



## Workshop Gives Leaders Awareness of Unconscious Bias and How to Effect Change

A multi-billion-dollar global chemical company located in Michigan approached Innovative Learning Group (ILG) to **help the company create a workshop to effect change as it related to having a diverse workforce.** The company's diversified industry-leading portfolio of specialty chemical, advanced materials, agrosiences, and plastics businesses delivers a broad range of technology-based products and solutions to customers in approximately 160 countries.

### SITUATION

As part of a transformation at the company, top leadership recognized the importance and value of increasing the diversity of its workforce and building awareness among company leaders of how unconscious bias can impede that progress.

*Given the documented benefits of diverse teams and the need to promote and retain top talent, the company requested a learning experience for front-line leaders that would:*

- Raise leadership awareness of the case for change regarding how unconscious bias can unintentionally derail the career development of diverse employees.
- Build understanding of the business case for diversity and why it is critical that leaders take purposeful action to drive change.
- Encourage leaders to create an inclusive culture by making authentic changes in the way they interact with diverse talent on a daily basis.



### SOLUTION

ILG was tasked with creating an intervention that would meet the goals set forth by the company. After discussing the outcomes expected, ILG experts recommended and created a three-hour instructor-led workshop for front-line leaders.

*The workshop included:*

- A “Continuum” activity that stated the case for change regarding diversity and inclusion, citing research and statistics to support the business case.
- Straightforward discussions that highlighted sensitive areas to encourage exploration of unconscious biases and each participant’s own frame of reference.
- A module on diversity that focused heavily on gender bias as well as age, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and disability biases.
- An activity in which participants created an action plan for personal and team transformation from unconscious behavior that excludes people and sustains the status quo to conscious, inclusive behavior that can lead to greater employee engagement, retention, and innovation.

ILG also included pre- and post-work to help reinforce the workshop content and encourage participation during and after the workshop. Prior to the workshop, participants were required to take the Project Implicit Gender-Career Association Test and one other Implicit Association Test on either age or race, which prepared participants for insightful discussions during the workshop.

Project Implicit is the product of research between Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington. The Gender-Career IAT is used to study feelings that exist outside of conscious awareness about diversity and inclusion.

At the workshop’s conclusion, the instructor suggested post-work that included answering personal reflection questions in the participant guide.

ILG also modified the course to create a two-hour version that condensed the content on gender bias.



FIGURE 1

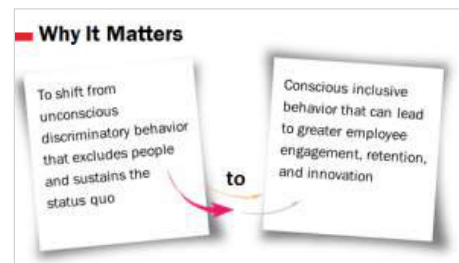


FIGURE 2



FIGURE 3



## A STUDY IN SUCCESS

### RESULTS

Participants left the workshop with an increased awareness of unconscious biases and the critical role they play in developing diverse talent. This has assisted front-line leaders in building the competency to effectively lead a diverse workforce. By gaining both self-awareness and an understanding of gender norms and the value of diversity, leaders have begun to positively intervene and drive change around career development of diverse employees.

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