



How to Handle Biases in Fundraising -- Yours and Theirs

Association of Fundraising Professionals

- Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair
 - **Unconscious (implicit) Biases** are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside of OUR own conscious awareness.
 - **Conscious (explicit) Biases** are intentional. We are aware of our attitudes and behaviors resulting from our biases.
 - Everyone holds **unconscious** beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by putting things, people and situations in categories.

What Influences Bias?

- Unconscious bias is triggered by our brain automatically making quick judgments and assessments.
- They are influenced by our background, personal experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context.
- Unconscious bias can have a significant influence on our attitudes and behaviors, especially towards other people.





Conscious Or Unconscious; the Results May Be the Same

- **Confirmation Bias** – When you form an opinion of a person based on things like their name (also referred to as “Name Bias”), where they live or where they work – *Can they afford to be a major donor? Or the donor has a low opinion of the fundraiser because of their ethnicity.*
- **Horns Effect** – The tendency to view someone negatively after learning something unpleasant about them- *You believe that they will be difficult to work with because a another fundraiser you know said that this person was a racist.*
- **Gender Bias** – The tendency to prefer one gender to the other. *A male donor preferring to work with a male fundraiser because he think’s that person has more authority or a fundraiser preferring to speak to the “husband” because they believe that he makes the decisions about giving.*
- **Attribution Bias** – When you try to judge a person’s behavior based on prior observations or Interactions. *You discount a potential donor because of the car they drive or their clothing.*

How Do We Avoid Making Biased DecisionsGraphic:

Graphic:Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory



Focus Within:

- Tune into your emotions
- Recognize how your experience has shaped your perspective
- Stick to facts, and don't make assumptions.
- Turn frustration into curiosity.

Learn about others

- Recognize how their experiences have shaped their perspective
- Consider how they might see the situation and what is important to them
- Think about how your actions may have impacted them

Engage in dialogue

- Ask open-ended questions
- Listen to understand, not to debate
- Offer your views without defensiveness or combativeness
- Disentangle impact from intent
- Avoid blame, think contribution

"eXpand" the options

- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Be flexible about different ways to reach a common goal
- Experiment and evaluate
- Seek out diverse perspectives

As President Lyndon B. Johnson said in 1965, "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'You are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair."

US Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun wrote in 1978,

"In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently."

