UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

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What Would You Do? Bike Theft (White Guy, Black Guy, Pretty Girl)

• A social experiment is conducted in a park.
• Three people try to steal a bike out in the open.
  • First, a white teenager.
  • Then, a black one.
  • Finally, a young blond tries her luck.
• Does anyone try to stop them?
• What surprised you most?

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge7i60GuNRg
• https://www.facebook.com/bbc5live/
Bias

- A bias is an inaccurate evaluation or belief that members of a group generally possess some characteristic.
- Why did people in this experiment act differently? Where does it come from? How do we reveal these biases?
- What are the dangers of this bias?
  - Assumptions may not be accurate
  - Lead to discrimination and prejudice
- Unconscious (or implicit) biases are automatic, unintentional, deeply engrained, universal, and able to influence behavior.
In fact,…Things are more complicated…

Count how many correct answers you get.


Can you tell the difference between a peaceful Sikh priest and an Al-Qaeda terrorist? How about the difference between a Roman Catholic priest and Ku Klux Klan members? What does this have to do with recognizing biases and managing diversity in the workplace?
Diversity: Why is it important?

Recent Trends:

• Diversification of the Workforce
• Greater Emphasis on Group Work
A few facts about diversity training

- Diversity Training is used in 67% of U.S. organizations (Esen, 2005).
- The diversity business was estimated to be an 8 billion dollar industry (Hansen, 2003)
Questions. Questions. Questions…

• Does diversity training work?
• Does diversity training increase numbers of women and minorities in the workplace?
• What evidence do we have?
What We Know About Diversity Training

Diversity training had no positive impact on workplace demographics.
• Naff & Kellough 2003; Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly 2006.

Mixed evidence about the effect of diversity training on managerial attitudes.
• Cox Jr. 1991 (+); Rynes & Rosen 1994 (-)…

Diversity training created resistance.
• Baba & Herbert, 2004; Rynes & Rosen 1995; Holladay et al. 2003; Kidder et al. 2004…
BUT...

- diversity training has the potential to make a huge, positive impact since the idea behind diversity training is to address prejudice, stereotyping, and other biases
How to Manage this Bias? Diversity Training

• You are a junior executive and you are going up for promotion. You know that:
  • your chances of success for promotion will increase if you take a diversity training.
  • if you get promoted, you will be managing a diverse workforce locally and globally.
• What would your ideal diversity training look like?
Results

• Diversity training is associated with better training outcomes overall, $g = .36$
  • largest effect on immediate reactions, $g = .61$
• Attitudes & behaviors appear to decay after training
• Cognitive knowledge (e.g., about different cultures) is maintained over time
Factors contributing to the success of diversity training

• Were complemented by a variety of other organizational initiatives (e.g., recruitment, affinity groups, sr. leader supportive behaviors, Culture/climate surveys/feedback)

• targeted multiple group differences (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation)

• designed to increase both diversity awareness and skills

• were relatively long (e.g., year long)
How Should We Judge Diversity Programs?

- Self-reporting of Attitudes
- Workplace Culture Survey
- Employee Scores on Bias Index
- Productivity and Performance
- Diversity of Workers
- Diversity of Managers