification or equivalent: for example, a graduate position requiring a 2:1 minimum degree

Experience: such as a secretarial role needing Minute taking experience

Skills: an HR role requiring experience using a specific software, for example

Knowledge: such as a social media role needing knowledge of a range of social media tools

Behavioural competencies: e.g. an accountancy role needing evidence of influencing at Board level.

Next, assess applications against the sifting criteria to screen out unsuitable candidates.

Selection Process – Anonymised Sifting

Removing identifying details from CVs and Application Forms has been proven to reduce bias from creeping in.

Are CVs or Application Forms even necessary?
- Could Hiring Managers at BFI FAN create a technical challenge which directly tests the key skills required for the role?
- All applicants could complete a challenge, the highest scoring applicants are invited to interview and those that do not pass the technical challenge are rejected.

Although anonymised sifting is not a solution for removing interview stage bias, the results at the hire stage for diversity are demonstrable as seen by many organisations in pilot programmes e.g. HS2.

Sifting / Evaluation Matrix

- Rate each candidate's CV application against agreed criteria
- Uses an alphabetical rating system which allows candidates to be grouped together into categories of EQUAL MERIT
- Ratings automatically calculated
- Minimises bias
- Provides an audit trail
- Evidence based decision making

Unconscious bias

Biases are natural. We all have them, and they help us make sense of the world. However, biases are a challenge to objectivity. They're subjective and individual according to our background and experiences. They are often unfair, unjust, generalised and insensitive.

Research believes that at any given moment you are being hit by around 11 million insights or inputs to your brain and it can only really cope with about 40 at any time.

Decision fatigue is a real thing. Your ability to make good choices deteriorates the more decisions you make. So to lighten the load, our brain's decision-making is broken down into two systems - one fast thinking, and one slow thinking.

System 1: used for every day, intuitive decisions. These are the sort of decisions that if you had to think long and hard about every one of them, you'd likely have a meltdown - like how much milk to put into your tea, what top to wear in the morning, or when to cross the road. For the most part, this sort of decision making is a bit like being on autopilot.

System 2: used for bigger, more important decisions like planning a trip or working on a big presentation. System 2 thinking tends to be slower, considered, and more mentally taxing.

Having these two systems is what allows us to stay productive and sane.

We make so many tiny decisions throughout the day that we need system 1 to take the brunt of them so that we reserve our capacity for conscious and informed decision making for when it's actually needed.

Our brains use shortcuts and patterns to draw conclusions, by using the information subconsciously stored in our mental lockers: this includes things like our past experiences and upbringing, what we've seen in the media and our individual opinions.

All of this allows us to make swift assessments of situations. However, we often use system 1, when we should be using system 2. This is why we have unconscious bias.

Different types of unconscious biases

Whilst there are over 200 different types of known cognitive (also known as unconscious or implicit) biases there are several common ones that present in unchecked workplace decision making, particularly in recruitment.

Some of these are:

First impression bias/ Confirmation bias: fall into trap of asking questions etc. to seek evidence to support prior views. Evidence to confirm/ leading people in interviews

Like me/ Not like me: drawn to individuals like ourselves and rate higher

Stereotyping: attribute qualities and behaviours based on what we think they typify

Halo/ horns: global impression. One desirable characteristic and rate all competencies/ behaviours highly

Central tendency: going for the middle option / scoring down the middle

Enthusiasm for competence: confused that enthusiasm is capability

Contrast effect: compare candidates against each other rather than criteria

Primacy/ Recency effect: remembering the first or last thing that has been said

Negative information bias: negative information has bigger impact, and we tend to place more emphasis on this

Clone effect: adding extra criteria to ensure the hire is the same as the current incumbent

Attribution error: assuming fault lies with the individual not the circumstance

In group bias: tendency to favour your own group

Status quo bias we like things to stay the same

The impact of unconscious bias

The impact of these Unconscious Bias in the workplace:

- As result of our limited cognitive capacity, we subconsciously categorise people when we meet them to avoid having to conduct completely new assessments for every new person we come across.
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- We assign a 'value' to the categories we use and without even realising it we stereotype.

- Research shows that 20% of 540 UK female jobseekers from the global ethnic majority altered their name in applications and almost all who did report a higher level of call-backs from potential employers.

- The CIPD reports that 51% of HR professionals in the UK were found to be biased against overweight women – and were unaware that this was the case.

Bias can often show up as micro-behaviours or microaggressions (the little things that we say and do that show how we regard those around us).

- They can make people feel excluded and can have long-term effects.

- The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, can communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to people based solely on their marginalised group membership.

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- They can have an enormous impact on to what extent we feel valued and included, and therefore how productive and loyal we are at work.

- Being constantly interrupted while talking, being left out of a discussion, someone reading emails/messages while you're talking to them, looking at their watch or not being introduced at a meeting can send negative signals.

- Even a change in voice pitch, volume or rate, or a change in body posture or hand gestures can affect the way you come across and make another person feel.

Diversity
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