



## Common Interviewing Biases

There are several problems that interviewers run into when they allow biases to get in the way. These include:

- ✦ Stereotyping:
  - Forming an opinion about how people of a given gender, religion, race, appearance, or other characteristic think, act, respond, or would perform the job without any evidence that this is the case.
- ✦ Inconsistency in questioning:
  - Asking different questions of each candidate leads to a skewed assessment of who would best perform the job. Questions designed to get particular information about a specific candidate are only appropriate in the context of a core set of questions asked of all candidates.
- ✦ First impressions:
  - An interviewer might make a snap judgement about someone based on their first impression positive or negative that clouds the entire interview. For example, letting the fact that the candidate is wearing outofthe-ordinary clothing or has a heavy regional accent take precedence over the applicant's knowledge, skills, or abilities.
- ✦ Negative emphasis:
  - This involves rejection of a candidate based on a small amount of negative information a common occurrence. Research indicates that interviewers give unfavorable information about twice the weight of favorable information.
- ✦ Halo/horn effect:
  - The "halo" effect occurs when an interviewer allows one strong point about the candidate to overshadow or have an effect on everything else. For instance, knowing someone went to a particular university might be looked upon favorably. Everything the applicant says during the interview is seen in this light. ("Well, she left out an important part of the answer to that question, but, she must know it, she went to XYZ University). The "horn" effect is just the opposite allowing one weak point to influence everything else.
- ✦ Cultural noise:
  - Since the candidate wants the job, she or he will provide the words the interviewer wants to hear, even if those words are not entirely truthful. For example, an applicant might say that he has no problem reporting to someone younger, or working in a team setting, when this is not the case. Interviewers should prepare questions that probe for specific examples and stay away from questions that elicit "yes" or "no" answers.



- ✦ Nonverbal bias:
  - Undue emphasis might be placed on nonverbal cues that have nothing to do with the job, such as loudness or softness of voice, or the type of handshake given.
  
- ✦ Contrast effect:
  - Strong(er) candidates who interview after weak(er) ones may appear more qualified than they are because of the contrast between the two. Note taking during the interview and a reasonable period of time between interviews may alleviate this.

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