

Five employee biases in a hybrid environment

Leaders and people managers may not be equipped to understand and address the natural human biases of their teams that have the greatest potential to derail their future of work strategy.

Here are the five employee biases that we think are the most important to focus on right now:

THE 'CAN'T BE BOTHERED' EFFECT



What's the point in attending these virtual meetings? I can't get a word in - no one listens!

She never contributes during team meetings... I'm not sure she's even there!



What is it?

- This bias is particularly prevalent when employees working from home feel that they cannot contribute to meetings that are happening predominately in person. Eventually, they might give up trying. While they may have valuable points to add, they feel at a disadvantage because they are not in the room and may find themselves easily ignored.

What to do:

- Be on the lookout for employees that do not talk or keep their camera off. When facilitating a meeting, be sure to ask those who are not in the room if they have anything to add. Ensure that they are not “drowned out” by those in the room that may dominate the conversation.
- Ask all attendees to dial in to level the playing field.

THE 'GRASS IS GREENER' EFFECT



I feel like I'm out of the loop with what's happening in the office.

He's so lucky he doesn't have to commute. I'm lucky if I'm home by 7.



What is it?

- It's possible for those who are working at home on a regular basis to feel that the in-office staff have certain advantages, such as access to leaders and being in the 'buzz' of the office. The same is also true for in-office employees who believe those at home have more perks, such as having the flexibility to create their own schedule and not having to commute.

What to do:

- As a manager, it is important to demonstrate empathy for both groups. Actively listen to concerns that your employees have and help them find solutions to any perceived or real disadvantages that are at play. Hearing from the other side can help people realize that there are challenges and benefits to both situations, and perhaps the grass is just as green on both sides.

THE 'IN-GROUP/OUT-GROUP' EFFECT



I would have been perfect for that project. Am I missing out on opportunities?

I'll work with Dan on this, he's right down the hall.



What is it?

- We all tend to identify with those that we can relate with. In a hybrid working environment, this may mean those in the same working model. This can lead to the formation of "in-groups" –

where people will favor working with those they identify most closely to. Those who find themselves outside of any groups (in the out-group) can quickly find themselves feeling disillusioned and even lonely at work.

What to do:

- It is more important than ever to build an inclusive culture within your organization. Look at your rituals and routines such as weekly team check-ins, recognition, and celebrations, and ensure that at every opportunity a 'one team' mentality is promoted.

THE 'NEWBIE' EFFECT



What is it?

- Joining a company during a pandemic is tough, and the experience of joining is very different from those who joined pre-pandemic. The Newbie Effect refers to the unique experience that these people have and the difficulty that follows in forming relationships and understanding the company culture.

What to do:

- Ultimately, whether it was intentional or not, your culture will have changed over the course of the last year. The evolved culture that new joiners will experience will still be heavily influenced by what came before, so help them understand those unwritten ways of working quicker by sharing stories that helped make the culture what it is today.

THE 'HEIGHTENED SPOTLIGHT' EFFECT



*I feel like every little thing
I do is being scrutinized.*

*Why is she setting
such ambitious
timelines for herself?*



What is it?

- We often believe that people are paying more attention to us than they really are, so if we are not in the office, we may really feel like we are **“in the spotlight”** and under pressure to deliver. Before hybrid working, many managers didn't trust their teams to work from home. Now that we've seen how productive employees can be from anywhere, they've come a long way and attitudes have changed. But in many cases, employees are still feeling constant pressure to prove themselves while working from home.

What to do:

- Ensure that employees know they are trusted. You can do this simply by telling them and reinforcing the point, but you must also demonstrate your trust by being flexible on their working patterns, not expecting immediate responses to messages, pushing back if home-based employees are creating timelines that are too ambitious for themselves, and taking time to work from home yourself if you are office-based.

Let's face it, there is a lot to consider...but with hybrid working on the rise, leaders need to understand and recognize these biases to successfully implement a model that's inclusive and sustainable in the long term.

Reference: <https://dochangeright.com/five-employee-biases-that-can-make-or-break-your-hybrid-working-model/>