

# SUPERVISING-IN-A-BOX SERIES:

## Employee Development



2 of 5

in-a-box  
SERIES

*Supervising-in-a-Box: Employee Development* provides supervisors with resources for developing their employees' strengths, maximizing their talents, and ensuring that all employees contribute their best ideas and efforts to the team. This "Box" includes background information, a training guide, tip sheets, resources for employee development and engagement, templates, evaluation tools, and a summary of key takeaways.



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Technical companies or departments striving to create highly productive teams that reduce employee turnover, capitalize on diverse innovative thinking, and ultimately strengthen their bottom lines have a new resource at their disposal: *Supervising-in-a-Box Series*. This five-part series provides tools to help supervisors develop successful and productive teams.



## AT-A-GLANCE

### WHY *SUPERVISING-IN-A-BOX*?

Employees report that the supervisory relationship is one of the most significant factors in their decision to leave or stay with an organization. Are you, as a supervisor, adequately prepared for this responsibility?

Unfair treatment and subtle forms of bias drive more than two million employees a year to leave their jobs, according to a survey of 1700 professionals conducted by the Level Playing Field Institute. Organizations that assume their supervisory relationships and work environments adequately foster productivity and innovation might be losing important talent and limiting their capacity for real accomplishments.

Are you looking for practical resources to help you develop and supervise a high-performing, diverse, technical team? Is your organization eager to realize the full potential of its employees? Even if your institution already has a formal training program for supervisors, *Supervising-in-a-Box* is for you.

## WHAT'S IN THE FIVE-PART SERIES?

The *Supervising-in-a-Box Series* provides resources for addressing unconscious bias and institutional barriers that affect five different supervisory job functions. Each box focuses on one job function. The different boxes in the Supervising Series are:

- » **Employee Recruitment/Selection** focusing on hiring the best talent.
- » **Employee Development** focusing on ensuring that employees contribute their best ideas and talents to the team.
- » **Team/Project Management** focusing on running an effective, innovative, and productive team.
- » **Performance Review/Promotion Processes** focusing on equitably advancing the best talent.
- » **Supervisors as Agents of Change** focusing on working for cultural reform with other managers and company leaders.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOX?

*Supervising-in-a-Box Series: Employee Development* includes the following components:

**Background Information and Training Guide** — Provides supervisors with an overall understanding of key concepts, issues, and problems related to unconscious bias and institutional barriers. Each section includes definitions, examples, key findings, and a general summary of how these concepts and issues affect supervising. This background

information is provided in all five boxes and also can be used as a training guide or tool for educating team members about these issues. See the “Add-water” Resources in the *Team/Project Management* box for tips on using this section as a training guide or educational tool.

**“Add-water” Resources and Templates** — A selection of concrete tools to improve employee development efforts.

### TIP SHEETS

- » Reducing Stereotype Threat and Tokenism
- » Giving Encouragement and Ongoing Feedback

### RESOURCES

*Background: Nine Questions and Five Foundations for Employee Engagement*

- » Nine Questions for Engaging Talent, Reducing Turnover, and Improving Business Outcomes
- » The Nine Questions and Five Foundations
- » The Five Foundations and Unconscious Bias: Other Considerations Before You Begin

*Templates for Using the Nine Questions and Five Foundations*

- » Employee Development Forms (supervisor & employee)
- » The “Strengths Interview” Templates

*Other Employee Development Resources*

- » Fostering Employee Participation in Innovation
- » Promoting Mentoring

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- » Manager Self-Assessment Tool: Evaluate Your Own Efforts at Employee Development
- » Employee Engagement Survey: See How Others Evaluate Your Efforts at Employee Development
- » Employee Engagement Survey Template

### SUMMARY: KEY TAKEAWAYS

**Resources Index** — A composite list of important resources referenced throughout this box series is available at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising).

### USING *SUPERVISING-IN-A-BOX SERIES*: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Find *Supervising-in-a-Box Series: Employee Development* at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising). Read background information on common phenomena that thwart supervisors' well-intentioned attempts to build an effective team. Use the "add-water" resources, talking points, templates, and multimedia resources to help you recognize and address these problems. Be sure to check out the other boxes in the *Supervising-in-a-Box Series*.

*Supervising-in-a-Box* was developed in collaboration with the Level Playing Field Institute (LPFI). LPFI promotes innovative approaches to fairness in higher education



and workplaces by removing barriers to full participation. For more information see [www.lpfi.org](http://www.lpfi.org).



*Supervising-in-a-Box* is sponsored and created by the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), NCWIT's Workforce Alliance, and the Workforce Alliance Practices Committee.



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: WHAT SUPERVISORS NEED TO KNOW

## THE PROBLEM: HIDDEN BIASES AND BARRIERS COST CORPORATE AMERICA \$64 BILLION PER YEAR — AND THAT IS A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE.

**COST #1: EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND LOSS OF TALENT.** The above estimate accounts only for the annual cost of employee turnover due solely to unfairness, which disproportionately affects people of color, women, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) employees.<sup>1</sup> When considering other intangible factors, such as the cost to company reputation and ability to recruit new talent, the price tag soars even higher.

Today 80% of a company's value is now classified as the "intangibles" tied up with people, in stark contrast to the 80% that used to be tied up in tangible assets such as inventory.<sup>2</sup> As founder and board chair of the Level Playing Field Institute, Freeda Kapur Klein observes, "Most employers have yet to figure out how to unlock the true value of that 80%. For the business that gets it right, the rewards will be enormous."<sup>3</sup>

## COST #2: LOSING THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSE INNOVATION.

The above estimate does not include the cost companies incur when they fail to realize the benefits of diverse work

teams. Numerous recent studies document how diverse work teams improve innovation, problem-solving, and productivity. Consider just a few examples:

- ✦ An NCWIT study revealed that mixed-gender teams produce IT patents that are more highly cited.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ Similarly, the London Business School found that work teams with equal numbers of men and women were more likely than all other types of teams to experiment, be creative, share knowledge, and fulfill tasks.<sup>5</sup>
- ✦ Additional studies indicate that, under the right conditions, teams comprising diverse members consistently outperform teams comprising "highest-ability" members.<sup>6</sup>

Unconscious bias and institutional barriers not only result in the *loss* of diverse talent, but they also prevent supervisors from even recruiting or hiring diverse talent in the first place. Likewise, they can prevent employees who do stay from contributing their best ideas — ideas that would make valuable contributions to work teams and company productivity.

<sup>1</sup> See the Corporate Leavers Survey published by the Level Playing Field Institute, 2007. <http://www.lpfi.org/workplace/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Reibstein as cited in Kapur Klein, Giving Notice.

<sup>3</sup> Kapur Klein, Giving Notice.

<sup>4</sup> Ashcraft, C. & Breitzman, T. Who Invents IT?

<sup>5</sup> London Business School, Innovative Potential.

<sup>6</sup> Page, S., The Difference.

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?

**Unconscious bias** results when our pre-existing gender schemas (stereotypes, beliefs and attitudes, representations, narratives) about particular groups of people subtly influence behaviors and decisions, negatively affecting employees from underrepresented groups.

**“But we’ve moved beyond that! We’re all pretty open and fair-minded around here.”** A great deal of research shows that even individuals who consider themselves committed to equality and believe that they have overcome these biases still engage in subtle forms of unconscious bias and discrimination.<sup>7</sup> Consider the following examples:

- » In one study, candidates with resumes that had white-sounding names received 50% more callbacks than the exact same resumes with black-sounding names.<sup>8</sup>
- » In another study, college administrators were far more likely to say they would hire candidates with resumes that had male names rather than female names even though the resumes were identical. This effect is exacerbated when women make up a smaller proportion of the candidate pool, as is often the case in technical companies or departments.<sup>9</sup>
- » In the Implicit Association Test, a test designed to measure unconscious bias, almost all test takers initially describe themselves as unbiased, yet 88% of white test takers show some bias against African Americans, and a majority of test takers show bias against photos of people who are overweight, gay,

elderly, or Arab/Muslim.<sup>10</sup>

- » When shown pictures of people of the same height, study participants overestimated the height of males and underestimated the height of females even though the photo included a reference point, such as a doorway.<sup>11</sup>

Unconscious biases such as these have a profound effect on the workplace, on supervisory relationships, and on hiring, performance, and advancement procedures.

## INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW ARE THEY RELATED TO UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

**Institutional barriers** include any aspect of a particular culture that systematically disadvantages certain groups of people. While similar to and often caused by unconscious bias, these barriers are more formal and institutionalized. When an initial population is fairly similar (i.e., in male-dominated professions), systems naturally emerge to meet the needs of this population. If these systems do not change with the times, they can inhibit the success of new members with different needs. It is important to remember that these barriers naturally arise in any majority-minority situation and are not necessarily the result of any ill intentions. Addressing the barriers is the goal, **not** finding fault or assigning blame.

<sup>7</sup> Dovidio, On Contemporary Prejudice.

<sup>8</sup> Bertrand & Mullainathan, Are Emily and Greg More Employable.

<sup>9</sup> Steinpreis, et. al., The Impact of Gender on the Review.

<sup>10</sup> Banaji & Hardin, Automatic Stereotyping.

<sup>11</sup> Biernat, et. al., Stereotypes and Standards of Judgement.

Some examples of institutional barriers include the following:

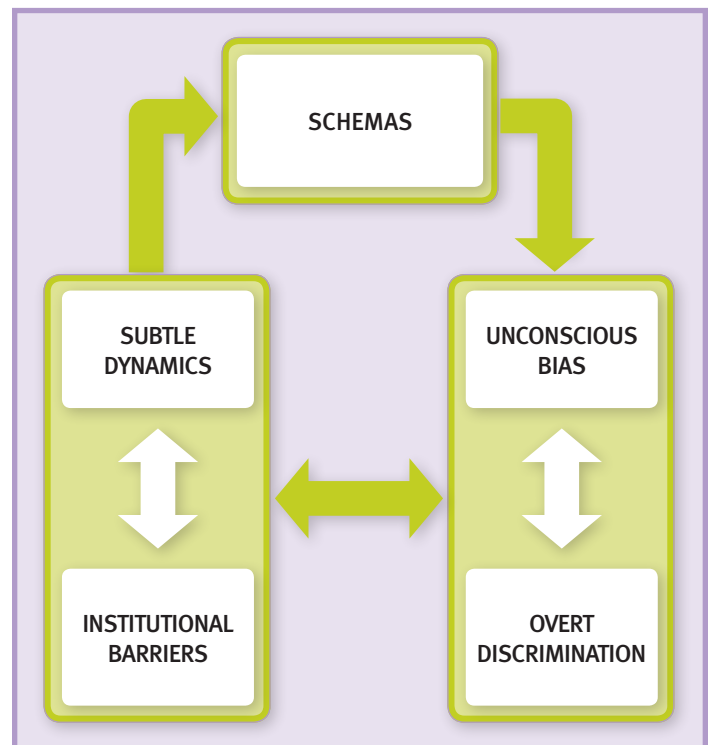
- » Systems that give more important tasks to people based on criteria that tends to advantage one group (e.g. *is in the office later at night, doesn't have children*)
- » Rigid schedules that make it difficult to attend to family responsibilities
- » Holding informal meetings in places underrepresented members are unlikely to be (e.g. *golf course, bar after work*)
- » “Promotion from within” policies (if few or no members from underrepresented groups are in the “pipeline” for promotion from within)
- » Performance evaluation criteria that (perhaps inadvertently) reward certain styles of communication rather than actual performance
- » Hiring systems or policies that weigh universities differently *without* considering how this perpetuates bias against low-income or first-generation college candidates. While some sort of weight system is necessary, companies also should build in weights that give credit to students for overcoming adverse conditions. This is arguably as important a quality in job performance as attending a prestigious school.

While unconscious bias certainly contributes to the development of institutional barriers, addressing individual unconscious bias alone will *not* remove institutional barriers. Companies also must identify and actively dismantle


seemingly natural systems (rather than only individual biases) that disadvantage particular groups.

## OTHER MISUNDERSTOOD MAJORITY-MINORITY PHENOMENA: SUBTLE DYNAMICS RELATED TO UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

Unconscious bias and institutional barriers result in a number of other phenomena and subtle dynamics commonly found in majority-minority environments (see figure below). These dynamics are often mistakenly seen as the fault of the minority members themselves. In reality, however, they are naturally occurring phenomena that arise in most majority-minority contexts because of unconscious biases and institutional barriers. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics is important for managing a productive team and fostering diverse innovation.




**MICROINEQUITIES:**

 **“My manager always lists me last toward the bottom in email to the team, unless there is a problem. THEN I’m first in the list. What’s up with that?”**

Microinequities<sup>12</sup> — closely related to and often caused by unconscious bias — are subtle cumulative messages that devalue, discourage, and impair performance in the workplace. These messages include looks, gestures, or tone of voice, and often accumulate in ways that lead employees to underperform, withdraw from co-workers, and ultimately leave the workplace. Other examples include the following:

- » Failing to recognize an idea when expressed by one employee but acknowledging it when paraphrased by another employee
- » Looking at the clock, answering the cell phone, or other subtle behaviors that indicate a manager or supervisor is not interested in the conversation with an employee
- » Subtle norms that make it acceptable for heterosexuals to talk about what they did on the weekend with husbands, wives, family but not as acceptable or comfortable for GLBT employees to do so

**STEREOTYPE THREAT:**

 **“Great job! You’re living proof that women really do have a technical-mind!”**


Even when said in jest, these kinds of comments (or more subtle comments) can invoke stereotype threat – the fear or anxiety that our actions will confirm negative stereotypes

about our “group” or about ourselves as members of a group. These fears and anxieties reduce feelings of competence and trust, and can negatively affect performance, confidence, and risk-taking behavior. Consider the following examples:

- » White male engineering students get lower-than-usual test grades when told in advance that Asians typically score higher than any other group on math tests.<sup>13</sup>
- » African Americans underachieve on academic tests when told racial stereotypes about intelligence.<sup>14</sup>
- » Women underperform on math tests when gender is called to their attention.<sup>15</sup>

It is important for supervisors to recognize these phenomena; otherwise they might incorrectly assume that this lack of confidence or certain instances of underperformance are the result of personal characteristics of the employees themselves. This will leave the conditions that create stereotype threat unaddressed, ensuring that these employees are not able to live up to their full potential and most likely will leave the company.

**TOKENISM:**

 **“We’re so excited to have you on board, and we’ve really needed someone like you to help us understand the Asian market.”**

Tokenism often occurs when only a few employees belong to a particular identity group (e.g., in terms of gender, race, age).

<sup>12</sup> Young, The Power of Small.

<sup>13</sup> Aronson, et. al., When White Men Can’t Do Math.

<sup>14</sup> Steele & Aronson, Stereotype Threat.

<sup>15</sup> Correll, Gender and the Career Choice Process.




The presence of these few “token” employees is sometimes used to satisfy technical diversity requirements but can mask the fact that a true environment of inclusiveness does not exist. Tokenism also results in a number of additional problems.

- » These members from diverse groups are often expected by others to “speak for” or “represent” the group as a whole.
- » Diverse members are expected to be able to “relate to” customers or clients who are also members of the same or similar identity group/s.
- » Members from diverse groups get tapped for a larger share of diversity work. This frequently prevents them from putting as much time into other aspects of their jobs, often negatively affecting job performance, evaluations, and advancement.

These expectations ignore the reality that a wide range of variation exists within any identity group and that it is unreasonable to expect one person to represent this within-group variation (for example, rarely do we expect a white person to speak for all whites or a man to speak for all men).

### GENDER — OR COLOR — “BLINDNESS”:


 “I don’t see color or gender; you do your work well on my team, you’ll succeed!”


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Individuals frequently make well-intentioned assertions such as these in an effort to combat prejudice and treat employees equitably. A gender- or color-blind stance might be appropriate if the larger society also were gender- and color-blind. Since this is not yet the case, holding such a

stance ignores important current realities. Women and people of color often have experiences that shape their lives differently, (e.g., women more often than men have to think about or are asked to explain how they balance work and family responsibilities). These individuals also face different prejudice and inequities. “Treating everyone the same” ignores these realities and the fact that existing workplace conditions do not meet these employees’ needs. It also ignores the fact that current workplace conditions are not natural; they have subtly evolved to meet the needs of the original population. This is especially the case in organizations where the original population was a relatively similar group of people (e.g., men, women, whites). For example, when most employees have a stay-at-home-spouse at home taking care of the children, flex time does not become a norm because these employees do not need it. If most of the original employee population had been single parents or had dual-working relationships, different systems would most likely have evolved.

### WITHIN-GROUP “COMPETITIVENESS”:

 “Women are often their own worst enemy; if you’d stop competing or fighting with each other, you’d be so much better off.”

 “Frankly, I prefer working with men: women can be so catty and not straightforward; men will more often just tell you how it is.”

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These comments mistakenly assume that this competitiveness results from characteristics of the minority members themselves; however, this dynamic occurs in almost any majority-minority situation where underrepresented groups feel pressure to scramble for limited resources and

rewards. While all employees may feel this pressure to some degree, the pervasiveness of stereotype threat, tokenism, and other such phenomena compound this pressure for members from underrepresented groups. These phenomena also make it far more likely that any mistakes or failures will be attributed, at least in part, to the employee's membership in an underrepresented group (e.g., reflected in comments such as "See, generally speaking, women are just more emotional about these sorts of things").

These dynamics also foster an increasingly competitive environment where, in order to succeed, members of underrepresented groups feel they must compete with each other or distance themselves from others in the same identity group in order to escape the assumptions made about that group (e.g., not only "act like a man" but highlight how you "act more like a man" than other women do).

### THE GLASS CLIFF:



**"Well, we've been getting pressure to diversify management, so we better give her a shot even if she's not quite ready."**

This phenomenon occurs when members from underrepresented groups are promoted too early or put in charge of tasks they do not yet have the expertise or the authority to carry out. Similar to tokenism, this often happens as supervisors, managers, or company leaders try to meet diversity requirements. Meeting these requirements in this way, however, unwittingly sets these employees up to fail and is detrimental to the long term interest of the company, to the employee's own interest, and to future efforts for hiring and retaining diverse employees. Supervisors need

to be keenly aware of whether or not they are hiring and promoting members of underrepresented groups simply to fill a "diversity requirement" and, in the process, may be setting these employees up to fail or fall off the "glass cliff."

### PRIVILEGE:



**"I'm where I am because of hard work! I didn't take advantage of any special treatment or handouts."**

We often talk about how unconscious biases, sexism and racism disadvantage underrepresented groups. Less often do we talk about how these biases and systems actually privilege or actively advantage majority group members. As Peggy McIntosh explains, in her case about white privilege, "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious."<sup>16</sup>

It is important to remember that recognizing and discussing "privilege" is in no way meant to diminish the work or accomplishments of majority members. It is certainly true that many or most majority members have worked hard to get to where they are. Statements like the opening quote above, however, mask the fact that these members also frequently benefit from a workplace that was, for the most part, designed by and for employees relatively similar to them. This makes "special treatment" unnecessary because these "treatments" are already built into the policies and cultural norms of a workplace.

The following list is adapted from McIntosh's list to illustrate some of the invisible privileges majority group members

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<sup>16</sup> McIntosh, White Privilege.

experience in the workplace. These daily, taken-for-granted experiences provide subtle, intangible advantages that produce a significant cumulative effect. As an interesting exercise or discussion tool, employees and managers might consider the examples below, identifying which apply to their lives or daily experiences.

- » At work, I can be in the company of people of my gender and/or race most of the time. I also regularly see people of my gender and/or race represented in top leadership positions.
- » I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally. I can also be pretty sure these people will be similar to me in gender and/or race.
- » I can perform my job well without being called a “credit to my gender and/or race.” If I perform my job poorly, people also are unlikely to attribute this to my gender and/or race.
- » I can attend meetings or work socials relatively sure that no one will ask me to get them a cup of coffee or a cocktail unless this is actually part of my job description.
- » I am never asked to speak for all the people of my gender or racial group.
- » I can advocate for women or other underrepresented groups without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking. In other words, I am less likely to be seen or talked about behind my back as promoting “my own agenda.”

- » When looking back at the history of our industry and technological invention, I am consistently shown that people of my gender and/or race made it what it is today.

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: SAMPLE SCENARIOS AND VIDEO VIGNETTES

Use the scenarios and discussion questions on the next page to explore unconscious bias and institutional barriers with your employees. Two video versions of these scenarios also are available for download at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising).

## CUSTOMIZE YOUR OWN VIDEO VIGNETTES

The sample scenarios in this box are based on real-life examples drawn from the Level Playing Field's Corporate Leavers Study. You also can turn real-life scenarios from your own company into customized video vignettes. To do so, contact the Level Playing Field Institute, [jacqueline@lpfi.org](mailto:jacqueline@lpfi.org).



## EDUCATE AND TRAIN EMPLOYEES USING *SUPERVISING-IN-A-BOX: TEAM/PROJECT MANAGEMENT*



Detailed information on how to use this section to help educate and train employees is included in *Supervising-in-a-Box: Team/Project Management*. The *Team/Project Management* box also includes additional information on “bystander training” — how to help employees or colleagues who witness biased behaviors (but may not be directly involved) to take appropriate and helpful action.

*The following scenarios are all real-life examples of how unconscious bias plays out in the workplace. Read through the scenarios and use the questions below to explore practical ways for addressing these biases and barriers.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of biases are operating in this scenario?
2. What problems, if any, do you see with the way this scenario was handled?
3. What could have the various players in each scenario done differently?
4. What kinds of company policies, practices, or cultural norms might prevent this sort of scenario from happening in the first place?

### SCENARIO 1

At a recent strategy retreat for senior managers, the conversation over dinner turned to global economic trends. I often get drowned out during these conversations as I'm the only senior African American woman business unit manager across any of our offices, yet I'm also the only one who was a successful entrepreneur before coming here. As the talk turned from economics to the U.S. presidential election, a very senior manager reached across the table and snatched

the dessert that had just been placed in front of me. He commented loudly that since Obama might win, the team would need me to stay healthy and go get all that new business. I was shocked and insulted on so many levels. Was my health not important before? My experience and intelligence should be all that counts. If they think I might have an advantage in a new administration, did they ever think about the advantage they've always had?

### SCENARIO 2

When I had errors on my work, even if it was really minor, the partner would say, "There is an English problem here" instead of just calling it a typo. Even stupid things like when I capitalized a term she didn't think should be capitalized she would call it an "English problem." It was really offensive. Everyone made typos but when I made them it was different. I felt singled out. But when we had an Asian client, they were more than happy to have me speak Chinese. My bilingual background only hurt me, it didn't help me when it benefited the firm. — *Asian, female lawyer*

### SCENARIO 3

I had been working for my tech company for a number of years, as one of the relatively few moms working there. Because of the crazy hours and the convenience, I was paying to send my two children to the company's onsite day care facility. I was absolutely shocked when I found out recently that company leadership decided to raise charges for their day care by a whopping 75% — which is even above the market rate! That means I'd be paying about \$50,000 per year for my two kids. Even though I and other parents in the company voiced our concerns about many not being able to afford such costly daycare, they went forth with their decision



to raise prices through the roof. Part of their argument was that they were upgrading to the highest quality daycare services. Well, to be honest, a lot of parents were quite satisfied with the previous daycare. So I think to myself, what is the point of upgrading to “state of the art” daycare if only the wealthiest can afford it? Personally, I don’t need “Gucci daycare.” That was the last straw in the elitism of the company for me. Why not provide affordable, quality services for all employees? I guess finding an equitable solution just wasn’t a priority.

### SCENARIO 4

José recalled his mentor’s advice about networking, so when he was at the company’s holiday party and saw two colleagues talking to the regional Vice President, he walked right over to say hello. The VP responded, “Thanks, I’ll take another white wine please.” It took José a few stunned seconds to realize the VP had mistaken him for a waiter, and a few more stunned seconds to realize his two colleagues were not setting the record straight and introducing him.<sup>17</sup>

### SCENARIO 5

As the most senior woman on an engineering team of a fast-paced start-up, I loved my job. The thrill of creating something, the ups and downs of getting funding, the tough competition in the space--there’s nothing like it. So when I became a mom, I vowed not to let my team down. I’d arrive at 8am, having dropped my kids at daycare, and got right to work. Around 10, 10:30, the single guys would start to show up. They’d get their coffee and breakfast and sit at their desks, perusing their favorite blogs and news sites. After a stint of work, it would be lunch time; I’d eat at my desk and they would either go out or go to the gym. By mid-afternoon,

as I was racing to get things done before picking up my kids, many of my colleagues would gather for a round of frisbee or foosball or ping pong. At the stroke of 5:00, I’d be off to pick up my kids and have dinner with my family. Usually by 9 p.m. I’d log back on and see how my teammates felt about my day’s contributions.

Not long ago, I was up for a promotion; given my peer reviews and my experience, it was a slam-dunk. But my manager doubted my commitment. He said, “When I make the rounds at 9 p.m., I see many of your teammates still working while eating pizza at their desks. I know you’re often online, but that’s not the same.” I told him, “Of course they’re still at their desks at 9 p.m., they’ve only put in 6 hours of work so far that day.”

That’s when I knew I was out of there. If my manager can’t tell the difference between face time and productivity, I’ll never get what I deserve.

### SCENARIO 6

Within six months of my new job, I found out I was pregnant. I told my boss, “I’m so happy. I’m pregnant.” My boss quit talking to me for a week. It was very strange because we were so close. So I pulled him aside and asked, “What’s wrong here? Why aren’t you talking to me?” He said, “Well, you know, you were my walk-on-water. I have even given you special training. Now you are going to leave.” I said, “I’m not leaving. I’m giving you eight months notice. We can plan for this. I will come back.” He said, “No you won’t.” I asked, “Hold on. What’s your paradigm?” He told me his first wife

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<sup>17</sup> Scully & Rowe, Bystander Training. All other scenarios in this section come from the Level Playing Field’s Corporate Leavers Study.

got pregnant and quit work. His second wife just won't have kids because all she does is work. I said, "How about a new paradigm: I work and I have my baby and then I come back to work. I've given you eight months notice. We can plan my projects. If I was Joe Shmoe and broke my leg skiing, I'd call in and say that I couldn't come in for three weeks. But this is something we can plan for." He still didn't get it. So I said, "Look, somebody had to quit work long enough to have you and every other man who works in this company." He just looked at me and finally he got it.

### NOTES:

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# “ADD-WATER” RESOURCES: SECTION OVERVIEW

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## TIP SHEETS

- » Reducing Stereotype Threat and Tokenism
- » Giving Employee Encouragement and Ongoing Feedback

## RESOURCES

### *Background: Nine Questions and Five Foundations for Employee Engagement*

- » Nine Questions for Engaging Talent, Reducing Turnover, and Improving Business Outcomes
- » The Nine Questions and Five Foundations
- » The Five Foundations and Unconscious Bias: Other Considerations Before You Begin

### *Templates for Using the Nine Questions and Five Foundations*

- » Employee Development Forms (supervisor & employee)
- » The “Strengths Interview” Templates

### *Other Employee Development Resources*

- » Fostering Employee Participation in Innovation
- » Promoting Mentoring

## EVALUATION TOOLS

- » Manager Self-Assessment Tool: Evaluate Your Own Efforts at Employee Development
- » Employee Engagement Survey: See How Others Evaluate Your Efforts at Employee Development
- » Employee Engagement Survey Template

## SUMMARY: KEY TAKEAWAYS

# TIP SHEET

## Reducing Stereotype Threat & Tokenism

*Stereotype threat and tokenism create fear or anxiety that our actions will confirm negative stereotypes about our “group” or about ourselves as members of a group. These fears and anxieties reduce feelings of competence and trust, and can negatively affect performance, confidence, and risk-taking behavior. Even well-intentioned jokes or comments, such as “Great job! You’re living proof that women really can have a technical mind!” can trigger the effects of stereotype threat and tokenism. To avoid this, think and examine your assumptions before you communicate. Consider the following suggestions:*

**Avoid characterizing a person as a representative of his or her group.** For example, avoid asking an employee to “speak for” her or his group or to help you understand how her or his group thinks (e.g., “what do women want anyway?” or “you’d be great at helping us understand the Latino market”). It can be helpful to ask yourself, “Would I make this sort of comment or ask this kind of question of a majority group member (e.g., man or white person)?”

**Deemphasize group identities and emphasize individual abilities in work task situations.** Research shows that simply raising awareness of group identities before individuals participate in work activities associated with certain stereotypes (e.g., men being better at technical tasks, linear thinking) triggers stereotype threat and lowers performance. Avoiding such comments and ensuring that other employees do so is important. Instead, talk about strengths and talents as belonging to individual employees (without referencing

gender or other identity groups).

**Foster an “incremental” view of intelligence and technical ability rather than an “entity” view.** An entity perspective on intelligence and technical ability frames these abilities as fixed and innate. An incremental view emphasizes that these abilities can be developed over time. Research shows that promoting an incremental view of ability significantly reduces stereotype threat and improves performance. To foster this view, avoid comments that frame technological skills as mostly “innate”; instead, talk about how technological skills also can be learned and developed.

**Recognize that work task difficulties are often about situational factors rather than an employee’s shortcomings or innate ability.** Always examine the larger work or team context for factors that may be causing work difficulties before simply assuming these are the result of individual failure. When difficulties arise, first genuinely ask employees *why* they think these difficulties occur and what they might need to overcome them (Also see Employee Development form, pages 24-26 ). Explain this orientation to your employees and help them do this as well.

**Provide intentional role models.** Find ways to highlight a diverse range of successful people in your field, including majority and minority group members. Try to make these a natural part of the work environment. While it sometimes can be appropriate and helpful to highlight “women inventors” or host “women’s events,” these activities also set women

or other minority group members apart as unusual or as exceptions. For example, instead of highlighting “women inventors” try highlighting a diverse array of “successful inventors.” Below are some suggestions:

- » Display posters/pictures that communicate these messages
- » Display/make available information on diverse inventors. Use the diverse Inventors screensavers for this box at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising). See MIT’s “Inventor of the Week” Archive at <http://web.mit.edu/invent/i-archive.html> for easily distributed information on women and other inventors.
- » Display/email/distribute information about a range of issues related to diversity and IT. See the following links for NCWIT resources with information that is easy to access and distribute:

***By the Numbers***

(<http://www.ncwit.org/pdf/BytheNumbers09.pdf>)

***Women in IT: The Facts***

(<http://www.ncwit.org/thefacts>)

***The Scorecard***

([http://www.ncwit.org/pdf/2007\\_Scorecard\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ncwit.org/pdf/2007_Scorecard_Web.pdf))

***International Women’s Day Box***

(<http://www.ncwit.org/resources.res.box.iwd.html>)

See [www.reducingstereotypethreat.org](http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org) and NCWIT’s Promising Practice — *How do Stereotype Threats Affect Retention? Better Approaches to Well-Intentioned, but Harmful Messages* — at [www.ncwit.org/practices](http://www.ncwit.org/practices).

**NOTES:**

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## TIP SHEET

### Giving Employee Encouragement and Ongoing Feedback

**Encouragement improves retention of all employees.** All employees benefit from ongoing encouragement and positive feedback from supervisors and colleagues. Research by Gallup and the Coffman Organization also shows that when employees believe that their contributions are important and valued, employee retention and business outcomes improve (see the Nine Questions and Five Foundations for Employee Engagement resources section).

**Encouragement specifically improves retention of employees from underrepresented groups.** Some research also indicates that encouragement is particularly important in retaining employees from underrepresented groups. For example, a number of studies on gender and IT find that even when no difference in technical competence exists, women often assess themselves lower when asked about their technical abilities.<sup>16</sup> Similar findings are replicated in other studies on male and female self-perceptions of technology skills, as well as their perceptions of skills in other gender-stereotyped subjects.<sup>17</sup> Explanations for this finding include the effects of stereotype threat and socialization patterns that discourage women from engaging in self-promotion.

**Encouragement is a simple, low-cost retention practice to implement.** Although it is relatively easy to do, offering encouragement is an often overlooked form of support managers can offer to employees. Simply saying “That was good work; I appreciate it” or “Thanks, that was a very valuable contribution to the team” (and meaning it) goes a long way toward improving employee morale.

**Begin encouragement and feedback early in the working relationship.** Offering encouragement and support early in the supervisory relationship is important for improving employee retention, especially for employees from underrepresented groups.

**Provide ongoing encouragement as “natural” opportunities emerge.** Be careful to be sincere when offering encouragement. Look for ongoing opportunities where these comments can be made in authentic and natural ways.

**Avoid invoking stereotype threat or referring to an employee’s identity group when offering encouragement.** Do not invoke an employee’s membership in an identity group when offering encouragement. While this suggestion may seem self evident, people still sometimes make subtle comments or even well-intentioned jokes, such as, “wow, if that isn’t living proof a woman can do this better than a man then I don’t know what is!”

<sup>18</sup> Von Hellens & Nielsen, Australian Women in IT and Hingorani & Sankar, Entry-level MIS jobs

<sup>19</sup> Correll, Gender and the Career Choice Process

# RESOURCES — BACKGROUND: NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

## Nine Questions for Engaging Talent, Reducing Turnover, and Improving Business Outcomes

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Based on surveys and focus groups with over one million employees, researchers at the Gallup organization identified 12 questions that measure the strength of a workplace and the elements needed to attract and keep the most talented employees.<sup>20</sup> Employees who responded more positively to these questions worked in units with stronger business outcomes in terms of productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer satisfaction.

### POSITIVE ANSWERS = INCREASED BUSINESS OUTCOMES

All 12 questions were linked to one or more of the business outcomes (productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer satisfaction), with nine questions having the *strongest* links to the *most* outcomes:

1. Do I know the outcomes for which I am accountable?
2. Does my immediate manager really know me?
3. Are my talents and abilities fully utilized?
4. Are my successes recognized by my immediate manager and coworkers?
5. Does my immediate manager do a good job of

coaching me to build on my strengths?

6. Is my current immediate manager the best of all the immediate managers I have had?
7. Do I clearly see the value I bring to my organization every day?
8. Am I a member of one of the strongest teams in the company?
9. Have I grown more professionally in the past year than in any other year?

### MANAGERS = THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN HOW EMPLOYEES ANSWER

Employees' responses to these twelve questions were most shaped by the employee's immediate **manager** rather than by policies or procedures of the overall company. This points to the importance of the immediate manager and the need to regularly assess this supervisory relationship.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Coffman/Buckingham, *First Break all the Rules*, Simon & Schuster 1999

<sup>21</sup> Coffman/Gonzalez, *Follow this Path*, Warner Books 2002

# RESOURCES — BACKGROUND: NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

## The Nine Questions Lead to Five Foundations

Updated research by The Coffman Organization, Inc. has shown that employee impact and outcomes can be demonstrated through a model outlining five foundations of employee engagement.

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1. **Focus:** Do I understand the desired outcomes of my role?
2. **Relationship:** Do I have a two-way relationship with my manager?
3. **Contribution:** Am I able to use my abilities to the fullest?
4. **Value:** Do I believe my contributions are valued?
5. **Achievement:** Am I able to grow and develop to new levels of success?

### USING AND MEASURING THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS: SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGERS

- » **Regularly survey employees.** Managers can check in informally with employees, asking these questions. Care must be taken that these are asked in safe, non-threatening, and non-punitive environments. To acquire even more reliable data, HR or an equivalent outside department can

conduct surveys based on these questions reporting the results and suggestions for improvement to managers. *Note — Engagement is created or destroyed at the local work-unit level, so company-wide survey results would need to be reported by work-unit to be meaningful.* (See Employee Engagement Survey Template for a ready-made survey based on these foundations).

- » **Regularly meet with individual employees.** Managers should also meet regularly with individual employees, using these questions to check-in, to offer feedback, to guide employees' professional development, and to pave the way for later performance reviews. Several resources are provided in this section to enable managers to have these discussions. Use the ones that best meet your needs. (See Templates for Using the Nine Questions and Five Foundations).
- » **Assess your own performance.** Managers should also periodically review these questions to make sure they are addressing each of these areas. While this should be complemented with more objective data from employees' assessments, frequently revisiting this list can help managers identify areas they may have forgotten or "let slide" amid their busy daily schedules. (See Manager Self-Assessment Tool.)

# RESOURCES — BACKGROUND: NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

## The Five Foundations and Unconscious Bias: Other Considerations Before You Begin

*This chart helps managers consider how unconscious bias might influence their attempts to build the five foundations. The first column summarizes managers' key responsibilities around employee development. The second column looks at how these responsibilities can be complicated by unconscious bias. The third column illustrates concrete examples of what this might look like. Use the remaining columns to make notes about how this might happen with your team or as reminders of particular biases you might watch for.*

A successful manager...	But watch for how unconscious bias...	Specific examples of how this might happen	Notes/Reminders
<b>(Foundation 1: Focus)</b>  Sets clear expectations for her or his employees	Might influence the kinds of expectations you set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch for how you might expect employees from underrepresented groups to do more diversity work or to relate to clients "like them."</li> <li>Don't equate "face time" with productivity or hard work. Employees who are parents may not be able to spend as many late evenings in the office as employees without kids. This does not mean that they are less productive.</li> </ul>	
<b>(Foundation 2: Relationship)</b>  Regularly solicits feedback from employees; regularly checks in to see what they need	Might influence how you do this more with some employees than others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how the only woman or person of color on a team of primarily white males might experience different barriers to progress or have different needs. You might even discuss this directly with the employee, but always respect the fact that some employees may not want to be treated differently.</li> <li>In general, remember that fairness does not mean "everyone gets the same" it means "everyone gets what they need."</li> </ul>	

A successful manager...	But watch for how unconscious bias...	Specific examples of how this might happen	Notes/Reminders
<b>(Foundation 3: Contributions)</b>  Gives employees opportunities to do what they do best; uses and builds on their strengths	Might influence what you see as strengths or “what they do best.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch out for how stereotypes and biases can lead you to see women as “good communicators”, good at organizing, “nurturing” or social tasks, overlooking other strengths. Work with employees to determine their strengths. Be aware that they may also fall back on these stereotypes. Push further to see what they really consider their strengths.</li> </ul>	
<b>(Foundation 4: Value)</b>  Values employees’ contributions, opinions and feedback	Might influence what accomplishments you recognize and how; might lead you to overlook certain employees’ contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch out for the tendency to recognize gender-stereotyped accomplishments.</li> <li>Avoid mentioning an employee’s identity group when giving encouragement.</li> <li>See if you listen to those who speak loudly or more often, neglecting others on the team.</li> </ul>	
<b>(Foundation 5: Achievement)</b>  Encourages employee development and career path; provides opportunities to grow	Might influence the opportunities you provide/suggest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how you might inadvertently encourage women to strive for “family friendly” positions, to capitalize on their “people skills,” minimizing their “technical skills.”</li> <li>Consider how you might underestimate the abilities of underrepresented group members in the advice you give.</li> </ul>	



# RESOURCES — TEMPLATES FOR USING THE NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS

## Employee Development Form (supervisor)

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*Complete this form before meeting one-on-one with your employee. These questions are based on Nine Questions that link to increased productivity and business outcomes. If your company has existing forms that serve a similar function, ensure that these questions are covered.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the desired outcomes for this position? *(If they do this job perfectly, what will the results be?)*

What resources are needed to achieve these outcomes?

Does this employee know about or have access to these resources? What resources still might be needed?

What I see as his/her strengths to meet the demands of this role:

What I would advise as goals for Professional Development: *(specific, measureable, actionable, realistic, and time driven)*

What I would advise as opportunities for meeting these goals: *(people to network with or who to “go to” with needs and questions)*

# RESOURCES — TEMPLATES FOR USING THE NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS

## Employee Development Form (employee)

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*This form is for the employee to complete prior to meeting. These questions are based on the Nine Questions linked to increased productivity and business outcomes. If your company has existing forms that serve a similar function, ensure that these questions are covered.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

What do I see as the desired outcomes this position? *(If I do this job perfectly, what will the results be?)*

What resources will I need to achieve these outcomes?

Do I know how and where to access these resources?

What I see as my strengths to meet the demands of this role:

What goals do I have for Professional Development: *(specific, measureable, actionable, realistic, and time driven)*

# RESOURCES — TEMPLATES FOR USING THE NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS

## The “Strengths Interview”

Within the first few weeks of employment, engage your new employee in a strengths interview (see the “Strengths Initial Interview” Template) to find out what he or she thinks he/she does well and how this gels with your own observations.

You may or may not agree with the employee’s assessment of his or her strengths, but the employee’s view is critical in assessing true strengths. At the same time, research indicates that individuals are often near sighted or even blind about their strengths and talents.<sup>22</sup> This is due to the fact that these behaviors come so naturally, that they simply don’t consciously observe them. We are dependent upon others to help discover our natural talents and strengths. Also when initially asked about strengths, employees themselves may fall back on gender stereotypes because it is what they have been told in the past or it is an “easy, default” answer. Push a little further to see if this is what they really think and also offer your own observations.

Every few months, check in with the employee to make sure that she or he is engaging in meaningful work (see “Strengths Follow-up Interview” Template). Remember, always watch for unconscious bias in your thoughts and answers and make sure your employees are not limiting themselves through their own unconscious biases.

Inspire your employees to think about their performance and encourage them to work in strength areas.

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### NOTES:

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<sup>22</sup> Coffman, 2008.

# RESOURCES — TEMPLATES FOR USING THE NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS

## The “Strengths Initial Interview” Template

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1. What did you enjoy most about your previous work experience? What brought you here? What keeps you here?
2. What do you think your strengths are? *[skills (what I know how to do), knowledge (what I know), and talent (natural ways of getting things done)]*
3. What about your weaknesses?
4. What are your goals for your current role? *(ask for outcomes that can be measured and timelines)*
5. How often would you like to meet with me to discuss your progress? Will you be likely to tell me how you are feeling and doing, or will I need to be sure to ask?
6. Do you have any personal goals or commitments you would like to tell me about?
7. What is the best praise you have ever received? What made it so good?
8. Have you had any really productive partnerships or mentoring relationships? Why do you think these worked so well for you?
9. What are your future growth goals, your career goals? Are there any particular skills you want to learn? Are there some specific challenges you want to experience? How can I help?
10. Is there anything else you want to talk about that might help us work well together?

# RESOURCES — TEMPLATES FOR USING THE NINE QUESTIONS AND FIVE FOUNDATIONS

## The “Strengths Follow-Up Interview” Template

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*The employee and supervisor should complete this form separately prior to meeting.*

1. How would you describe success in your current role? Can you measure it?

Here are some of my thoughts: *(Add your own comments)*

2. What do you actually do that makes you as good as you are? What does this tell you about your skills, knowledge, and talents?

Here are some of my thoughts:

3. Which part of your current role do you enjoy the most? Why?
4. Which part of your current role are you struggling with? What does this tell you about your skills, knowledge, and talent? What can we do to manage around this? Training? Positioning? Support system? Partnering?

Here are some of my thoughts:

5. What would be the perfect role for you? Imagine you are in that role. It's 3 P.M. on a Thursday. What are you doing? Why would you like it so much?

## RESOURCES — OTHER EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The additional resources and practices highlighted on the following pages also can help supervisors promote employees' professional development and improve each employee's contributions to the team.

### RESOURCES FOCUSING ON PRACTICES IN TWO AREAS

1

**Fostering employee participation in innovation.** Recent research highlights the importance of having a diverse range of employees involved in innovation. Supervisors can use the resources in the next section to help employees understand what innovation activities are important and how to participate in them more fully.

2

**Establishing mentoring programs.** When it comes to employee development, supervisors can not “do it all.” Good mentoring programs help provide additional support for employee growth, especially for members from underrepresented groups who often lack access to important social networks.



See NCWIT's resources on innovation and mentoring at [www.ncwit.org](http://www.ncwit.org):

- » *Mentoring-in-a-Box: Technical Women at Work*  
(<http://www.ncwit.org/resources.res.box.industry.html>)
- » *Who Invents IT? An Analysis of Women's Participation in Information Technology Patenting (Executive Summary)*  
(<http://www.ncwit.org/resources.res.reports.html>)



# RESOURCES — OTHER EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

## Fostering Employee Participation in Innovation

A recent NCWIT study showed that mixed-sex teams produce the most highly cited patents, with citation rates 26 — 42% higher than the norm. A number of other recent studies also highlight the importance of diversity for improving innovation (see page 5).

However, members from underrepresented groups are less involved in innovation teams than are other employees. In order to reap the benefits of diverse perspectives in innovation, supervisors and companies need to implement practices that encourage diverse teams and that help employees from underrepresented groups participate more fully in innovation efforts.

### ESTABLISHING INNOVATION COMMUNITIES

Innovation communities and challenges can promote diverse employee innovation. IBM's Women Inventors Community is an example of one such program that seeks to demystify the patenting process and bolster women's involvement in innovation. Members can access an international network of fellow employees who offer advice, mentorship, and support on patenting. Several locations have established local chapters that meet in person. The program also offers online workshops on a variety of relevant topics, such as information on the

patenting process, patenting success stories, career improvement opportunities, and claims writing.

To increase motivation for patenting, the community also sponsors an annual "Patent Challenge." To qualify, teams must be made up of Innovation Community members and must include at least one woman (most teams include at least 50% women). The teams submit their entries to the patent review board, which reviews them for filing eligibility. Eligible submissions are filed and a panel of judges identifies the top two entries. The first year's winning team comprised two women, one of them a first-time patenter. For more information, see NCWIT's Promising Practice — *How Can Companies Promote Innovation with Diverse Employees? Patenting Learning Communities* — at [www.ncwit.org/practices](http://www.ncwit.org/practices).

While programs like these have yet to be formally evaluated, the following components seem to be important for success:

- » Strong program and team leadership
- » Guidance by employees who have patented or participated in innovation
- » Mixed gender team composition
- » Teams composed of members from diverse departments or job functions
- » Don't limit the focus to patenting. Different companies have different innovation priorities. Learning communities should focus on the innovation activities most important to your company.

## FOSTERING INNOVATION: WHAT SUPERVISORS CAN DO

- ❧ Establish a norm of assembling mixed gender/diverse project teams.
- ❧ Educate employees about the benefits diversity brings to innovation (see [www.ncwit.org/practices](http://www.ncwit.org/practices)).
- ❧ Demystify the process: Develop innovation communities or similar programs that teach “how to patent.” While patenting is an important measure of innovation, do not limit these efforts to patenting. Identify other kinds of innovation activities that are important and rewarded within your company and make your employees aware of these.
- ❧ Make information on innovation and the patenting process an explicit part of mentoring programs.

## INVENTOR’S WEBSITE AND HANDBOOK

To promote innovation and invention, have employees visit the Lemelson-MIT Program’s Invention Dimension website. The website includes the following features for promoting employee innovation and patenting:

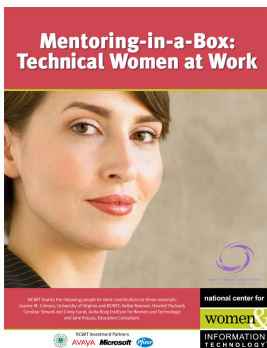
- ❧ **Inventor’s Handbook:** An online handbook that addresses questions concerning the protection of intellectual property, raising capital, applying for patents, and other steps to protect and commercialize ideas. This is especially useful for employees as confusion over the intricacies of the patenting process is one aspect that prevents employees from patenting and further developing their innovations.
- ❧ **Inventor of the Week:** Weekly profiles of inventors from the past and present
- ❧ **Links & Resources:** Other online invention information and resources, including education; news; product protection and marketing; invention organizations; also includes links to sites for kids.
- ❧ **Games & Trivia:** Fun-filled approaches to learning about invention. Test your invention IQ and play other invention games such as “Which Came First” or “Invention Connection” on the Inventing Modern America: From the Microwave to the Mouse website.

The Invention Dimension website can be accessed at <http://web.mit.edu/invent/invent-main.html>.

# RESOURCES — OTHER EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

## Promoting Mentoring

### NCWIT MENTORING-IN-A-BOX: TECHNICAL WOMEN AT WORK



*Mentoring-in-a-Box: Technical Women at Work* will help you start and sustain a purposeful and rewarding mentoring relationship. Informed by research from academic and business literature and by conversations with mentoring experts in the

field, *Mentoring-in-a-Box: Technical Women at Work* offers activities, resources, and tools presented in an easy-to-use format.

The program zeroes-in on challenges unique to technical women in industry settings. It also focuses on the long view: helping women survive their jobs and thrive in their careers, as well as helping them envision, plan, and take practical steps toward positions of influence and innovation. The “Box” contains strategies, activities, and tools that support a thriving and productive relationship between mentor and protégée.

Access *Mentoring-in-a-Box: Technical Women at Work* at <http://www.ncwit.org/resources.res.box.industry.html>.

### NOTES:

## EVALUATION TOOLS

### Manager Self-Assessment Tool: Evaluate Your Own Efforts at Employee Development

*This self-assessment tool is designed to help managers assess their performance in terms of the employee development practices identified in this box. These have been shown to be good practices across companies. However, employee development also takes place within the context of specific companies' cultures. This list is not meant to take the place of other employee development practices specific to individual companies. Use this box and the checklist below in conjunction with other practices required by your company.*

A successful manager...	How I accomplish this	How I might improve
<b>Sets clear expectations</b> ✿ Examines these for unconscious bias		
<b>Provides the necessary materials, equipment, and resources to get job done</b> ✿ Makes sure this is done equitably among team members		
<b>Uses employees' strengths and gives them opportunities to do what they do best</b> ✿ Examines how unconscious bias might influence what I see as "strengths"		
<b>Gives frequent recognition for good work</b> ✿ Avoids invoking stereotype threat or tokenism when doing so		
<b>Values employees' opinions and feedback</b> ✿ Draws out quieter employees rather than primarily listening to those who speak loudly or more often		
<b>Encourages employee development and provides opportunities to grow</b>		
<b>Examines how unconscious bias might influence the advice I give or opportunities I suggest</b>		
<b>Discusses employees' future roles and goals in the company (at least twice a year)</b> ✿ Looks for how unconscious bias might shape the advice I give		

## EVALUATION TOOLS

### Employee Engagement Survey: See How Others Evaluate Your Efforts at Employee Development

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The Employee Engagement Survey Template can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the supervisor's efforts to incorporate the lessons of this Box into his/her management approach.

#### SURVEY ADMINISTRATION TIPS

- » This survey should be administered to all direct reports, and/or others who might be influenced by the implementation of these practices.
- » The appropriate term should be substituted for “manager” as needed — e.g., department chair, team lead, supervisor, etc.
- » Surveys should be completed privately and submitted anonymously.
- » If the total number surveyed is 15 or fewer, or if another situation exists in which individual responses would be identifiable, then a survey should not be used.

#### SURVEY TIMING

Surveys can be administered up to two times per year. An excellent use of this survey tool is to administer the survey before implementing any of the Box practices and soon after. If a change is detected between the pre and post surveys, this suggests that the practices may have had an

impact. Causation is difficult to ascribe, however, as other environmental shifts may also partially account for any changes in perception.

# EVALUATION TOOLS

## Employee Engagement Survey Template

Research shows that the following questions are important indicators for successful managers and for improving business outcomes. I am interested in checking in with you regularly regarding your answers to or thoughts about these questions. This will help me be a better manager, help me better meet your needs, and help us be a productive, high-functioning team.

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT 2.0™ ITEMS\*

Please answer each of the following items on a scale of 1-5, where “1” means you strongly disagree with the statement and “5” means you strongly agree with it. If you absolutely think the question doesn’t apply to you, or you don’t know how to answer it, you can use the “Not Applicable” [NA] response option. All items must be answered.

A successful manager...	Strongly Disagree ..... Strongly Agree					
1. I know the outcomes for which I am accountable.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2. My immediate manager really knows me.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
3. My talents and abilities are fully utilized.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
4. Successes are recognized by my immediate manager and coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. My immediate manager does a good job of coaching me to build on my strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
6. Of all the immediate managers I've had, my current immediate manager is the best.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
7. Everyday, I clearly see the value I bring to my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
8. I am a member of one of the strongest teams in the company.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
9. In the past year, I have grown professionally more than any other year.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
10. I have full confidence in our leader's decisions and direction.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
11. Overall, I am extremely satisfied with this organization as a place to work.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

\* Please note: The first nine questions are specific to measuring “employee engagement.” The last two questions are also used to measure perceptions of a more strategic level. These measure “Overall Satisfaction” and “Leadership Confidence.” Positive ratings for these indicators have also been linked to improved business outcomes.

— The Coffman Organization, Inc.



## SUMMARY: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

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1

Unconscious bias results when our pre-existing gender schemas (stereotypes, beliefs and attitudes, representations, narratives) about particular groups of people subtly influence behaviors and decisions, negatively affecting employees from underrepresented groups. This costs corporate America an estimated \$64 billion per year.

2

A great deal of research shows that even individuals who consider themselves committed to equality and believe that they have overcome these biases still engage in subtle forms of unconscious bias and discrimination including:

- » Microinequities
- » Gender- or color-blindness
- » Stereotyping
- » Tokenism
- » Within-group competitiveness
- » The glass cliff

3

To avoid stereotype threat and tokenism:

- » Avoid characterizing a person as a representative of his or her group.
- » Emphasize individual abilities in work task situations.
- » Foster an “incremental” view of intelligence and technical ability (that these are not simply innate qualities but can be expanded with effort and experience).
- » Recognize that work task difficulties are often about situational factors.
- » Provide intentional role models.

4

Providing sincere, honest encouragement can help employees from underrepresented groups overcome doubts, biases, and barriers they often face.

5

To keep employees engaged and to increase productivity:

- » Remember that 5 Foundations must be met for sustained employee engagement: Focus, Relationships, Contributions, Value, and Achievement.
- » Regularly meet with employees to determine strengths, future career plans, and current job needs/responsibilities.
- » Revisit the Manager Self-Assessment Tool to assess your performance in terms of employee development.
- » Promote innovation learning communities.
- » Encourage mentoring.