Five Policies That Outsmart Unconscious Bias in Your Company

**Equalize Resumés**
- Multiple studies have shown that resumés with ethnic-sounding names are discarded when identical resumés with traditionally Anglo-American names are advanced to the interview stage.
- In tech, finance, and the sciences, female names are discarded when male names are advanced.
- Eliminate sources of bias from resumés, including:
  - Address or location
  - Age or dates of employment
  - Certain clubs and memberships
  - First and last names
  - School
- Solve potential bias problems by removing data from resumés before they are seen by decision-makers.

**Assess Competency First**
- Create a test or series of questions to determine if someone has the specific skills necessary to successfully do the job.
- When someone walks in for an interview, and no one who looks like them has ever held that job, every interviewer is naturally going to question their ability to do it, and the candidate will have to prove themselves over and over, and to a higher extent than those who look like everyone who already does the job.
- This process winds up excluding good people, especially if there isn’t a uniform definition of competence.
  - Anyone who passes can be interviewed for their ability to work with the team.
  - Have a different set of people test the skills of the candidate objectively.
  - Make it clear to interviewers that the applicant has been tested and is 100% competent to perform the job.
- This eliminates one level of bias, both against some candidates and in favor of others, and gives everyone a consistent interview experience.

**Train Your Interviewers!!!**
- Never ask anyone to interview a candidate without training on how to conduct an effective interview.
- Train your workforce on:
  - Labor law
  - Unconscious bias
  - What your company values in candidates
  - How to assess those values
- Interview training guidance can be found on SHRM.Org, Linkedin Learning and several other sources.
Performance Reviews
• Must Be Written!
• Don’t allow anything to be said in a performance review that isn’t written down.
• Train managers on how to assess performance and give effective, constructive feedback that doesn’t include criticism based on personality.
• Have The HR Department Review The Reviews To:
  o Check that concepts like “team player” and “leader” are applied evenly to the same behaviors
  o Determine if specific managers consistently rate some identity groups higher or lower than others
  o Look for identifiable patterns
  o Make sure standards of success and failure are consistent for all employees
  o See if certain words are only used to describe certain groups

Examine Your Metrics
• Are you simply rewarding the same behavior you always have without regard to whether that yields the best results?
• Is that based more on who you reward than what is achieved?
• Companies often reward traits such as risk-taking, quick decision-making and competitiveness rather than things like consensus building, inclusive communication, empathetic leadership and deliberate decision-making.
• Examine whether behavior that has traditionally not been rewarded actually yields more of the outcomes you seek.
• Do a long-term assessment of what your company values and how you are rewarding what you claim to value.
• Objectively determine:
  o What outcomes you’re trying to achieve
  o What specific behavior will get you those outcomes
  o How to identify and reward that behavior
• When you pay more attention to what you reward, who gets rewarded will become less biased.

For More Information
About maximizing the Happiness & Inclusion in your workplace, or to bring Valerie Alexander in to keynote your event or work with your team please visit: SpeakHappiness.com

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