

Be Less Human to Conduct Better Meetings



Be aware of cognitive biases so that you can make better decisions!

According to Wikipedia, “A cognitive bias is a systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment.”

These biases are often adaptive, meaning they developed in humans to help us survive. For example, when we see an animal that we’ve never seen before, it’s helpful to assume that it’s a predator and try to confirm that assumption (confirmation bias) in order to survive. If we’re wrong, we’re still alive! However, we’ve evolved and no longer need to worry (for the most part) about being eaten by lions, but often we still apply confirmation bias to new situations and ideas, often to our detriment.

This worksheet is meant to be a brief reminder of common cognitive biases in hopes that by priming you with this information right before a meeting, you’ll be better able to recognize, avoid, and control these natural human instincts in pursuit of better meeting outcomes!

COGNITIVE BIASES

“A cognitive bias is a systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment.”



CONFIRMATION BIAS

We tend to listen only to information that confirms our preconceptions - one of the many reasons it’s so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.



RECENCY BIAS

The tendency to weigh the latest information more heavily than older data. Investors often think the market will always look the way it looks today and make unwise decisions.



ANCHORING BIAS

People are over-reliant on the first piece of information they hear. In a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person’s mind.



INFORMATION BIAS

The tendency to seek information when it does not affect action. More information is not always better. With less information, people can often make more accurate predictions.



OSTRICH EFFECT

The decision to ignore dangerous or negative information by “burying” one’s head in the sand, like an ostrich. Research suggests that investors check the value of their holdings significantly less often during bad markets.



BANDWAGON EFFECT

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of groupthink and is a reason why meetings are often unproductive.



SURVIVORSHIP BIAS

An error that comes from focusing only on surviving examples, causing us to misjudge a situation. For instance, we might think that being an entrepreneur is easy because we haven’t heard of all of those who failed.

Source: *Business Insider*