

## ***Try It Now: How Can I Interrupt My Own Age Bias in Hiring?***

Interrupting age bias as it occurs needs first to start with becoming comfortable with a little bit of discomfort. As the hiring manager, take a moment to increase your own capacity for feeling a little uncomfortable. It will help you lead the team more effectively in your shared efforts to reduce age bias in hiring.

After this exercise, you can use the next *Try It Now* exercise to do something similar with your team to help them become aware of how to interrupt age bias in your team's overall hiring efforts.

### **Step 1: Reflect on your own possible implicit age bias**

Take ten minutes to complete the free [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#) (Age IAT). Read through the results and the summary of web respondent scores on key indicators. After you have read the results twice, reflect on these questions. Jot thoughts if you want to.

- In what work relationships might implicit age biases have played out in my own professional life — 5 years ago, 5 months ago, 5 days ago?

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- In what ways might my implicit biases have led to hiring/project assignment decisions to minimize my own potential discomfort?

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- Could my own managerial decisions and hiring decisions seem to show a pattern of affinity bias (preference for colleagues who are a similar age as I am)?

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- How might any implicit age bias affect how open I am to hiring someone who is older than I am as my direct report?

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- How might my own level and type of implicit age bias have evolved over time?

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- If my results suggested no automatic preference for either older or younger people, what could this mean for how I lead the hiring process?

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## ***Try it Now — What's Your Personal Motivation to Reduce Age Bias?***

We are more successful in reducing bias in our relationships and behaviors if we take time to reflect on our motivations for reducing it.

**Step 1: Read this list of possible personal motivations and add your own in the blank areas.**

- ☐ I need to fill high-volume hiring needs and see a strategic opportunity to do so if I ensure my sourcing and selection efforts include older candidates.
- ☐ It's been challenging to find the most qualified candidates for recent hires, and upon reflection I realize that there were no older workers among the candidates we interviewed.
- ☐ I've seen or experienced age bias personally and don't want others to have that experience.
- ☐ I would like to have a reputation as a manager who strives to be inclusive, as that could make my teams function more effectively, make it easier to recruit into my team and improve my own chances of promotion by leading a high-performing team.
- ☐ I believe we will better serve diverse customers and capture new markets by creating a diverse team.
- ☐ Given how many generations are in the current workforce, it just makes sense as a smart talent management strategy to hire across all of them.
- ☐ I already try to build a diverse and inclusive team in other ways, but realize I need to take age into account in these efforts.
- ☐ I want to lead the way because I know my organization doesn't have any defined policies to help create a multigenerational workforce, such as defined unbiased recruitment processes.<sup>11</sup>
- ☐ (Add your own here) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ (Add your own here) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2: Now check the boxes next to the top 3 that are your core personal motivators.**

**Step 3: Consider your top reason for wanting to reduce age bias in your professional**

**relationships and behaviors.** With it in mind, list three words to describe what it would feel like to manage your team after you have taken steps to reduce age bias within your team hiring.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>11</sup> Only 5% of employers have defined policies to help create a multigenerational workforce, such as unbiased recruitment processes, phased retirement, or life-long learning opportunities. OECD. (2020). [Promoting an Age-Inclusive Workforce. Living, Learning a](#)

## ***Try It Now: How Can I Prevent Age Bias in My Team's Hiring?***

Are you ready for the tactics you can use with your team? We have reviewed the research and gathered the top research-backed recommendations in one place for you.

**First:** Use the list of best practices on the following pages as a self-assessment.

- Read through the full list of best practices and supporting examples. As you read each one, choose whether you use it “Consistently,” “Sometimes,” or “Not Yet.” Check the C, S or N next to each practice.

**Second:** When you are done reading the full set of best practices, choose:

- One best practice that you use “Consistently” that you will celebrate with your team:

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- One best practice that you use “Sometimes” that you plan to move to “Consistently:”

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- One best practice that you use “Not Yet” that you can’t change on your own, so will raise to HR/other leaders for their consideration to change it:

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**Third:** Jot a 1-2 sentence plan to take action on each of the items you selected in Step 2. This can be as simple as bringing it up in your next team meeting, sending an email or identifying whom to talk with about this topic. Add a due date for each one.

- The one “Consistently” that you will celebrate with your team:

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- The one “Sometimes” that you plan to move to “Consistently:”

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- The one “Not Yet” that you can’t change on your own, so will raise to HR/other leaders for their consideration to change it:

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**Fourth:** Check out the downloadable, customizable DIY Hiring Documents later in this toolkit. It integrates all of these best practices into templates you can use.

## ***Try It Now: How Can I Recognize Age Bias in Hiring? Say This, Not That.***

### **Step 1:**

As you read this sample job description, can you spot the keywords below that indicate bias? Underline any words or phrases that could dissuade an older candidate from applying for the position.

#### ***The Widget Company, Inc.***

At The Widget Company, we take great pride in our company culture. A large portion of our success stems from our people, who are talented, innovative, ambitious, creative and forward-thinking. The Widget Company encourages our team to think outside the box and bring fresh ideas to our work and clients.

The Widget Company is looking for a marketing strategist with up to five years of experience to support North America business development. With room to grow quickly, this position is perfect for recent graduates looking to gain industry knowledge and those who want a chance to make their mark in a fast-paced start-up environment.

*Requirements:* GPA of 3.8 or higher from a top university with marketing or related major preferred, advanced user of Salesforce's Marketing Cloud and Tableau tools, experience or ability to quickly learn technology tools for work collaboration, proven track record of promotion in a high-growth organization, cultural fit in a high energy team, ability to travel to U.S. client locations two to three times per quarter, sometimes on short notice. Candidates must be able to work at headquarters office in downtown Chicago a minimum of 3 days per week. Candidates may have a flexible schedule, but must be available to work core business hours of 10-4 CST within their full workday on each weekday.

*Salary:* Commensurate with experience

About The Widget Company: We know there's more to life than work. As a Widgeton, you'll work hard and play hard. Our teams enjoy free lunches, happy hours and a full social calendar. Among our benefits, we offer health, dental, student loan, pet care and commuter benefits. We strive to be a fully inclusive workplace.

*How to apply:* Submit a cover note with your LinkedIn profile to our job posting at [www.widgetcompany.com/careers](http://www.widgetcompany.com/careers).

## Step 2:

Now review this Say This, Not That cheat sheet.

Use it to edit the language you underlined in the sample job description. Jot the replacement phrases above the language you'd want to replace.

Say This:	Not This:
Entry level	Recent college grad
List specific skills and required proficiency level	Digital native
List specific skills and required proficiency level	Tech savvy
Agile, creative thinker	Fresh ideas
Adaptable	Young
Education level	Graduation year
List company values, benefits	Cultural fit
Productive	Go-getter
Highly engaged	High energy
At least 7 years of experience	7-10 years' experience in...
Examples of overcoming obstacles in academic or workplace environments	High-potential
Expectation of 3 days per week in office	(Leaving it out of the job description)
Flexible schedule with core team working hours of 10-2 EST	(Leaving it out of the job description)
Salary range xxx-yyy	Salary commensurate with experience
Highly engaged	Energetic
Evidence of ability to apply new knowledge	Requesting GPA, SAT or GMAT/GRE scores
Ability to cultivate and activate professional networks to achieve team goals	Social
Clearly delineate between "required" and "nice to have"	A long list without indicating if any or all are required, or if some are simply beneficial but not critical
High-growth organization	Start-up atmosphere, fast-paced
Aligned with our company values (list them)	Cultural fit
We value experience, dependability and comfort navigating uncertainty	Choosing not to include language that explicitly values these common hallmarks of older workers
Add something you've seen in a job description here:	

## Step 3:

Now copy and paste the job description for a role you are currently hiring to fill, or the one you most recently filled into an open Word doc. If you don't have access to either of those you can even use your own job description.

Use the Say This, Not That chart from Step 2 to edit it to reflect language that is more likely to draw candidates from a wide range of ages and experiences. Then copy and save it back to your own files so the updated version is ready for you to use.

## ***Try It Now: How Can I Help My Team Interrupt Age Bias in Our Team's Hiring?***

Interrupting age bias as it occurs needs first to start with becoming comfortable with a little bit of discomfort. As someone who influences your team's hiring practices and decisions, take a moment to increase your own capacity for feeling a little uncomfortable. It will help us be more effective in our shared efforts to reduce age bias in hiring.

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