Interviewing Biases

Objective: To equip hiring managers with the ability to identify common biases in the interview process, reflect on their own potential vulnerabilities, and develop strategies to mitigate these biases. After reviewing the definitions of each biases and reading through the journaling prompts, pick two questions to write about in your personal journal or in the quiz question.

Bias Definitions and Examples:

- **Glare Factors:** Judging candidates based on superficial or irrelevant characteristics.

    o *Example:* Being overly impressed by a candidate's expensive suit or dismissing someone due to a minor grammatical error in their speech.

- **Experience Fallacy:** Overvaluing experience without considering potential.

    o *Example:* Automatically favoring a candidate with 10 years of experience over a highly adaptable and quick-learning candidate with 5 years.

- **Confirmation Bias:** Seeking information that confirms our initial impressions.

    o *Example:* Asking follow-up questions that are likely to support a positive first impression while overlooking or dismissing information that contradicts it.

- **Overconfidence Bias:** Overestimating our ability to assess candidates accurately.

    o *Example:* Feeling certain about a candidate's fit after a short interview without using structured evaluation methods.

- **Similarity Bias:** Favoring candidates who are like us.

  - *Example:* Feeling a stronger connection and evaluating more positively a candidate who went to the same university or shares similar hobbies.

- **Stereotype Bias:** Making assumptions based on stereotypes.

  - *Example:* Assuming a younger candidate lacks leadership skills or that a candidate from a certain background won't be a good cultural fit.

- **Availability Bias:** Relying on easily recalled information.

  - *Example:* Remembering a recent negative experience with a candidate from a particular company and therefore being more critical of a current candidate from the same company.

- **Escalation of Commitment:** Continuing to support a decision despite negative evidence. Sunk cost fallacy – I've already invested this much.

  - *Example:* Ignoring red flags about a candidate late in the interview process because so much time and effort has already been spent on them.

Journaling Prompts for Each Bias:

Glare Factors:

- Think about past interviews you've conducted. Can you recall any instances where superficial characteristics (e.g., appearance, speaking style, hobbies) might have unduly influenced your initial impression of a candidate, positively or negatively?

- What are some superficial factors that you personally might be more susceptible to noticing or being influenced by?

- What specific strategies can you put in place to focus more on the candidate's qualifications and potential rather than these superficial aspects?

Experience Fallacy:

- Reflect on times you might have been heavily swayed by a candidate's extensive experience. Could there have been candidates with less direct experience but greater potential or adaptability that you might have overlooked?

- What aspects of "potential" (e.g., learning agility, problem-solving skills, growth mindset) do you sometimes struggle to assess?

- How can you adjust your interview questions and evaluation criteria to better assess a candidate's potential for future success, beyond just their past roles?

Confirmation Bias:

- Consider situations where you formed an early positive or negative impression of a candidate. Did you then tend to focus on information that supported your initial view and perhaps downplay contradictory evidence?

- What are some initial "gut feelings" or assumptions you tend to make about candidates?

- What specific questions or evaluation techniques can you use to actively seek out disconfirming evidence and challenge your initial impressions?

Overconfidence Bias:

- How confident do you generally feel in your ability to accurately assess candidates during an interview? On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place yourself? Why?

- Can you recall any hiring decisions where your initial strong confidence in a candidate didn't align with their later performance? What might have contributed to that misjudgment?

- What mechanisms (e.g., structured interviews, multiple interviewers, standardized evaluation rubrics) can you implement to introduce more objectivity and reduce reliance on your individual judgment?

Similarity Bias:

- Think about candidates you've felt a strong connection with during interviews. Were there instances where this connection was based on shared backgrounds, interests, or experiences? Could this have inadvertently led to a more favorable evaluation?

- What aspects of a candidate's background or personality might you unconsciously find more relatable?

- How can you actively ensure you are evaluating candidates based on objective criteria and job-related skills, regardless of personal similarities or differences?

Stereotype Bias:

- Consider any general assumptions or stereotypes (related to gender, age, ethnicity, education, etc.) that might unconsciously influence your perception of certain candidate profiles.

- Have you ever caught yourself making assumptions about a candidate based on a group they belong to?

- What steps can you take to become more aware of your own implicit biases and actively challenge stereotypical thinking during the interview process?

Availability Bias:

- Reflect on situations where a particularly memorable positive or negative experience with a past candidate might have unduly influenced your evaluation of a current candidate with similar traits.

- Are there certain candidate characteristics or interview moments that tend to stick in your memory more easily?

- How can you ensure you are evaluating each candidate based on their individual merits and the entirety of their interview, rather than being overly influenced by easily recalled information?

Escalation of Commitment (and Sunk Cost Fallacy):

- Think about a hiring process where you might have had reservations about a candidate early on, but continued to invest time and effort in their candidacy. Did the amount of time already invested ever make it harder to ultimately say "no"?

- Have you ever felt pressure to move forward with a candidate simply because a significant amount of time or resources had already been spent on them?

- What objective criteria or "stop points" can you establish in your hiring process to ensure you can make unbiased decisions, regardless of prior investment?