

# Unconscious Bias

Miriam Friedman | Oregon Coast Community College | September 18,  
2019

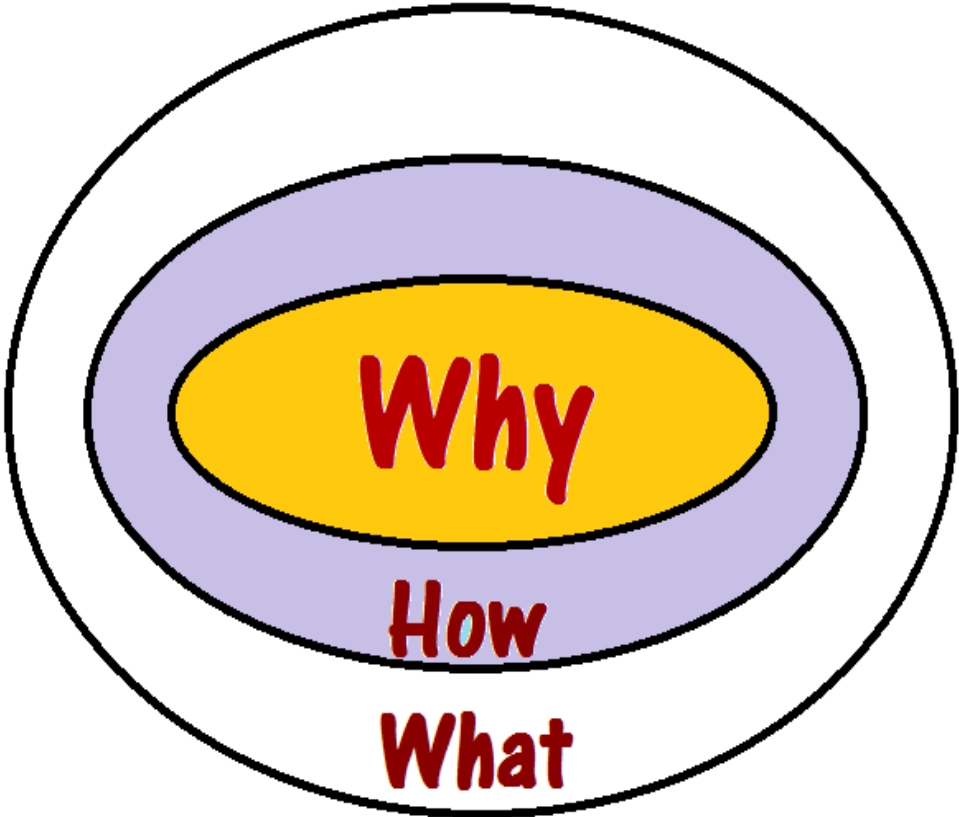
# Learning Objectives

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At the end of the training, learners will be able to:

- Explain what unconscious bias is
  - Understand how it can negatively influence workplace decisions
  - Understand some scientific research on unconscious bias and its influence
  - Commit to taking at least one action to mitigate the influence of unconscious bias:
    - Structure for success
    - Measure results
    - Evaluate subtle messages
    - Hold everyone accountable
-

Before we begin, think about the Golden Circle









**We receive 11 million bits of information every moment.**

**We can only consciously process 40 bits.**

**99.9999996%**

**UNCONSCIOUS**

# Reacting before we even realize it

The subconscious mind uses 3 major processes to make sense of the millions of bits of information we receive.



**Objects, Processes, Schemas**



# Our brains in action - filling in the gaps

Olny srmat poelpe can raed tihs. I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulaclyt uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! If you can raed tihs psas it on!!

# Our brains in action

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Please say the *color* of the text.

RED

BLUE

YELLOW

BLACK

GREEN

BLUE

ORANGE

PURPLE

BROWN

---

GREEN

RED

# Our brains in action

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Please say the *color* of the text.

RED

BLUE

YELLOW

BLACK

GREEN

BLUE

ORANGE

PURPLE

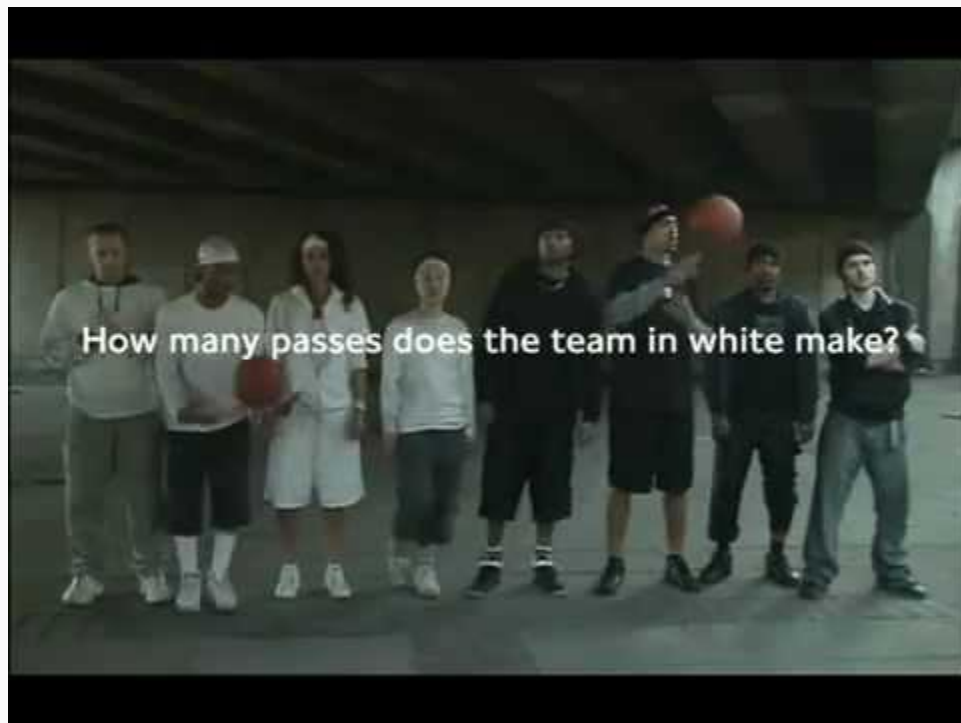
BROWN

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GREEN

RED



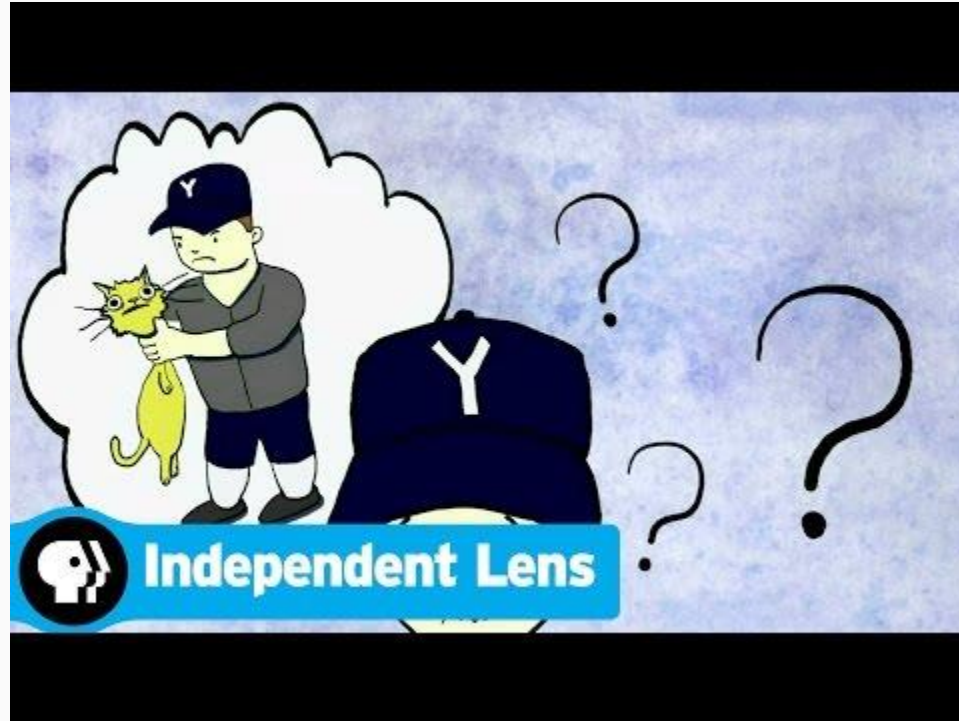


How many passes does the team in white make?

# Ladder of Inference



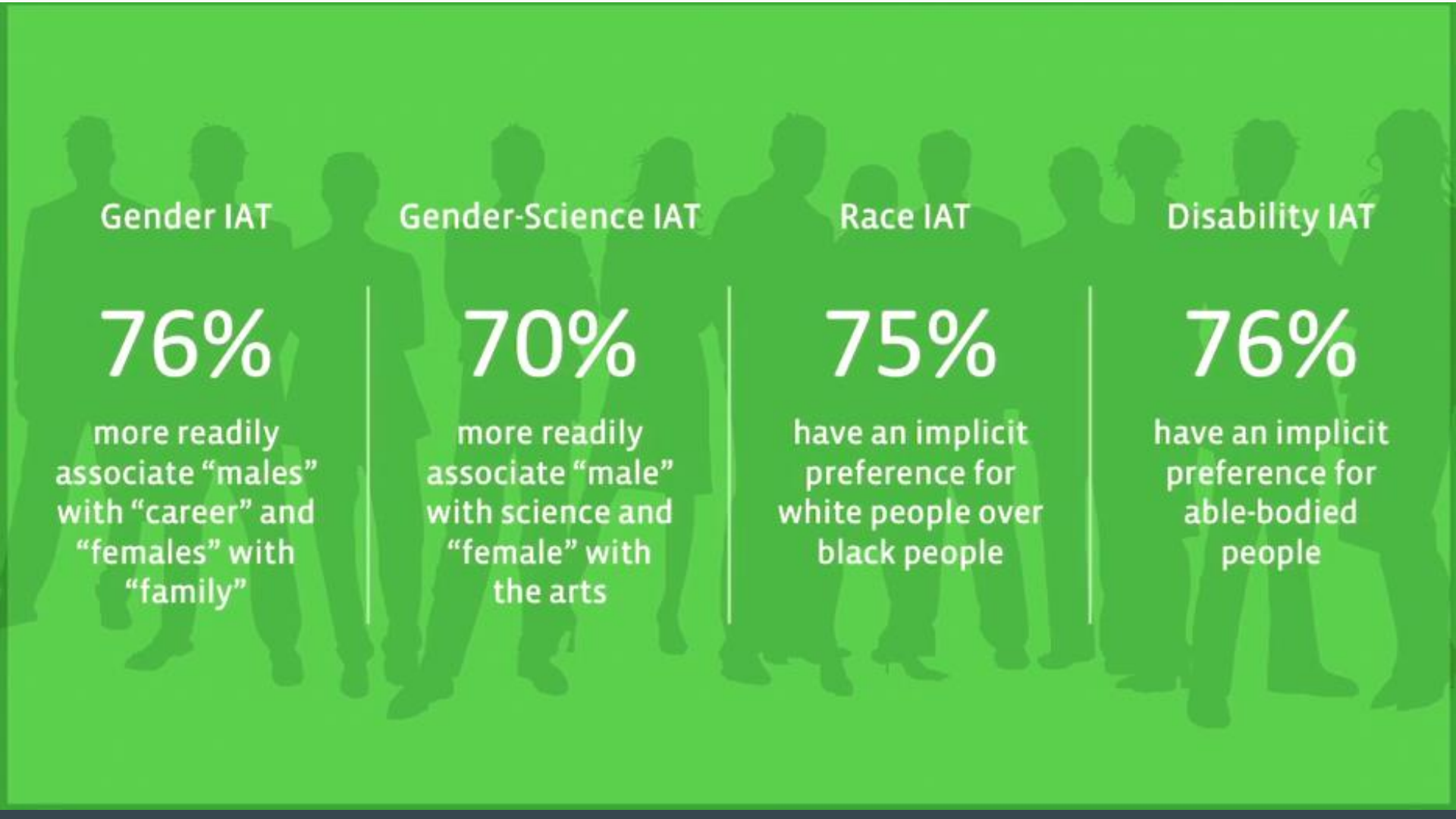
# A little more explanation



# What is implicit bias?

Project Implicit defines implicit social cognition as the "thoughts and feelings that occur outside of conscious awareness or control."

Try an Implicit Associations Test (IAT) for yourself at [Project Implicit](#).



Gender IAT

76%

more readily  
associate “males”  
with “career” and  
“females” with  
“family”

Gender-Science IAT

70%

more readily  
associate “male”  
with science and  
“female” with  
the arts

Race IAT

75%

have an implicit  
preference for  
white people over  
black people

Disability IAT

76%

have an implicit  
preference for  
able-bodied  
people



# Unconscious Bias

An **Implicit association or attitude** that:

- Operates beyond our control and awareness
- Informs our perceptions of a person or social group
- Can influence our decision making and behavior (Catalyst Women)

Our **implicit people preferences**, formed by our socialisation, our experiences, and by our exposure to others' views about other groups of people.

**Quick and often inaccurate judgment** based on limited facts and our own life experiences.

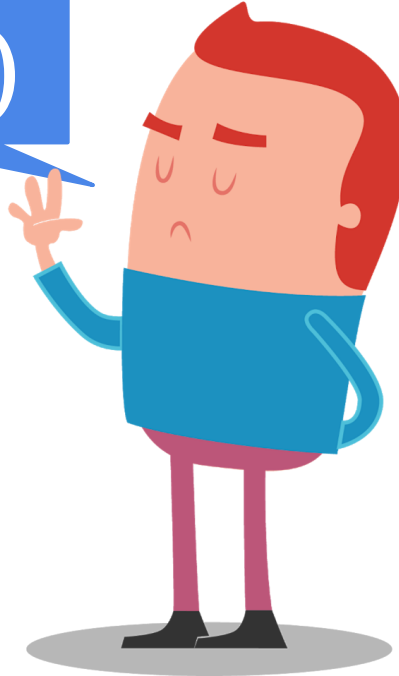
- This gives certain individuals and groups both unearned advantage and unearned disadvantage in the workplace.

# 4 things that make a situation more prone to the influence of unconscious biases:

1. Task
2. Numbers
3. Clarity
4. Perceiver

**YOU are biased.**

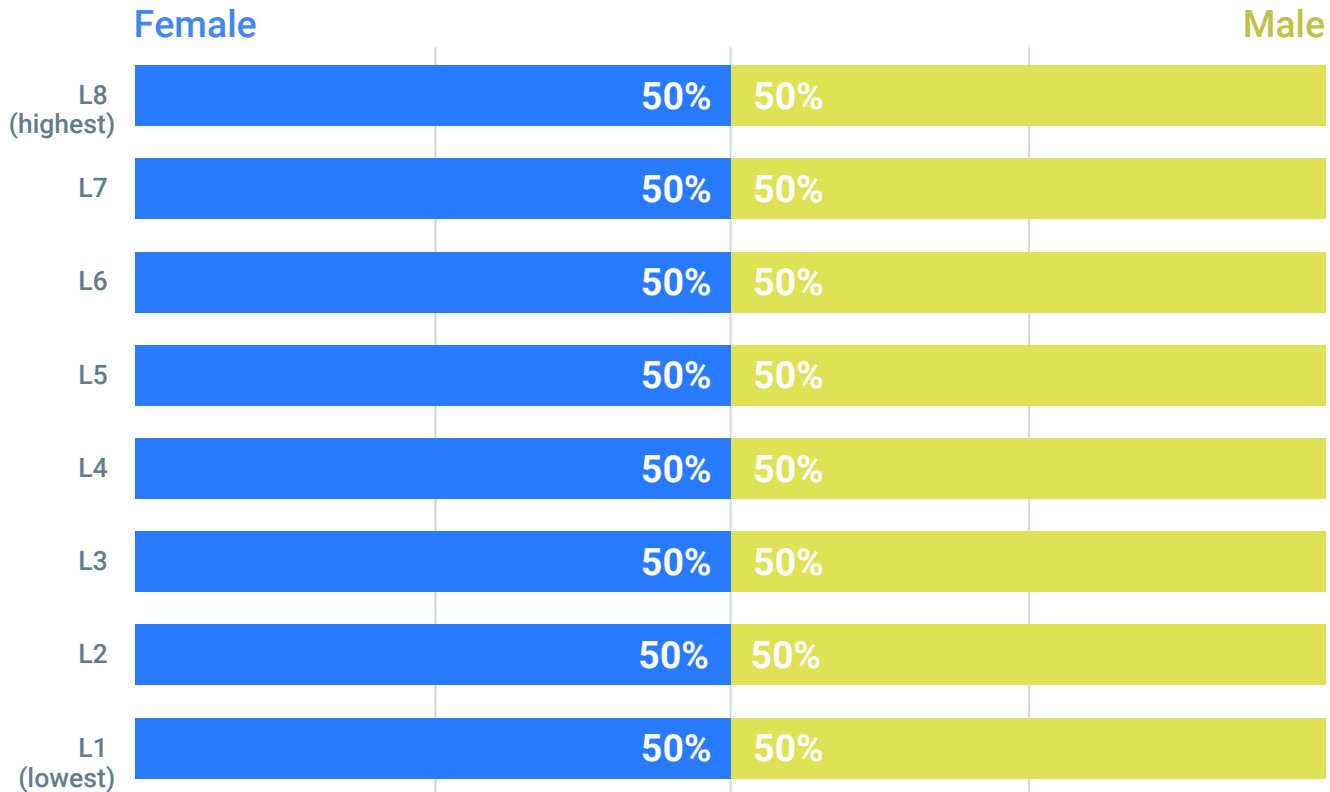
**(So am I.)**



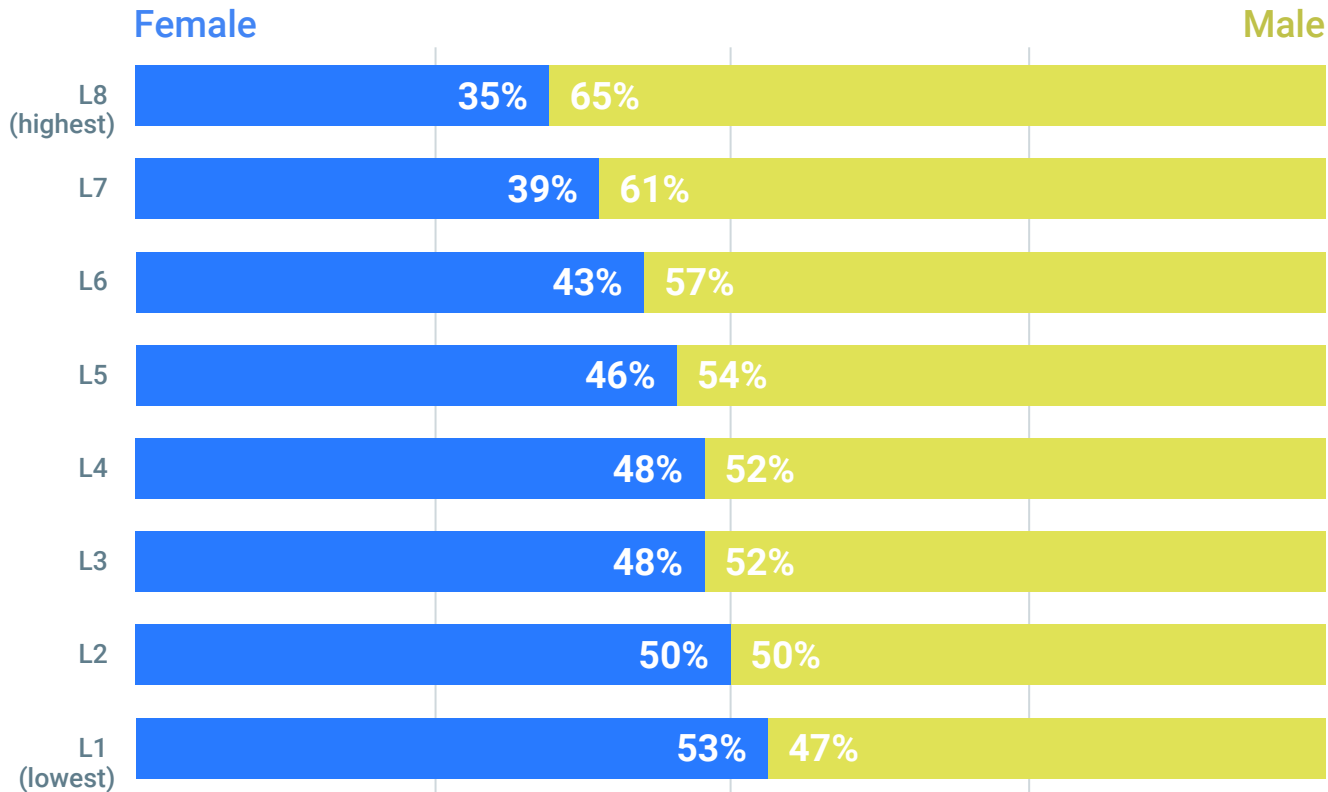
**It matters.**

**Even a tiny bit of bias  
can have big consequences.**

# With 1% variance in performance scores...



...only 35% of level 8 employees would be blue.



# Diversity is a competitive advantage.

Companies with higher proportions of women board directors outperform others by 53%.

# Diversity is a competitive advantage.

**Diverse teams outperform homogeneous ones, especially when solving complex problems.**



**Your job:**

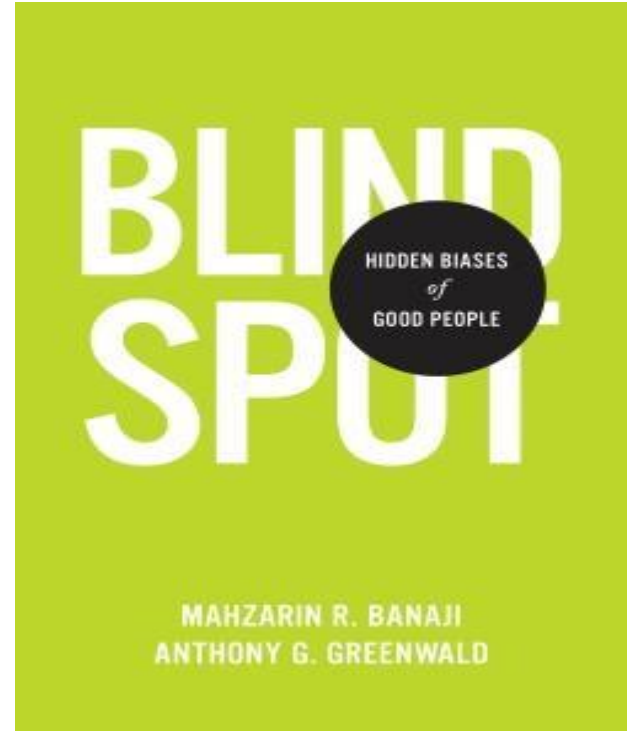
**Commit to one action.**

# Check our bias to wreck our bias



# Take Five: Tips for Uncovering Bias

1. Acknowledge your bias
2. Be wary of first impressions
3. Learn about stereotypes
4. Broaden your focus
5. Expose yourself to new experiences



# Four methods to try:

1. Structure for success

2. Measure results

3. Evaluate subtle messages

4. Hold everyone accountable

**What does success look like,  
specifically?**

# Is Emily more employable than Lakisha?

Applicant: Brendan, Greg, Emily & Anne



Applicant: Tamika, Aisha, Rasheed, & Tyrone





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**POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS**

# Structured job interviews





# What makes a good manager?

Self-confident  
Desire responsibility  
Industrious  
Assertive  
Consistent  
Logical  
Firm  
Aggressive  
Steady  
Skilled in business matters  
Vigorous  
Emotionally stable  
Forceful  
Analytical ability  
Direct  
Frank



Curious  
Helpful  
Intuitive  
Creative  
Understanding  
Neat  
Aware of others' feelings  
Vulgar (less)

# Four methods to try:

1. Structure for success

**2. Measure results**

3. Evaluate subtle messages

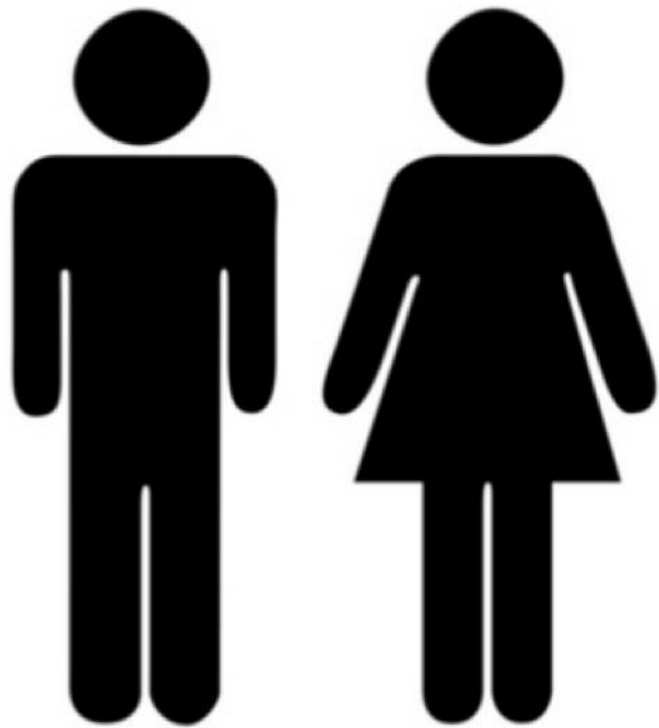
4. Hold everyone accountable

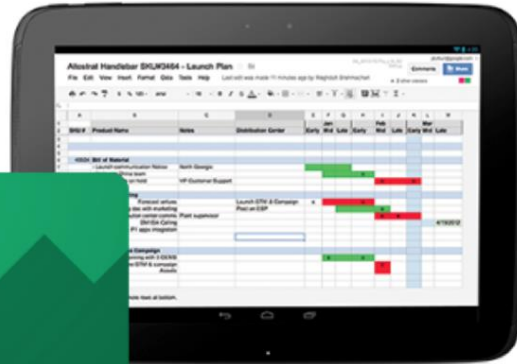
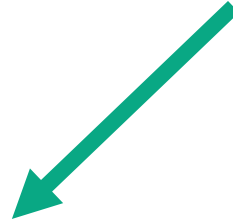
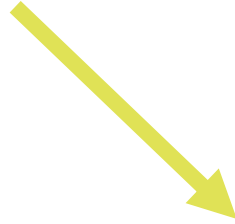
**You can't improve what you can't measure.**

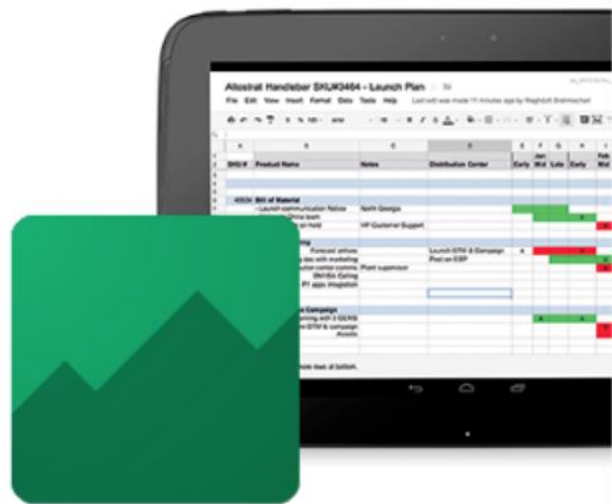
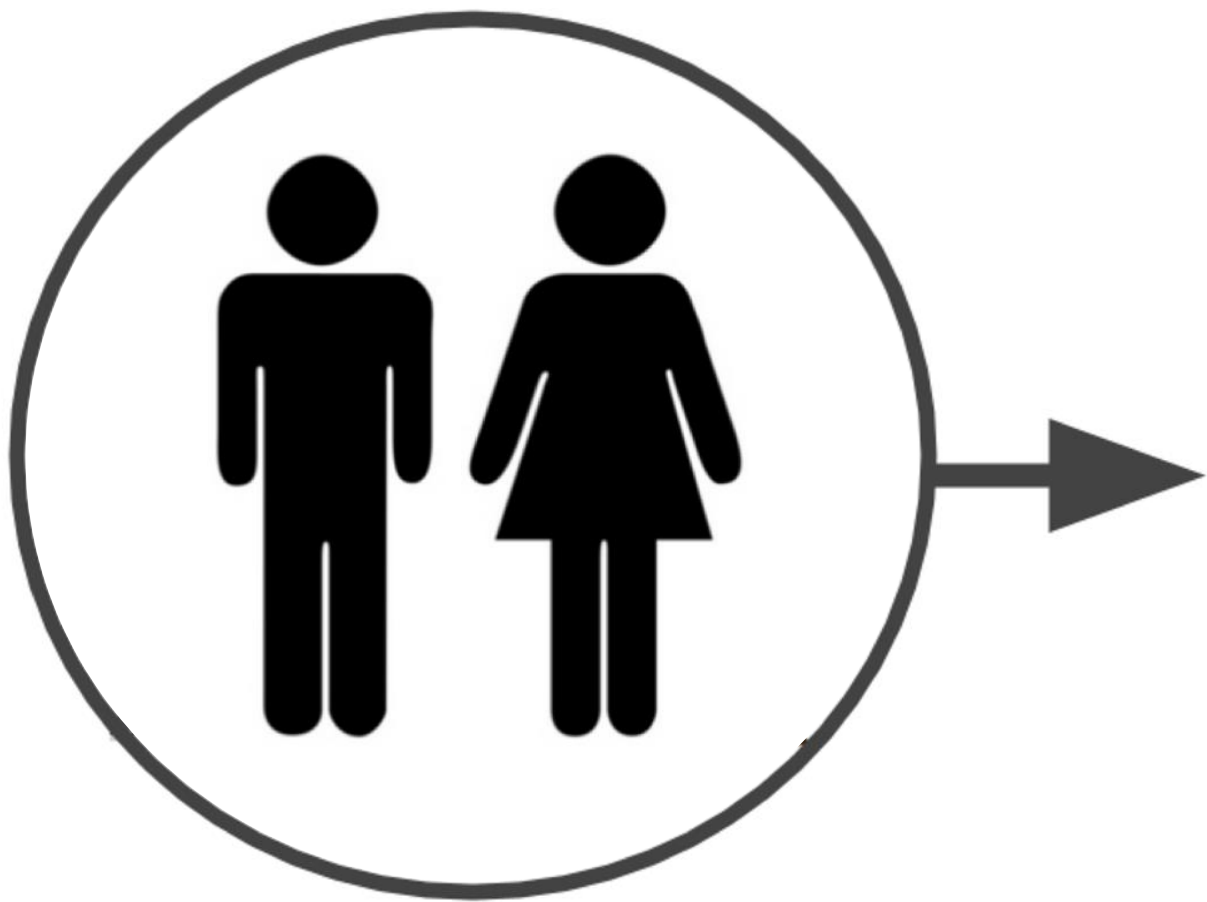
# Gender in Doodles around the globe

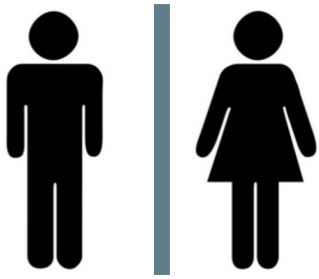
re:Work











7.57

women

7.33

men



5.33

6.50

1

5

9

no influence

very influential



# Four methods to try:

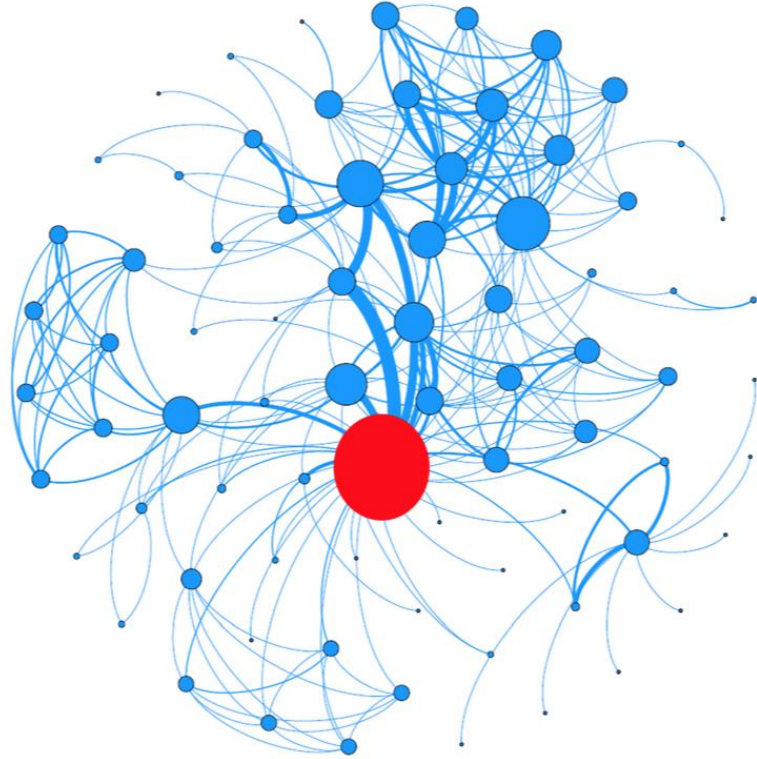
1. Structure for success

2. Measure results

**3. Evaluate subtle messages**

4. Hold everyone accountable

**Recognize the power of signals.**





# Four methods to try:

1. Structure for success

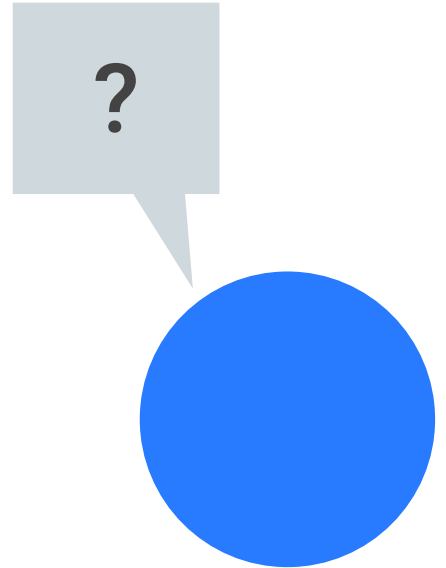
2. Measure results

3. Evaluate subtle messages

**4. Hold everyone accountable**

# Hold yourself accountable.

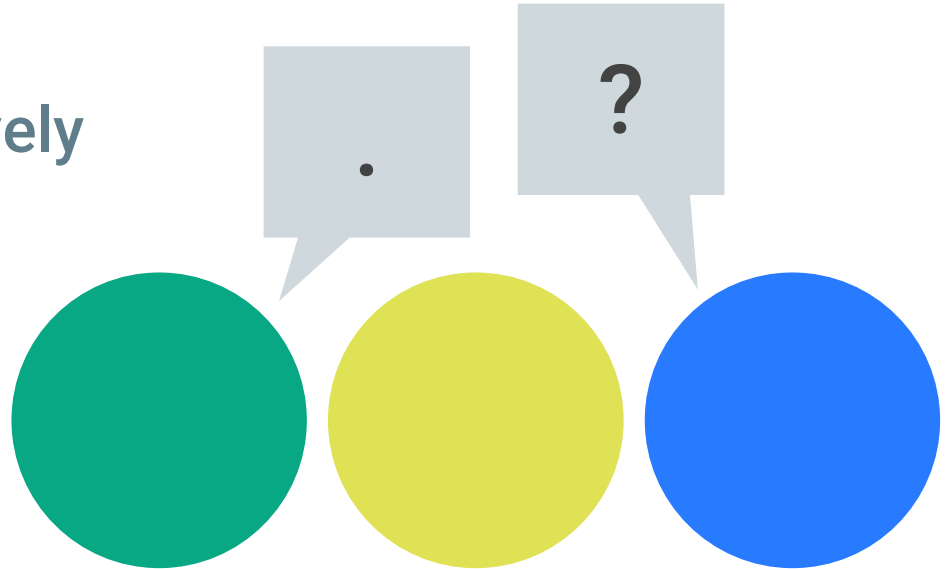
- Question your first impressions
- Justify your decisions
- Ask for feedback



**Empower everyone to call out  
unconscious bias.**

# Hold others accountable.

- Create a culture of calling out unconscious bias
- Make others justify decisions
- Make decisions collectively





# Commit to one action:

1. Structure for success

2. Measure results

3. Evaluate subtle messages

4. Hold everyone accountable

**Commit to one action:**

**THANK YOU!**