



# Unconscious Bias Training What We Learned From Starbucks

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## Julie Dower

Welcome, everyone. First, I just wanted to take some time to thank everybody for joining us today. We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. My name is Julie Dower. I am the marketing communications manager at Vensure Employer Services, and I will be your host over the next hour.

The webinar today is a first in a series on sensitivity in the workplace and we'll be focusing on unconscious bias today. We'll be covering relevant topics through a Q&A with our panelist at the end of the session. We will do our best to answer all of the questions, but any that we do not get a chance to respond to, we will reach out to you on an individual basis after the session today. This webinar is brought to you by Vensure Employer Services and all of our PEO partners across the country and our clients. We have clients located in all 50 states and we look forward to answering all of your questions.

Our agenda for today includes defining unconscious bias, really diving into what we learned from the Starbucks situation, updating your training policies and procedures, building a diverse workforce, and then our Q&A at the end. If you hear information, or if you would like to hear additional information about a topic, or you need clarity on anything that we've discussed today, please feel free to submit a question for us. And just in case you're unfamiliar with how to do that and Go To Webinar, when you launched the Go To Webinar platform, a control panel appeared. In that control panel, there is a dropdown section called Questions. You can open that section up, type your question into the dialog box, and go ahead and hit enter to submit the question. We do ask that if you are a client, you let us know by putting client in the question, either at the beginning or the end. It is important to know that you will not see questions or comments from anybody else asking questions. You will receive a response from our moderator, however. We'll try to answer all of the questions within

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the allotted time for today, however, if you do not get your question answered, we will reach out to you after the session. You are also welcome to email us directly at [webinarhrhelp@vensure.com](mailto:webinarhrhelp@vensure.com) for additional information.

We are thrilled to have our panelist today, Robin Paggi, joining us as our expert. She is a seasoned human resource practitioner specializing in training on topics such as harassment prevention, communication, team building, and supervisory skills.

### **Robin Paggi**

Thank you. Happy to be here with you today. The term unconscious bias popped up into the nation's vocabulary a couple of years ago with an incident that happened at Starbucks and training that happened as a result of that. And we'll talk about that in just a moment, but want to talk about bias first. I think everybody is familiar with the term. Bias is a prejudice, either in favor or against something, a person, a group in comparison with another that is often considered to be unfair. Now we're all biased. For example, I can't tolerate intolerant people. So, there you go. And I know that. And most of us know what our biases are, even though we don't like to admit that we have biases. I had a woman one time tell me that she is not biased, she is very open-minded. I said, "Do you think everyone should be open-minded?" And she said, "Well, yes." And I said, "Ah, well then you're probably biased against people who are not open-minded." And that blew her mind.

So, some biases that we all experience. Number one is confirmation bias. And what that is that we form an opinion, and once we do, we look for things to substantiate our opinion. We want it to be verified, validated, and know that we are right in our opinion. And, we look for things that will confirm our opinion and we don't pay attention to things that don't. We won't watch certain news shows, we won't look at certain newspapers, we won't do a variety of things that contradict what we know to be true. That's confirmation bias. And we are all guilty of it, to a certain degree.

There's also the bandwagon effect, when somebody tells you something and then you just go along with what they have said without finding out for yourself. And then again, you, once you form that opinion, will look at things to validate your opinion.

There is negative bias. Some people see things in a more negative light. Now, we're all negative at some times and we are designed to be that way. We have to pick up on negativity so that we can stay alive and survive. But, some people see negative things more so than others. And so, that's the view that they look at the world through, and their biased more toward negative things and positive things. And they can find the negative in just about everything. And if something is positive, they know why it's really not.

But then there's people who are the opposite. They have a very positive bias. They see life through rose-colored glasses, if some of you know what that term is, which means that everything is rosy. I encountered a woman who definitely wore rose-colored glasses. I didn't know that I met her for the first time, a potential client, and upon meeting her, she said to me, "My gosh, you're gorgeous." And I was feeling very good about myself. And I led her through the part of our office that had an artificial tree on it, and I thought this artificial tree was hideous. And she looked at that tree and she said, "My gosh, that's gorgeous." And so, then I knew everything in her world view is gorgeous. And I think that's a lovely world to live in, but it's not exactly what's happening.

So, there are other biases that we tend toward and it's important that you know what your biases are. But then, there's unconscious bias, and what is it that? Social stereotypes regarding certain groups of people formed outside of the person's conscious awareness. Now, if they're unconscious, how do we know that they exist? Well, I'll talk about that a little bit more. But something about unconscious biases is that, it's often incompatible with our conscious view of ourself. For example, this little unconscious bias pops up and sometimes we're repulsed by it. We don't want to have that bias. We believe we

don't have that bias. You see a lot of people right now proclaiming that they are not racist while they're doing things that most everybody thinks are pretty racist. And so, the view that we have of ourself is usually much more positive than we actually are. And it's much more positive than that of the world has as well. How we see ourself as not how others see us, for the most part, and that's one of the reasons that we have difficulty navigating our world, but that's another workshop.

Now, these unconscious bias, and I'll explain more in just a second, but they are more prevalent when we're under pressure. Are you under pressure right now? I would say that you probably are. If you're lucky, you're working and maybe you're not in your workplace, you're at home like I am, but at least you have a job as compared to the millions of other people who don't. And so, when we have pressure going on in our lives, those unconscious biases come to the surface. And so, that's why it's important to know what they are before they do. Now, we've got a lot of racial things happening right now. Unconscious bias is not just about race. We can have biases against a variety of people for all sorts of things. The common denominator is that they're usually not like us. And that's one of the things we tend to like people who are like us. And when people are different from us and we don't understand them, we usually prescribe bad motives to their behaviors. And that's really important for us to understand about ourselves. We're not bad people because of it. It's just how our brain works.

So next slide, we'll talk more about how unbudgeted bias competencies are formed. First, our brains' automatic processing of negative stereotypes that become embedded in our brain without our awareness is what unconscious bias is. So, our brain is constantly bombarded with data. So, we're picking up on patterns and we're making generalizations, trying to put order to that data. Sometimes we overgeneralize without knowing about it, which could lead us to discriminate even when we think we're treating people equally. Now, we have always been bombarded with data, before cell phones, before the internet, before having thousands of channels available to us on TV. Even before all of those things of our modern time, our brain had too much stimuli coming toward it, and so it picks up on the negative things to make sure that we stay alive. Our brain is designed, is designed to help us stay alive, and so we'll pick up on those negative things, and they have more of an impact on us than we realize. One of the things that happens with the increase of all of the data is that our brain is working overtime to try to figure out what all of this data means and which of it is going to hurt us. And because we've got so much going on, for example, I wonder how many of you, while you're watching this webinar, are also looking at your email or also looking at your social media post on your cell phone. I'm sure you're doing more things than just listening to me. And as a result of that, you've got too much stimuli coming in. The brain cannot focus on two things at one time. And so, your unconscious is starting to pick up things here and there, and here and there. And if you are trying to do something else while you're listening to me, I'll just be that Charlie Brown voice in the background, WaWaWaWaWa, until I hit a word that triggers something in you. And perhaps I will, and then, you'll start paying attention because that little trigger word grabbed your attention and could possibly be a threat for you.

So, here's one of the things that I encourage you to do: just do one thing at a time because our brain is not designed to be competent in completing two tasks that require our attention. We can walk and chew gum at the same time because we don't have to think about it. It's when we have to think about two things at one time that it dumbs us down automatically. So, data coming in, our brain is working to categorize it, to filter out the threats, stuff gets into our subconscious that we're not aware of, and then when we become under pressure, we react to those little things that were embedded in our brain. Our snap judgments rely on all the associations we have, from fictional television shows to news reports. So again, here's all this data that's coming in and one of the things that happens with that data, is that a lot of times it tells us the same thing over, and over, and over. That's one of the reasons that people in Hollywood and who make movies and that type of thing, that's why people are upset with them for having stereotypical portrayals of people based upon their race. And so, for example, if you are watching shows that constantly show people of a particular color having a gun in their hand, then when you encounter somebody on the street of that color and they reach for something like their cell phone, your brain will tell you it's actually a gun. So, we make these snap judgments based upon all of these little embedded pieces

of data, based upon the stereotypes that are fed to us. That's one of the reasons that it's really important that we don't have these stereotypes, even in fictional TV shows and movies, and that we watch more than one news source so that we're not hearing the same thing and seeing the same thing over, and over, and over, and over, because that's how it gets embedded. And even if we're saying, "I'm not prejudiced," when we have a snap decision to make, we're going to rely upon those unconscious stereotypes.

This is not on your slide, but it's still about unconscious bias. If they're unconscious, how do we know that we have them? Well, because there have been lots and lots of studies on them. Example, studies have said that faculty members answer emails faster from people they don't know when the email address has a stereotypical white name, like Greg or Robin. So, faculty members will answer those emails faster. Doctors are less likely to recommend medical procedures for patients of color than for white patients, even when the medical records are similar. Black and female car buyers were quoted higher prices than white male car buyers. Now, I'm a woman, and if you're a woman, one of the things that you don't like to do is go buy a car on your own because you know that you're going to be treated differently than if you take a male with you. Employers invite applicants with white-sounding names to an interview versus applicants that have names that sound different. And one of the things that we need to know is that we have a name bias, also. Names that are difficult to pronounce, usually we don't want to interact with those people because we don't know how to pronounce their names. And if we don't even know them, all we're seeing is their name on an application, then we'll just pass right over it because we can't pronounce their name. And so, the gentleman who had the quote about our snap judgments right there, his name is Sendhil Mullainathan, and he is the one who came up with the study about employers inviting applicants with white-sounding names, as opposed to others. And he said that the HR professionals that he did these studies with were astounded that they had this name bias because they felt that they were doing what they needed to do to prioritize diversity in the workplace. They were astounded that the study demonstrated that they had committed named bias against applicants with difficult-to-pronounce names.

Again, we're talking about the incident that happened to Starbucks on April 12th, 2018, in Philadelphia. It was all over the news and I'm sure that you are familiar with it. But what happened is that two black gentlemen went into a Starbucks in Philadelphia and they did not place an order. They sat at a table, they were waiting for a third person to join them for a business meeting. The manager asked them if they wanted to order something and they said no, that they were waiting, and then she called the police. The police came and arrested them. And, of course, people are recorded on their phones, and it goes viral immediately, and then there were protests, and as a result of that, the chairman of Starbucks said that they were going to close down every Starbucks in America, and that's 8,000, and they were going to have training on unconscious bias. And that's when we really began to hear this phrase.

What happened in the Starbucks training? It was a four-hour workshop in every single place. The employees were given guidebooks, they had video and audio clips that they watched, there was a statement from the chairman of the board about his vision of the company and how he, his vision was that it was a diverse company that treated everyone with respect. The employees talked about differences between themselves and others, they reflected on what a place of belonging means to them, they examined their own biases, they proposed suggestions for corporate policy, and offered input on the obstacles they face and making all customers feel welcome. And they determined what steps they would take to make customers and one another feel more welcome. So, that sounds like a lot of things happening in that four hours. Well, how did the employees feel about it? Well, like most training sessions, some of it thought it was good. One employee said, "I think the training is an appropriate response and solution to what happened in Philadelphia." And then you had another employee who said, "In my opinion, the training was a waste of four hours." Well, I'm a trainer by profession and I have been for over 20 years and I know that people can differ greatly in their opinion when they sit through the same training session, much

like all of you will. And so, employee reactions are important, but what's really important is the effect of the training when everybody goes back to work, and we'll continue with that in just a moment. But, let me continue with what's on this slide.

It is important for every workplace to address unconscious bias in some fashion. And fortunately for us, Starbucks took the lead and they put it out there for the world to see and to read about how effective it was after the fact. And so, we've learned some great lessons from them on how to improve it, because you don't get it right the first time. And so, we'll talk about those lessons in just a moment. But, any unconscious bias training should include the fact that it's normal. As I said, our brain is designed to pick up on things, to categorize them, to tuck them away, and then when we're under stress or duress, they arise. And, that's just how our brain works in order to help us survive. And so, that needs to be a part of it, so people understand what it is and how it happens.

When you talk about how biases impact the workplace and how they affect our interactions with each other, when we are biased toward people or against people, we don't want to interact with them. We like people who are like us. We want to interact with them and we tend to do that. And so, that interferes with our ability to work together, and it interferes with our ability to provide customer service because automatically, when we view somebody who looks different from us, we have our opinions about them and it impacts how we interact with them. And so, we need to understand all of these things to make sure that we are treating everyone with respect, and providing education, and training. And again, Starbucks helped us. And so, we're going to go to the next slide to figure out what that education and training should look like.

Well, first of all, one of the things that Starbucks found out is that one size does not fit all. A criticism of their training by one of the employees is that it was the same program throughout the United States. Now, Starbucks usually look the same, but the United States does not look the same. And so, one criticism that an employee had was that people of color were being trained not to be biased against people of color and that didn't seem to work very well. And one of the things that criticism was also is that it was focusing on one race. And so, we know that you shouldn't focus on one race, one gender, one religion, one culture, etc. because all of us are biased against all sorts of people. And it's not just one race.

One of the things I know as a trainer is that more discussion, less instruction usually works best; that people want to talk about their experiences, especially adults. Sitting people down and just talking to them, and unfortunately, that's all we can do in this format. But if we were alive, it wouldn't be me just talking to you, it would be you talking to each other, for the most part. That's how adults learn best. And so, Starbucks demonstrated that out of that four hours, you need to have at least three of it being employees interacting with each other. Provide information and resources on how to implement and execute the training. Now that's one of the things that I learned as a trainer a long time ago. I would present an idea or a concept, and I would think that people would understand what to do with it. And, fortunately for me, many years ago I presented the concept of situational leadership and a participant in my training said, "Well, that's all nice and fine, but what do we do with it?" My brain is thinking that people know what to do with the ideas that I'm presenting and this participant let me know, "No, some people you need to tell them exactly what they're supposed to do with the training." And so, I have tailored my training to do that. And so, that's one of the things that popped up after this training.

There was another situation that happened in another Starbucks in Philadelphia, the same city where the original situation happened that inspired all of this training. What happened was that a customer who had a stutter gave his order to the barista and the customer's name was Sam. And when he stuttered, it came out, S-S-S-Sam, and that's exactly what the barista put on his name on the cup. So, obviously, just focusing on one race, or gender, or what have you, sometimes people don't understand, "Oh, this is just the example." We're supposed to apply this to everyone. And if you don't tell people exactly what they're supposed to do with the information, sometimes they just don't get it. And so, that's what we're going to do for you next.

Some things that you can do: updating your training. Now, a lot of people do not have unconscious bias training. And a lot of people don't have training at all. That's one of the things that I know as a trainer, is that most employers do not train employees very much at all on how to do their job. And that's one of the reasons that I have a job. I do a lot of supervisory training and it's amazing to me how many people are promoted into supervisory positions because they're good at their job, and they're expected to be a good supervisor as a result of being good at their job. And it takes a whole different skill set. And so, if you were in a supervisory position, it's really important that you receive training on how to be a good supervisor. This is one aspect of that. So, one of the things that I encourage you to do is educate internal teams prior to formally revamping company policies and procedures. If you are in charge of HR, or of training, or of creating company policies, I strongly encourage you to get other people's input before you roll something out. And I know that because I've made that mistake before. I think something's a great idea, and I roll it out there, and there were a variety of things I didn't consider and that type of thing. And so, that's one of the reasons that diversity is such a plus in organizations, is because two heads are better than one. Educate your internal teams before you roll it out company-wide. Create policies and procedures to manage various situations that will come up, to prevent snap judgment. So, that's the thing with Starbucks. This manager didn't know what to do. We've got people sitting in our Starbucks... they're not ordering anything. And so, I'm going to call the police because I don't know what else to do. Well, if there were some policies about that, then people just follow the policy, if the policy makes sense in that situation. That's one of the things that people should be able to do, is prepare people for situations that might come up so that they respond automatically in a way that makes sense for that situation. Expecting people to have common sense will get you in trouble every time. Common sense is not so common. What is common sense for you is not common sense for someone else. So, helping people go through the training before they get into the situation helps ensure that they will react with that situation.

Training. Cover a wide range of topics. And, one of the things that was a criticism of the Starbucks training is that it just happened once. And I know as a trainer, people can't just be trained on something once and then they're good to go for the rest of their lives. And if you're just focusing on one thing, then you're not exploring the topic as well as you could. So, as Julie mentioned at the beginning of this program, we're going to have a variety of topics that we're going to look at over the next few weeks that will expand on this topic, looking at cultural awareness, looking at emotional intelligence. And so, you just can't do it one time on one topic and expect people to get it. It's larger than that.

Open training opportunities for new and current employees. And here's something to grapple with. If we have this training, should we make it mandatory? Arguments against mandatory training are that, if you force people to do things, they will begrudge you for it, especially if they don't have time nor interest. So, those are the arguments against it. Here's the argument for it. If you say anyone who would like to come to training can come, the people who need to be there the most won't be there. So, mandatory training, yes does have some bad things about it, but it is more important to have everybody there listening than people who just want to be there listening.

And use blended learning. Now, one of the things that's great about this whole pandemic thing is that people have learned how important in-person training is. And I like that because a lot of times people just think, Oh, I can't spend the money on having you travel here in order to be in person. Let's just do a Zoom meeting, or better yet, we'll just do a recorded webinar or what have you. And people are finding out that that is just not as effective as in-person training. But, again, you can't have all employees be in one place at the same time. And so, having a variety of methods to be able to get the message to employees is an important aspect of your training.

Now, as fall, as far as policies and procedures are concerned. Reviewing current policies, well what do current policies have to do with unconscious bias? Well, it's not necessarily policies about unconscious bias, but we get into harassment and discrimination when we're talking about unconscious bias. It's not the same thing, but those are the policies of which I

speak, is that unconscious bias is prejudices that we have because people are different from us. The reason that we have anti-discrimination laws is to ensure that we have equal access to employment for everyone, and the two go hand-in-hand. And so, it's important to ensure that you have those policies in place, that they are updated—I'm in California and one of the things that frequently happens here is that we have additional protected classes that are added. We have 17 protected classes in California at this point. Gender identity and gender expression were added some time ago. But, Supreme Court just said that sexual orientation and gender identity are now protected classes nationwide. You'll need to put those protected classes in your discrimination policy.

Request acknowledgment from existing employees and add acknowledgment form to the new higher onboarding process. And what are those policies? That people will not harass or discriminate against people because of being in a protected class? Forcing people to sign an acknowledgment is forcing them to acknowledge that they have been told information. And often people say, "I didn't know." I mean, I had an employee once when I was HR manager of a company, she told me she had never read the employee handbook, so therefore the policies did not pertain to her because she never read them. So, that's why you need to have people acknowledge that they have received the information in case they pretend that they never did before.

Why do we want to create a diverse workforce? We'll get to that in just a moment. How do we create a diverse workforce? Well, one of the things that we can do is we can make hiring decisions intending to create a diverse workforce. So, what does that mean, that we choose people based upon their race, or their sex, or their age? No, that's not what we want to do, because that's a form of discrimination. Discrimination is, in part, making employment decisions about people because of their race or sex, etc., and we don't want to do that because it's against the law. But, we do want to cast a wide net to our applicant pool to ensure that we are getting the word out to everyone about job opportunities that we have. And sometimes we don't do that. Sometimes we just go to Monster.com or Indeed and we just post there. And guess what? People who don't have a computer don't find out or see those ads. And so, creating a diverse workforce means that we do a little bit of extra work to ensure that our word gets out, or the word gets out, about job opportunities that we have.

We need to get to know people as individuals. And, over and over again, this is what studies have said, is the way we get rid of prejudice and unconscious bias is by working with people side-by-side who are different from us. And then we get to know them as individuals and we find out, oh hey, you're not that different after all. We like people who are like us and that's one of the first things that we do when we are getting to know someone, we try to find out what we have in common with them. And then, once we find out we have something in common, we like them a little bit better. Well, we all have things in common with each other. Unfortunately, most of the time we only see our differences. When we work side-by-side, then we find out about those commonalities, and that is what is going to help us get over this racial divide.

Personal development. We have to look at ourselves personally, observe the stereotypes that we have, and we all are biased against certain people for certain things and to replace those stereotypes. And so, how do you do that? Well, one of the things that tends to happen is that when people do things who are different from us and we don't understand or agree with that behavior, we ascribe ulterior motives to their behavior. Instead of doing that, we can try to figure out why they're doing what they're doing. Now, this is a great way to learn not to take things personally. And I learned this little trick about a decade ago, and it works really well for me. So, here's the situation. I worked in an employment law group with attorneys, and I had, or there was an attorney who had traveled into town and was working with our marketing director and another attorney on some kind of project. It did not involve me, but it was, involved all women. And I looked up around lunchtime, and I saw them all getting their purses, and walking out to go to lunch, and they did not invite me, and my feelings were hurt. "Hey, why didn't you invite me to go to lunch?" And so then, I started making up stories about it all.

“Oh, well they’re mad at me.” Why would they be mad at me? Or, and what, this is what we do. Our brain tries to figure out the data that we have just gathered. And so, then I thought to myself, “Well, maybe they’re continuing to talk about the project that has nothing to do with you, and that’s why they didn’t ask you.” Oh, that sounds logical. Well, that’s probably the reason. So, how to not take things so personally is to determine if there might be a really good reason people are doing what they’re doing that doesn’t have anything to do with you or the negative feelings that you have about that person. And if it’s logical, then usually that’s probably the correct answer.

And seek out groups unlike your own. Again, we gravitate toward people who are like us because we understand them, we get them. It doesn’t require as much work to try to get along with them because it’s just easier. But that means then that we don’t get to know people who are not like us. And when you get to know people who are not like you, you find out all sorts of stuff that you wouldn’t have if you would have just hung out with the same people over, and over, and over.

Why do we want to create a diverse workforce? First of all, because it fosters innovation. When you have people who see things differently, who have been exposed to different things, who’ve experienced different things, they have more ideas than we have on our own. So, two heads are better than one. One of the things that tends to happen when people are alike is we have groupthink. And groupthink means that we’re all just thinking the same things and we can’t get out of that little box that we have built for ourselves. When you have different kinds of people around you who have different kind of ideas, it expands your brain and it creates innovation. Innovation is necessary for us to be able to stay relevant. The world changes so fast, and if you are not innovating, getting out ahead of your competitors, you’re going to be left behind. And so, we need to have more diverse views and experience so that we can stay competitive. It opens global opportunities. This is a global world we live in. I’m sure that, you know that you might not have a business in another country, but you’re doing business with people in other countries. And when you do that and you have people that work for you who understand those countries, and their laws, and their culture, that opens up opportunities that you would not have had otherwise, it improves your organization’s culture as a whole, again, because you won’t have everybody who is the same, thinking the same thing, responding the same ways. Further develops the company brand. And so, that’s one of the things that people are looking at now, especially younger people. Younger people, I consider anyone under the age of 40. Even better yet, 30. And people of that generation are not all the same. But, things that have been said about them is that they really care who they do business with. And if you are demonstrating that you are a diverse organization, they more, might gravitate more toward your organization than not and a better customer service is delivered.

Now, one of the things Coca-Cola did in the 1940s. They were selling a lot of Coca-Cola to one group of people, one race, primarily. Their advertising was geared toward that race. In the advertisements, people of that race were the only ones in the advertisements. They were selling the product in stores populated by that race. And then they thought, “You know what, we’d really like to make more money. So, how can we do that? I don’t know—let’s hire people of other races and they can influence the advertising and where the product goes, etc.” And they made way much more money than they could have as a result of being able to develop new customers and to service them.

When we have people who are different from us, they’re going to understand things that we don’t, they’re going to see things that we don’t, they’re going to be able to enlighten us and help us understand and see those things better, which then delivers a better product and better service. How do you do it? Well, one of the things is to look beyond compliance. Now, what is the compliance piece of it? Do we have to have a diverse workforce? No, you don’t, unless you have an affirmative action plan. And the reason that you would have an affirmative action plan is because you work with the federal government. So, the federal government does require people who it contracts with to have an affirmative action plan. And that plan doesn’t mean that you will fulfill quotas. It means that you will try to reach out and include people that make it a

little bit more than what you would do regularly, instead of just throwing up the ad on Monster.com and Indeed, that you were working with local job forces, local employers' training resource, those types of organizations where people don't usually jump on a computer to find an ad because they don't have one. And so, that's compliance for some people. And so you want to look behind that.

You want to identify new talent pools. Now, one of the things, Silicon Valley hit a gold mine with something that happened accidentally. In Silicon Valley, what do they do? It's all about tech, and coding, and that type of thing. And one of the things they hit upon is that people who have autism usually make great coders. And one of the reasons for that is because of autism's effect on the brain for people to be more detailed and more focused. And that's exactly what they needed. And this opened up a whole new talent pool for them once somebody made that discovery. Now, legislation had to take effect in order for people who have autism to even be allowed in the workforce. And some people still do discriminate against them because they think that they do not have the necessary cognitive ability to find out that it's even better. So, identifying new talent pools can be very rewarding for your organization.

Addressing diversity in every aspect of talent management. What is talent management? Well, your employees are your talent. And how do you manage them, and your recruiting, your hiring, your developing, your mentoring, your retaining them, all of that? And you're looking at how to enhance all of those things through diversity.

Creating ways for people to connect. One of the things that tends to happen is that we segregate ourselves. For example, I used to work for a law firm and we would have a company party. And I'd walk into the company party and all the lawyers would be sitting together, and all the non-lawyers would be sitting together, and then they even segregated themselves by departments, and this is at a party. And so, one of the things we have to do is integrate people and finding ways for them to be able to connect at work. Having, when we all get together again and we can be close to each other, being able to have team-building experiences, potlucks—people love food, celebrating birthday parties, whatever we get to do again when we all get back together again. But we also can connect through Zoom and those types of things, as people are doing. One of the things that I have read about the youngest generation in the workplace who is called Generation Z, because they are so connected, technol, technologically, they have a difficult time connecting face to face. And so, employers are going to have to help them with that a little bit.

And make diversity a part of your brand. And as I said before, younger generations are gravitating toward companies that are demonstrating that they are diverse. I did some work for a local college district and they really wanted help with their diversity program. And I jumped on to their website, and I was looking at all the pictures on their website, and in all of their pictures, there was no diversity. It was the same kind of people over, and over, and over. And so, I suggested to them, "If you want people from all sorts of race, religion, gender identity, all of those types of things, if you want people to apply with your organization, you've got to demonstrate that they're a part of that organization." And so, that's part of your brand in your marketing material, on your website, all sorts of things to demonstrate that you embrace diversity.

### **Julie Dower**

Okay, Robin, here's a couple questions for you. What is affirmative action? Can you dive a little bit more into that?

### **Robin Paggi**

Yes, I just touched on that very quickly. Affirmative action is a program that employers are saying they are taking affirmative steps, proactive steps, to try to have a diverse workforce. And it is not something that's mandated by federal legislation, except if you do work with the federal government. And so, a lot of times people think affirmative action is

quotas. We have to hire so many people of this color, and that sex, etc., and that's not what it is currently. It is just a program that demonstrates we are doing everything that we can to try to attract and recruit qualified applicants from lots of diverse places. Now, sometimes employers get sued for discrimination, and a court will require that they have an affirmative action program. So, it is a written plan that says these are the steps we are taking to try to attract a diverse workforce. But again, there are no quotas involved in it, at this time.

**Julie Dower**

Awesome. Are employers required to provide sensitivity training?

**Robin Paggi**

Are employers required to provide sensitivity training? Not at this time. And if you're going to provide it, I wouldn't call it sensitivity training because that usually just turns people off. And so, unconscious bias training, cultural awareness, that is a webinar that we're having in a few weeks is cultural awareness workshops, and what they look like, and how to put them together, and that kind of thing. So, there is no requirement, at this time, for this type of training whatsoever. But, it is being proactive and reacting to a national situation that everyone is aware of at this time.

**Julie Dower**

Perfect. Is sensitivity training and harassment prevention training the same thing?

**Robin Paggi**

No, they are not and a lot of states do not have a requirement for harassment prevention training either. As I said before, I'm in California and we have had a state law that went into effect in 2007 that said employers with 50 or more employees are required to provide harassment prevention training every two years to their supervisors. Well, in 2018, Governor Brown signed a law that said employers with five or more employees have to provide harassment prevention training to all of their employees every two years. But I understand that we are unique in California. I know that there are just a few other states that require harassment prevention training. So, a lot of people are not familiar with what it is because they haven't had to attend it. In harassment prevention training, a lot of times the focus is on sexual harassment because of the Me-Too movement and because that's pretty much what the law stipulated when it was first passed. But in my harassment prevention training, I go through what harassment is, which is verbal, visual, or physical conduct directed at someone or about someone because of being in a protected class. Then we go through all of the protected classes. As I said, in California at the moment we have 17 and I mentioned that sexual orientation and gender identity are now protected classes federally. And so, it's important that harassment training, harassment prevention training, talks about all of the protected classes so that people understand that there are a variety of ways that people can be harassed other than just sexually. And we are all in protected classes and that's one of the things that is important for people to know. I'm in the protected class of age because I'm over 40, I'm a female, I'm white—Race is protected for everybody. I have a religious affiliation that's protected. And so, just going through all of those things helps people to understand that the law says you cannot be harassed or discriminated against because of being in a protected class, and helps people to understand what harassment is so that they don't do it to other people. So, harassment prevention training really is focused on the legal aspect of it.

Unconscious bias training, cultural sensitivity, whatever you want to call it, really is focused more on the why people have them, what we can do about them, that type of thing. But as I mentioned before, discrimination, unconscious bias go hand in hand.

**Julie Dower**

Perfect. How do you start the process of creating a policy that includes an expectation regarding bias behavior?

**Robin Paggi**

I'm sorry, I didn't hear the entire question.

**Julie Dower**

No problem. So, how do you start the process of creating a policy that includes an expectation regarding bias behavior?

**Robin Paggi**

Ah, okay. Well, one of the things that I do, I try not to reinvent the wheel. And so, instead of sitting down and saying, "Hmm, what should our policy look like?" I would just Google. Or if you're a client of ours, we can provide you with a template that gets the ball rolling. And one of the things that it's important for policy creation is to explain why the policy is being created. And so, when you don't do that with people, it's just another thing people are telling me what to do or not do, and I don't like that. And so, when you tell people something like, "We are implementing this policy about bias in the workplace in order to ensure that we have a respectful workplace where everyone is comfortable," and language like that. So, you're putting in why you're having it and then what the policy is. And so, what is the policy? That you don't engage in certain behaviors, usually is what it is. Identifying with those behaviors are and what the expectation is. Again, people need to know, this is an expectation of your employment here. And then there's usually the, "what happens if you don't meet those expectations." So again, a policy like this would look a lot like an anti-harassment policy, but maybe not as legalistic as that. And, just again, the emphasis is trying to ensure that everyone is comfortable in the workplace because when we're not, we don't work as well as we could. And when we're at work, the goal is for us to do the best job we possibly can for our employer and anything that gets in the way of that becomes an issue that must be addressed.

**Julie Dower**

Perfect. So, I think we have time for just one more question. Would you recommend an affirmative action plan is put in place even if the business doesn't deal with the government or has fewer than 100 employees?

**Robin Paggi**

I think it's a good idea because it helps people focus on ensuring that they are trying to be as inclusive as possible. When we put things down on paper and, and we make it a goal not to hire so many people of this color or what have you, but when we make it a goal to ensure that we are casting the widest possible to include as many people as we possibly can, then it's more than likely going to come to fruition. When we just say things that, "You know, I really need to do better at this or I'm going to do better at this," it doesn't tend to happen. When we put things on paper, and it's right in front of us, and we're held accountable for it, then it's more than likely going to happen. And so, that's why I would suggest that, yes, you have some kind of plan in place. You don't have to call an affirmative action plan. You can call it a recruitment plan. You can call it whatever you want to. But, the goal is to just try to cast the widest possible to include as many people as possible.

**Julie Dower**

Great. Robin, thank you so much for your time today. Everybody who was able to join us, we really appreciate it and we hope that you join us for the remaining webinars in the series. Have a great day, everyone.

**Robin Paggi**

Thank you so much. Bye-bye.