

# 3 REASONS BIAS TRAINING DOESN'T WORK

## **WE HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF IN MERITOCRACY**

What does the research say?

"If managers believe, because of formal performance evaluation and compensation systems, that their organization is meritocratic, they are ironically more likely to engage in less meritocratic behaviour." Most organizations have some mechanisms in place that are used to evaluate performance and award compensation. Few people would admit if their organization takes a shoot-from-the-hip approach to these processes. Without a commitment to equality of opportunity, and a system for ensuring equitable processes, we can assume they are not.

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## **BIAS TRAINING JUSTIFIES BIASED DECISION-MAKING**

What does the research say?

After being given bias training, then being instructed to suppress biased decision-making, participants made more biased decisions than a control group not instructed to suppress biased decision-making. We might feel like we can out-think our unconscious biases, and we can even work hard - think hard! - in the attempt. But the fact of the matter is that our unconscious biases are nearly impossible to uproot. However, we can uncover and disrupt bias together one question and one decision at a time.

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## **JUST TALKING ABOUT STEREOTYPES CAN LEAD TO STEREOTYPE CONFIRMATION**

What does the research say?

It might sound overly complicated, but our brains are nothing if not complex. Research shows that when stereotyped groups (eg. women, people of colour, older people, disabled people, etc.) are the topic of conversation in bias training, the stereotypes associated with those groups are highlighted in our minds, subconsciously. Then, members of those groups are more likely to behave in alignment with the associated stereotype, and members of other groups are more likely to perceive that behaviour in the stereotyped groups, as well. At the end of it all, everyone feels like stereotypes have been confirmed. And even if they don't feel it, their minds have unconsciously internalized the belief. Kind of a lose, lose, lose situation.

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## **THE EQUITY SEQUENCE™**

is our impactful, evidence-based alternative to bias training where you work in teams to interrupt systemic bias one question, and one decision, at a time.

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