

# SUPERVISING-IN-A-BOX SERIES:

## Team/Project Management



3 of 5

in-a-box  
SERIES

*Supervising-in-a-Box: Team/Project Management* 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 team and project management, 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: Team/Project Management* 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 each volume and also can be used as a training guide or tool for educating team members about these issues. See the suggestions for using this section as a training guide or educational tool in the “Add-water” Resources section of this box.

**“Add-water” Resources and Templates** — A selection of concrete tools you can use to improve your team/project management efforts.

### TIP SHEETS

- » Reducing Unconscious Bias in Assigning Tasks and Responsibilities
- » Facilitating Healthy Team Debate
- » Supervising Global Teams

### RESOURCES

- » Task Assignment Assessment
- » Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): Helping Your Whole Team Function as an “In-group”
- » Assessing LMX
- » Educating Your Team about Unconscious Bias and Diversity Dynamics
- » Discussing Diversity Dynamics with Different Types of Teams
- » “Bystander” Training

### 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

## 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: TEAM/PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Find *Supervising-in-a-Box Series: Team/Project Management* at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising). Download the entire box as a single compressed folder, or select individual components as you need them. 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:

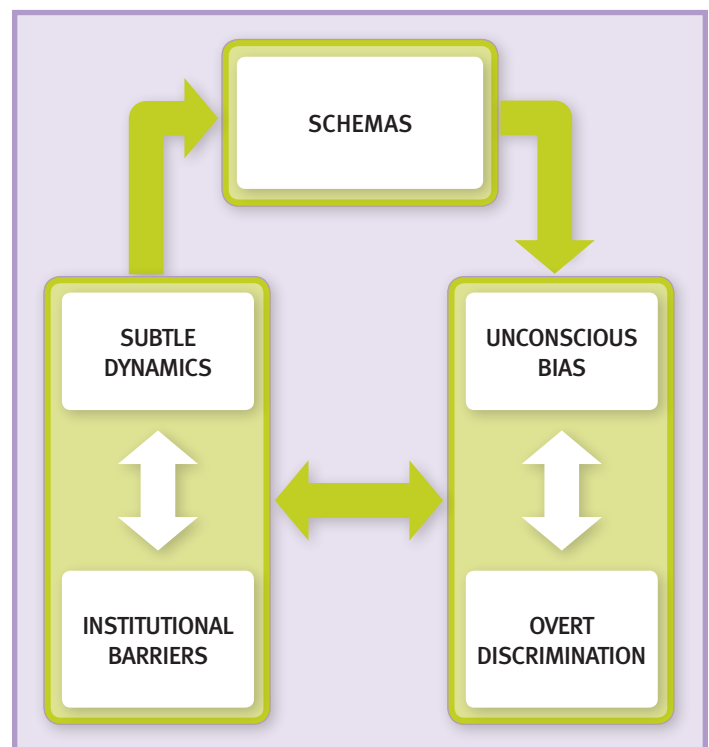
- » Systems that give more important tasks to people based on criteria that tends to advantage one group (e.g. *is in the office later at night, doesn't have children*)
- » Rigid schedules that make it difficult to attend to family responsibilities
- » Holding informal meetings in places underrepresented 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."**

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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."**

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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 the “Add-water” Resources section of this box. This section 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 Unconscious Bias in Assigning Tasks and Responsibilities
- » Facilitating Healthy Team Debate
- » Supervising Global Teams

## RESOURCES

- » Task Assignment Assessment
- » Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): Helping Your Whole Team Function as an “In-group”
- » Assessing LMX
- » Educating Your Team about Unconscious Bias and Diversity Dynamics
- » Discussing Diversity Dynamics with Different Types of Teams
- » “Bystander” Training

## EVALUATION TOOLS

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

## SUMMARY: KEY TAKEAWAYS

## TIP SHEET

### Reducing Unconscious Bias in Assigning Tasks and Responsibilities

**Conduct a “task assignment” assessment (see page 22).**

Take stock of which team members have been in charge of or assigned to which projects.

- » Are some team members assigned more frequently to highly visible projects? This can happen inadvertently especially when some team members are more vocal in requesting such assignments.
- » Are other talented team members missing out on these assignments, perhaps because they are quieter or because their potential has been overlooked?
- » Are some team members assigned more often to high risk projects? Team members from underrepresented groups are often assigned these projects and become “scapegoats” if the project fails or is less successful than intended.

**Examine criteria used for task assignment.** Be sure that each criteria used for assigning tasks is relevant for those projects. For example, supervisors sometimes avoid assigning important projects to team members who work flexible hours even though this schedule does not impair their ability to do the job. Look for these kinds of unconscious assumptions in the criteria you use for task assignment.

**Watch for patterns where team members perform stereotypically gendered roles.** Make sure these roles are rotated throughout the team. For example, research illustrates that women more frequently take on the role of

notekeeper in team or group meetings. Similarly, women are frequently asked to assume tasks that involve social organizing while men are often given more tasks that involve problem-solving. In some cases, these individuals may want to perform these roles. In many cases, however, team members assume these roles because they are “just used to it,” think that “no one else will do it,” or because other team members unconsciously (or consciously) assume they will take on these roles. Often it is a combination of these factors.

**Avoid or interrupt comments such as these: “Women are just better at social tasks” or “Men are better problem-solvers.”**

These comments reflect a misunderstanding of the gender-difference research and exaggerate its findings. While some differences exist, research also shows more “within-gender” variation than it does “cross-gender” variation. In other words, contrary to conventional wisdom, there are more differences *among women* or *among men* than there are *between* women and men. Likewise, this research does not demonstrate that these are natural or biological differences. Gently remind employees of these facts when they make these sorts of comments.

**Avoid the “glass cliff” phenomenon.** Resist the pressure to fill quotas by promoting “token” employees from underrepresented groups before they are ready. Ensure that all employees have the support, resources, and authority necessary before they are promoted or assume project leadership.

## TIP SHEET

### Facilitating Healthy Team Debate

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**Actively look for ideas from unexpected sources.** Successful managers know that often the best advice comes from unexpected people and places. Sometimes important insights come from team members who would not consider themselves or be considered by others as an expert on the problem at hand. Always stay open to all avenues for feedback.

**Solicit the opinions of “quieter” employees.** Managers who hear primarily from team members who speak most loudly and most often are missing out on a wealth of important contributions. Do not assume that quiet team members have nothing to say. This often reflects a different personality style or cultural background. Actively look for team members who say less and specifically ask if they have thoughts they would like to put on the table. Do so in a sincerely curious manner, and make it okay for them to say “no.” If you sense that some employees feel more comfortable sharing ideas one-on-one, ask them about this after team meeting.

**Acknowledge other perspectives and use positive words to disagree.** When you disagree with a team member, consider using the following kind of language: 1) “I’d like to add what may be another point of view,” 2) “I see your point, but what if we also consider this...” or 3) “I understand your point, but let’s explore another dimension for a moment.” These, or similar approaches, are positive ways to disagree and still have an impact on creativity. This approach also keeps all participants in the conversation and prevents defensiveness.

**Ask questions about other team members’ reasoning or ideas; don’t make assumptions.** When you do not understand a team member’s thinking, do not assume that it IS wrong or that you know WHAT is wrong with it. First, ask why or how they came to this way of thinking. Language such as, “I’m curious to hear more about your thinking behind...” or “That’s interesting; why did you do it that way?” is helpful. Even if it turns out that their ultimate solution or suggestion is wrong, new insights that are useful in other ways often emerge from this type of exchange.

**Identify whether the debate is about instrumental or fundamental differences.** Instrumental differences refer to differences about the “best” way to meet a goal or solve a problem. If the team agrees about the larger goal or problem, discussing these instrumental differences is appropriate. Reminding the team about the shared goal can be helpful in such debates. Sometimes, however, teams can get bogged down in debating instrumental differences or questions when they actually have fundamental differences about the larger goal. If this is the case, you need to move the debate explicitly to this level, identifying the competing goals and deciding upon these first.

**Stay present in the conversation.** Everyone should give their full attention to the conversation. Genuinely seek to understand what others say. Don’t check email or fidget with your handheld.

**Avoid interrupting.** This usually communicates significant



disrespect. It is also one way that some team members end up dominating conversations, silencing the perspectives of team members who feel that interrupting is “rude” or “inappropriate.”

**Avoid negative personal attacks.** Attacking someone or their ideas is never productive. Even if their ideas are problematic, negative attacks will simply cause members to become defensive or disengage from the conversation, ultimately shutting it down.

## NOTES:

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# TIP SHEET

## Supervising Global Teams

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Working across global teams presents unique challenges that are sometimes overlooked and undervalued. As technology and new markets continue to drive more geographically-diverse teams, new skills need to be developed to match the pace of business. The following tips will help build better working relationships with virtual teams and achieve the highest level of productivity.

### CULTURAL CONCERNS

**Develop an understanding of the culture of the regional team.** In many regions, attitudes toward hierarchy, class, family connections, gender, and even nationality will prohibit team members from raising salient or new points. To work through any reticence to engage, have a meeting before the meeting where you build a relationship with the remote team members. Use this time to help you understand the culture as well as the perceived politics that are usual in any office environment. Give them the encouragement necessary to contribute their knowledge and ideas during the conference call.

**Recognize the unique skills, strengths, and conditions of the remote office.** In many subsidiaries, the headquarter office is often afforded the most influence, funding, and resources. Recognize the remote office and team for their unique skills, language, perspectives, and cultural experience that are critical to business success in the region. Also recognize their unique needs.

**Conduct “expectation conversations” that clarify in detail the goal, objectives, and successful outcomes.** With differing education levels and experiences, this can be a stumbling block as remote locations use their own unique solutions for achieving outcomes that may conflict with the company’s values.

**Clarify and acknowledge often.** True in any remote team scenario, but all the more so across geographical and cultural lines. For non-English speakers, speak more slowly (but not more loudly) to allow time for translation. Be careful of jargon, humor, and language that might not translate well or might be offensive.

**Don’t assume your product, plan, or policy will work universally.** Listen when told so by the remote team in order to understand whether the challenges are real or natural resistance to change.

### LOGISTICAL CONCERNS

**Be sensitive to time differences.** If possible, let each regional office or team member set the conference call time on rotation to demonstrate respect and equality of purpose. Be aware of and sensitive to work days and holidays when scheduling meetings. For instance, in the Middle East the work week is Sunday – Thursday.

**Don’t cancel last minute.** Your teammates in offices around the world are often accommodating the “home office” time zone at the expense of their personal time.

**Connect to remote office networks and invite them to join yours.** Involvement within distribution lists and other internal information sources can build up rapport, trust, and confidence.

**As the team leader, maintain a virtual “open door” policy based in confidentiality.** Make yourself accessible by using a communication system that signals electronically when you are in the office and when you are available for calls. Let team members know through individual email that this option exists for them.

**Take advantage of international mentoring.** Mentoring international or remote team members is an excellent way to discover and address additional communication *and* cultural issues that often hinder the success of a global team. Be sensitive to culturally important elements, such as gender, which will require woman-to-woman mentoring in certain parts of the world.

## NOTES:

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## Task Assignment Assessment

## RESOURCES

### Leader-Member Exchange (LMX): Helping Your Whole Team Function as an “In-group”<sup>18</sup>

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#### LMX AFFECTS BUSINESS OUTCOMES AND PRODUCTIVITY

The unique working relationship between a supervisor and each individual employee affects both organizational and personal outcomes. This impact has been documented through years of research based on a leadership theory about patterns of exchanges between leaders and members (LMX). Findings show that leaders tend to develop more positive relationships with some organizational members than with others. These “in-group” relationships, characterized by exchanges of trust, respect, and low formality, have a measurable positive influence on the performance, job satisfaction, and commitment of both men and women.

Positive LMX also correlates with increased work self-efficacy. In other words, leaders who establish positive working relationships with women or people of color new to their team engender greater self-confidence in these members. Because low self-efficacy in IT is sometimes reported by these groups and often precedes departure, especially by women, LMX quality is especially important in a technical environment.

#### LMX AND UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unfortunately, positive LMX is more likely to form between people who see themselves as similar. Because most IT leaders are white and male, women and people of color less often achieve in-group status. Awareness of this

tendency can help leaders consciously include women and underrepresented minorities, eliminating “out-groups” and ensuring that the whole team functions as an “in-group.”

#### DEVELOPING POSITIVE LMX WITH ALL EMPLOYEES

**Step 1.** Leader-member relationships develop over time, but from the very beginning mutual respect is crucial. Leaders must recognize and value the qualities the member brings to their organization and must communicate that respect early, within the first few weeks of contact. Leaders can communicate and model respect by explicitly telling group members that they are capable of doing challenging tasks, acknowledging the validity of any concerns, and treating them as individuals, not as representatives of their sex or race. It may be useful for leaders to explicitly say that they want a high-quality working relationship.

**Step 2.** Mutual trust occurs when a leader and a member share a belief that they can depend on each other in accomplishing goals. Leaders should offer opportunities, relying on the member to accept and perform dependably. Leaders also must follow through with rewards, including greater autonomy and more “face time” with supervisors or leaders. Ensuring that members know the leader would rescue or back them up, if necessary, is also important.

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<sup>18</sup> Hiller and Day, LMX and Teamwork; Scandura & Lankau, Developing Diverse Leaders; Reid, et. al., The Role of Mentoring and Supervisor Support



**Step 3.** Mutual commitment and obligation grow as the relationship matures. As justification for trust builds, leaders should develop shared understanding of organizational goals with their members and include members in decision-making. As leaders and members learn what to expect from each other, the pair should develop career interdependence.

These steps in forming a positive relationship require that leaders possess interpersonal skills including effective listening and communication. Other behaviors that contribute to building trusting relationships include:

- » Consistency
- » Integrity
- » Sharing & delegation of control
- » Communication
- » Demonstration of concern

## ASSESSING LMX

Conduct “relationship audits” to periodically measure the quality of the leader-member relationships in your organization (see page 25). This information will allow you to benchmark the relationships and track changes in response to your deliberate attempts to improve them. The following survey items can help you accomplish these tasks. They are adapted from those used in research where the benefits of positive leader-member relationships were documented. When you review your results, think about whether pairings of different sexes or races achieve high quality LMX.

## NOTES

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# RESOURCES

## Assessing LMX

The first set of questions is based on those most used in LMX research. Responses to the following questions may use a 6-point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=strongly agree, and N/A indicates not applicable.

[FOR ALL]	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I usually know how satisfied my [leader/member, supervisor/subordinate, department head/faculty member] is with what I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] understands my work-related needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] and I are alike in a number of ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My relationship with my [...] is very effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[FOR LEADERS]	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I would be willing to “rescue” my [subordinate/faculty member], even at my own expense, if s/he really needed it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would use my power to solve problems in my [...]’s work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand my [...]’s potential.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] has enough confidence in me that s/he would defend my decisions if I was not present to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
[FOR MEMBERS]	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I can count on my manager to ‘bail me out’ even at his or her own expense, when I really need it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] would use his/her power to solve problems in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] understands my potential.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My [...] has enough confidence in me that s/he would defend my decisions if I was not present to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## RESOURCES

### Educating Your Team about Unconscious Bias and Diversity Dynamics

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**Incorporate information on unconscious biases and institutional barriers into existing formal trainings.** For example, you might work with your HR department or other appropriate personnel to incorporate the “Background Information and Training Guide” in this “Box” into existing training curriculum. The guide also includes vignettes for group discussion. Two of these vignettes are on video and available for download at [www.ncwit.org/supervising](http://www.ncwit.org/supervising). You also can create additional videos based on real-life scenarios or scenarios tailored for your workplace. To do so, contact the Level Playing Field Institute at [jacqueline@lpfi.org](mailto:jacqueline@lpfi.org).

**Discuss in more informal team meetings.** You also can use the “Background and Training Guide Section” in this box to facilitate informal discussions with your team. Use the tips below to help ensure productive discussion should you decide to use this information with your team.

#### DISCUSSION TIPS

**Set ground rules.** Acknowledge that these can be difficult issues to discuss. Disagreement is always okay, but debates should occur in a respectful manner. Also see Tips for Healthy Debate to assist with setting appropriate ground rules (page 18).

**Keep team discussions confidential.** “What happens in team meetings, stays in team meetings.” Sometimes sensitive issues or personal stories might arise. It is important to keep these discussions within the team. Do not reveal these

private discussions with others outside the team. Violating this confidence can foster distrust.

**Consider your team’s demographics and prepare appropriately.** These types of discussions require different kinds of considerations and preparation with teams that consists of members who are from relatively similar identity groups (e.g., all men, all women, all white), teams that consist of only one or two members from different identity groups, or diverse teams that consist of a range of members from different identity groups. The chart on the following page provides some tips for leading these discussions with each type of team. Keep in mind that these are general recommendations; managers need to consider these suggestions in light of the unique aspects of their team and adjust or tailor these recommendations accordingly.

**Don’t leave team members “hanging”; provide an avenue for further discussion.** Sometimes these discussions can raise questions or concerns for employees that are not resolved in the initial meeting. It is important that these employees have a place to discuss these further. An open-door policy with the manager is one way to handle these situations. You may also wish to refer them to others within the company or within HR. Let all employees know that these options are available.

# RESOURCES

## Discussing Diversity Dynamics with Different Types of Teams

Below are tips for leading diversity discussions with different types of teams. These are general suggestions and may vary depending on your relationship with your team. They will also vary depending on whether you, the manager, are a member of a majority or minority group. Be open and honest about how you relate to the dynamics or experiences described below.

Type of Team	Advantages	Disadvantages	Approach
<b>Relatively Similar Team Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Tends to be higher level of shared understandings and experiences. Don't simply assume that this shared understanding exists though as there is always variation within groups.</li> <li>✦ The tendency for at least some level of shared experience can reduce conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Members may agree on problems and solutions to certain scenarios or vignettes too readily or not have a basis for understanding how a particular problem or scenario would be experienced differently by someone different from them.</li> <li>✦ Resistance to these discussions or confusion around why they are necessary can arise more readily in teams of relatively similar members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Acknowledge these pros and cons upfront at the beginning of the discussion.</li> <li>✦ Encourage team members to think about:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1) Less obvious ways they have been marginalized</b> (e.g., times when they have felt in the minority or "left out," growing up in a working-class family among middle-class norms). Tapping into these experiences helps build empathy and potential ground for shared understanding.</li> <li><b>2) Unexamined "privilege" they experience</b> (See "Privilege" section in Background Information &amp; Training Guide)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>One or Two Members from Underrepresented Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Different lived experiences are more likely to surface and create interesting debate. Of course, don't assume that members from the same identity groups will share the same perspectives or that members from different groups will share different perspectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Such debate can be uncomfortable, especially for those one or two people from underrepresented groups.</li> <li>✦ Majority members also can be afraid to speak for fear of offending others.</li> <li>✦ A form of tokenism can surface where other team members expect "diverse" team members to "speak" for their group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Again, acknowledging these pros and cons upfront is usually helpful.</li> <li>✦ If you have a good relationship with the members from underrepresented groups, you may wish to have a brief conversation with them ahead of time. Explain why you want to have these discussions with the team and how you plan to handle them. Ask for their feedback on this plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Diverse Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ A wide range of ideas, perspectives are likely to emerge.</li> <li>✦ No one member is likely to feel as singled out or uncomfortable as in teams where only one or two members are from underrepresented groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Discomfort can still arise, however.</li> <li>✦ Also, keep in mind that while members may feel comfortable on your team, this may not be the case when they are out in the company at large. Any isolation or discomfort they feel in the company at large regarding these issues might transfer to team discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Again, acknowledging these pros and cons upfront is helpful.</li> <li>✦ Providing a clear rationale for why these discussions are important is also helpful.</li> <li>✦ Review the tips for healthy debate and disagreement.</li> </ul>

# RESOURCES

## “Bystander” Training<sup>19</sup>

*Provide bystander training or discuss the importance of being an active bystander with employees. The following is a brief description of what it means to be an active bystander and what kind of training is involved. You can discuss appropriate bystander responses to the scenarios provided in the Background Information and Training Guide section. For more information or more formal training, contact Maureen Scully at the Center for Gender in Organizations at Simmons School of Management (<http://www.simmons.edu/som/cgo/>).*

**Why “bystander” training?** A number of organizations have begun implementing “active bystander trainings” for at least two reasons:

- » *Encouraging the positive:* Promoting productive, inclusive behavior from all managers and employees
- » *Discouraging the negative:* Reducing biased, discriminatory, and illegal behaviors

**Who is a “bystander”?** A bystander could be anyone who sees or otherwise becomes aware of behavior that appears worthy of comment or action. Typically this includes three types of bystanders:

- » people who do or say something (whether positive or negative) that might merit a response
- » people who are impacted by what is said or done
- » supervisors

Bystanders might be peers or teammates. They might be subordinate or senior to the person whose comment or behavior warrants reaction. Training that encourages “active bystanders” takes into account the different power dynamics and contexts that may be involved.

**Why are active bystanders necessary?** There are a number of reasons to encourage bystanders in the workplace to be “active” when action is appropriate:

- » There are often more peers and bystanders to intervene than there are supervisors.
- » A responsible bystander may be able to react immediately and on the spot, at times when action is safe and appropriate. This may be more productive and cost-effective in affirming good behavior or discouraging unacceptable behavior than are reactions that are delayed.
- » Social psychologists and neuroscientists have repeatedly demonstrated how people are affected by the actions of those around them.<sup>20</sup> Developing active bystanders can speed the process of creating cultural norms that reduce biased behaviors and foster inclusive ones.

<sup>19</sup> Scully & Rowe, Bystander Training

<sup>20</sup> Cialdini, Influence and Christakis & Fowler, Collective Dynamics



**Can bystanders make things worse?** Some participants in bystander training worry that a bystander might “make matters worse.” This is possible, especially when an active bystander takes some seemingly righteous action that makes her/him feel better but that also infringes on the privacy of the person defended. For example, a supportive comment about gay people that accidentally “outs” a colleague may be intended to show commitment to diversity but also cause an individual harm. To avoid these instances, training includes thorough discussions about when to act, when and whom to consult, and of course, whether to report the unacceptable behavior of another person to a compliance office.

### EXAMPLE: BYSTANDER TRAINING

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.

The damage in this example was exacerbated by the silence of the bystanders—two colleagues who did not correct the

Vice President’s biased perception. In an organizational context, where power differences are involved, bystanders may be silent for many reasons—to help the powerful save face, to avoid provoking conflict, and to preserve their own status. Bystander training might emphasize a range of responses that the two colleagues in the above scenario might use, in order to bring José into the conversation, save face for the Vice President, and/or show their own social adeptness at networking and connecting people. For example, one of the bystanders in this situation might say:

- » “I could use more white wine, too. Let’s find a waiter.”
- » “You should talk to José about our Northeast accounts. I’ll try to find a waiter.”
- » “Good idea. José, would you join us for a glass of wine, too? Let’s flag the waiter for four more glasses. So, have you met José? He’s a key player in Northeast accounts.”

Notice that the last two responses not only address the biased behavior but also turn the situation into a positive one by introducing José and his accomplishments. Practicing these kinds of scenarios ahead of time makes it easier to respond in the moment, instead of freezing in stunned silence. Even if different kinds of scenarios emerge, employees will be better prepared for responding in ways that mitigate unconscious biases.

*For more information contact Maureen Scully at the Center for Gender in Organizations at the Simmons School of Management (<http://www.simmons.edu/som/cgo/>).*

## EVALUATION TOOLS

### Manager Self-Assessment Tool: Evaluate Your Own Efforts at Team Management

*This self-assessment tool is designed to help managers assess their performance in terms of the team/project management practices identified in this box.*

A successful manager	How I am accomplishing this	How I might improve
Promotes healthy debate among team members		
Assigns tasks equitably; examines task assignment patterns for unconscious bias		
Offers flexible work arrangements when possible; creates environment where these arrangements are valued		
Considers other unique needs of all employees, including global employees, and plans accordingly		
Works with team to understand and discuss diversity dynamics		
Understands when diversity dynamics should be discussed as a whole group or with individual team members		
Develops positive relationships with all employees; does not create “in” and “out” groups		

## EVALUATION TOOLS

### Employee Survey: See How Others Evaluate Your Efforts at Team Management

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The following 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 then again several (6-9) months later. 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

## Team Management Survey Template

I am interested in checking in with you regularly regarding your answers to 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. Please answer each of the following items on a scale of 1-6, where “1” means you strongly disagree with the statement and “6” 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.

Questions	Strongly Disagree ..... Strongly Agree						
1. My manager promotes healthy debate among team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
2. My manager seems to respect opinions that are different from his/her own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
3. My manager assigns tasks equitably.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
4. The criteria my manager uses to assign tasks has been made explicit.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
5. My manager offers flexible work arrangements when possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
6. My manager has created an environment where flexible work arrangements are valued.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
7. My manager considers the work/life balance needs of the employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
8. My manager works with employees to understand the dynamics related to diverse people working together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
9. My manager appears to understand when diversity dynamics should be discussed as a whole group or with individual team members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
10. My manager does a good job guiding difficult conversations to ensure they remain productive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
11. My own relationship with my manager is cooperative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
12. My own relationship with my manager is effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
13. I usually know how satisfied my manager is with what I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
14. My manager understands what I need to work most productively.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA

## SUMMARY: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR TEAM MANAGEMENT

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### 1

#### Watch for Unconscious Biases in Task Assignments

- » Conduct a task assignment assessment
- » Examine criteria used for task assignment
- » Watch for patterns where team members' perform stereotypically gendered roles
- » Avoid or interrupt comments such as these: "Women are just better at social tasks" or "Men are better problem-solvers"
- » Avoid the "glass cliff" phenomenon

### 2

#### Foster Healthy Team Debate

- » Actively look for ideas from unexpected sources
- » Solicit the opinions of "quieter" employees
- » Acknowledge other perspectives and use positive words to disagree
- » Ask questions about other team members' reasoning or ideas; don't make assumptions
- » Identify whether the debate is about instrumental or fundamental differences
- » Stay present in the conversation
- » Avoid interrupting
- » Avoid negative personal attacks

### 3

#### Pay Attention to Culture

- » Develop an understanding of the culture of the regional team
- » Recognize the unique skills, strengths and conditions of the remote office
- » Conduct "expectation conversations" that clarify in detail the goal, objectives and successful outcomes
- » Don't assume your product, plan or policy will work universally
- » Be sensitive to time differences
- » Don't cancel at the last minute
- » Connect to remote office networks and invite them to join yours
- » As the team leader, maintain a virtual "open door" policy based in confidentiality
- » Take advantage of international mentoring

# 4

## **Develop Positive Leader-Member Relationships**

- » Share mutual respect and trust
- » Back your team
- » Increase autonomy
- » Include employees in decision making

# 5

## **Educating Your Team About Unconscious Biases and Diversity Dynamics**

- » Incorporate into existing formal trainings
- » Discuss in more informal team meetings