CASE STUDY SCENARIO: "It Depends on the Lens"

The scenario takes place in the conference room of a large administrative department on the campus of a university. The shared services department is expanding and seeking to fill a manager position. For the past three weeks, the search committee has been working its way through the pool of 60 applicants. The group feels confident that the targeted marketing strategy suggested by HR has helped them identify a strong pool of qualified applicants.

As the scenario opens, we observe the members of the search committee already in conversation. They have been meeting for the past hour, reviewing in depth the top six applicants.

Today's meeting will end shortly because the committee chair, David Delay, has to take an important conference call. They've agreed to meet again tomorrow morning to choose the short list of three candidates who will be invited to visit the campus for the interview process.

Search Committee Members

David Delay:

Senior Director
Search Committee Chair and Hiring Manager
15 years at university

Keisha Singleton:

Director
3 years at the university

Gale Napier:

Director
17 years in the department

Bobby Chen:

Director
7 years at the university

Franklin "Frank" Shorrock:

Senior Director
10 years at the university

Candidates under discussion

Alan Klein

Carolyn Kazuhiro

Scott Hutchinson

Jamal Jackson

Thomas Green

Judy Stephens

The Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble

Dane Cruz   *Director and Actor,* **CITE**

As Director of the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble (CITE), Dane is responsible for the research, development and implementation of new training programs as part of Organizational Workforce Development (OWD) within the Division of Human Resources at Cornell University. Over the past 18 years, Dane has served as a training specialist with CITE using interactive theatre to address challenging workplace issues for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, corporations, professional groups, conferences, government agencies, and hospitals as well as academic institutions nationwide. As an actor, he has worked in regional theatre, radio, short film and industrial and corporate training videos and films. He trained at Florida State University in their BFA Program, and interned as an actor at McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ.

Vivian Relta   *Consultant and Facilitator,* **CITE**

Ms. Relta serves as the human resource specialist for the Ensemble with responsibility for client needs assessment, program design and facilitation. Prior to returning to Cornell & CITE in 2012, Vivian served as the Interim Director/Associate Director of EOP at Emory University, creating education, leadership and diversity programs for Emory College/Emory Healthcare. She has served as facilitator, educator and trainer for CITE for 11 years, engaging students, faculty, staff, senior level administrators. Vivian served as the Assistant Dean of Intercultural Affairs at Hobart and William Smith colleges working with academic and administrative units. She has over 25 years experience leading programs for diverse groups on communication, conflict management, and organizational change.

Jumoke (Jum) Warritay   *Program Coordinator and Actor,* **CITE**

Ms. Warritay has worked with CITE for the past seven years as an actor, and now also serves as CITE program coordinator and presenter. Jum's work with CITE melds her interests in theatre with a vocation for public sociology. Also a PhD candidate at Cornell University, she is trained as a historical sociologist in the Department of Development Sociology, with expertise in political economy and cultural studies. Her dissertation work looks critically at African development through the lens of textiles markets in Ghana. Before graduate school, Jum worked in education research at the Spencer Foundation in Chicago. She is a graduate of Northwestern University with a dual degree in Education and Social Policy, and International Studies.

Reducing Stereotypic Biases in Hiring

A. Findings from research in social psychology on stereotypic biases

1. Stereotypes function as cognitive shortcuts.
2. Stereotyping often occurs out of awareness.
3. We are **all** prone to biases.
4. Both men and women, non-sexist, non-racist, even well-intentioned people are capable of bias.
5. Biasing processes are more extreme when …
   a. individuals are tired, rushed or otherwise cognitively burdened.
   b. Underrepresented identities are rare in a unit ("tokens").
   c. jobs are "typed" (associated with a particular gender or race).
   d. valid performance information is lacking.
   e. criteria are vague or ambiguous.
6. The good news is that biases can be reduced.

B. What can be done?

1. Underlying principle—disrupt the tendency to use stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts.
2. Strategies/solutions
   a. Devote adequate time.
   b. Avoid premature ranking of the applicants.
   c. Read or review applicants work rather than relying solely on support materials
   d. Critically analyze supporting materials (recommendation letters, cover letters, performance evaluations etc.).
   e. Be accountable—be prepared to explain your decisions and rankings
   f. Be transparent—What are the criteria? Is it the same for all applicants? Is it the right criteria?
   g. Structure diverse groups and allow for maximum participation.
   h. Think about how the job ad and descriptions might impact the applicant pool and perceived fit of the candidates.
   i. Consider using a candidate evaluation form (see attached for example).

Know your biases: www.implicit.harvard.edu (Social Attitudes)

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