

Is Affinity Bias Involved in Determining Cultural Fit?

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During the interview process, some companies may try to assess whether job candidates will align with their culture, hoping it will increase the chance any candidates they hire will thrive within their new work environment.

However, any hiring practice that involves some form of non-objective evaluation can present a risk of affinity bias—the potentially unconscious tendency to favor people we perceive to be similar to us.

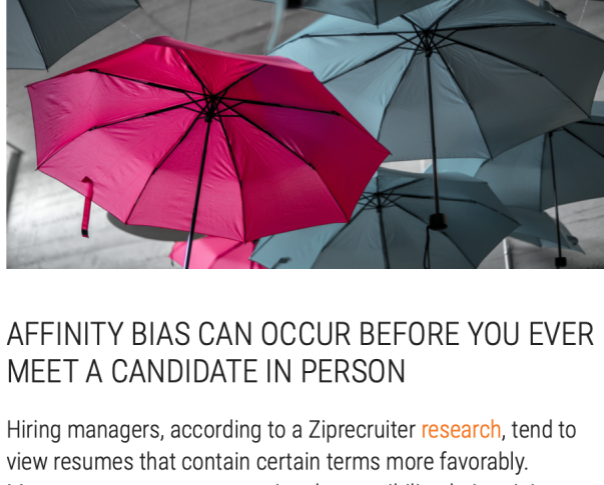
To prevent affinity bias from affecting hiring decisions, organizations may want to consider some of the following points:

GENDER STEREOTYPES COULD INFLUENCE OPINIONS

In a 2014 [study](#) conducted by the Columbia Business School, male and female managers were both found to be twice as likely to hire a male candidate, instead of a female one, to perform a math-based task, even though both candidates had equal qualifications.

YOUNGER HIRING MANAGERS MAY UNFAIRLY DISMISS OLDER CANDIDATES

Recent research from AARP suggests the most common type of age-related workplace discrimination in the U.S. involves older jobseekers not getting hired; in the U.K., nearly two-thirds of 55- to 64-year-olds say they've felt discriminated against by a prospective employer due to their age when being interviewed, according to [data](#) from job website Totaljobs.



AFFINITY BIAS CAN OCCUR BEFORE YOU EVER MEET A CANDIDATE IN PERSON

Hiring managers, according to a Ziprecruiter [research](#), tend to view resumes that contain certain terms more favorably. Managers may want to examine the possibility their opinion could be affected if a candidate were to use phrases in job experience descriptions and emails that are similar to ones the manager would use—or are markedly different.

NON-SUBJECTIVE SCREENING METHODS CAN HELP

A [study](#) involving 19 assessment techniques found giving candidates a test that includes hands-on simulations of part or all of a job they will be doing if hired is one of the top three predictors of how a candidate will perform in position.

Companies may also find blind hiring techniques that allow them to conceal information relating to names, gender and other qualities can better assess candidates' likelihood to succeed in role than any cultural fit determination. Some organizations, for instance, are using software solutions that remove photos and dates from applicant tracking systems and names from social media searches to help [reduce the chance conscious and unconscious bias could occur](#).

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