

# [ BIAS INTERRUPTERS ] *small steps big change*

## INTERRUPTING BIAS IN HIRING

### Tools for Individuals

Incremental steps that improve diversity in your organization can yield large gains. Diverse work groups perform better and are more committed, innovative and loyal.<sup>1</sup> Gender diverse workgroups have better collective intelligence, which improves performance by the group and its members, leading to better financial performance.<sup>2</sup> Racially diverse workgroups consider a broader range of alternatives, make better decisions, and are better at solving problems.<sup>3</sup> Bias, if unchecked, affects many different groups: modest or introverted men, LGBT+, individuals with disabilities, class migrants (professionals from blue-collar backgrounds), women, and people of color. We've distilled the huge literature on bias into simple steps that help you and your company perform better.

*Bias Interrupters should be implemented at an organizational level. But there are steps you can take to interrupt bias at your workplace.*

### THE CHALLENGE

When comparing identical resumes “Jamal” needed eight additional years of experiences to be considered as qualified as “Greg,” and “Jennifer” was offered \$4,000 less in starting salary than “John.”<sup>4</sup> We know now that workplaces that view themselves as being highly meritocratic often are, in fact, *more* biased than other organizations<sup>5</sup> and that the usual responses—one-shot diversity trainings, mentoring and networking programs—typically don't work.<sup>6</sup>

### THE SOLUTION

Bias interrupters are tweaks to basic business systems that can yield large gains: Organizational interrupters change existing business systems; individual interrupters are steps individuals can take on their own.

### BIAS INTERRUPTERS

1. **Learn how to spot and interrupt bias** by using our **Identifying Bias in Hiring Worksheet** which summarizes hundreds of studies, and encourage others to do the same.
2. **If you are hiring, reach out beyond your own networks.** If your existing organization is not diverse, hiring from your current employees' social networks will replicate the lack of diversity.
3. **If you are working with a recruiter, let them know you want a diverse pool.** If the initial pool is largely homogenous, it is statistically unlikely that you will hire a diverse candidate.<sup>7</sup>
4. **Develop an interview protocol sheet** that explains to everyone what's expected from candidates in an interview and distribute it to candidates and reviewers to look over before interviews.
5. **Be mindful of optics.** If your organization is homogeneous, candidates who are different may worry whether they will fit in. The Airbnb data science team countered this by making sure that women made up at least half of the interview panel for job candidates.
6. **Take the Bias Interrupter Training** so you can identify and interrupt bias in your workplace.
7. **Persuade your organization to use bias interrupters:** small changes to basic business systems—from hiring to performance evaluations to compensation—can help interrupt bias and improve performance. Use our talking points to persuade your boss.

<sup>1</sup> e.g., Dahlin et al., 2005; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Jehn et al., 1999

<sup>2</sup> Richard et al., 2004, Wooley et al, 2011; Lewis, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Phillips et al., 2006, Antonio et al., 2004; Richard et al., 2003

<sup>4</sup> Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Castilla, 2015

<sup>6</sup> Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Hekman, & Chan, 2016

