

Bias Prompt Cards

Challenge biases to create more inclusive & impactful solutions.

The cards have three main objectives:

1. To uncover biases that could influence your choices when developing a solution.
2. To question if your solution might inadvertently exclude certain users or perspectives.
3. To re-orient the solution where biases are identified and addressed.

By confronting biases, you can design solutions that are not only innovative but also fair and accessible to a diverse population. This deck of cards is not exhaustive, but aims to be an introduction to challenge your biases.



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What is a Bias?

A bias is a mental shortcut we use, often without realizing it, to make quick decisions in complex situations. While this helps us act fast, it can also lead us to overlook important information or alternative ideas¹.

Why it matters

When we rely on a bias instead of critical analysis, our solutions risk suffering from limited creativity, skewed decision-making, and lead to less inclusive or effective solutions. This is what we call an **innovation Consequence** - the subtle but real impact bias can have on the quality and originality of your work.

¹ Gilovich, T., Griffin, D., & Kahneman, D. (Eds.). (2002). *Heuristics and biases: The psychology of intuitive judgment*. Cambridge University Press.



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Action

Bias

Taking action to feel in control, even when doing nothing might lead to a better outcome.

Example

Making quick decisions in a team during a downturn in productivity without analysing the situation well enough.

Innovation Consequence

Progressing too quickly and missing key steps or insights.



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Anchoring

Bias

Relying heavily on the first piece of information encountered, often to the exclusion of subsequent data.

Example

Treating the first research article you read in a project as the most important source of information.

Innovation Consequence

Locks thinking too early and limits exploration.



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Availability Bias

Depending on resources and information that comes to mind quickly and easily, rather than what is most relevant.

Example

Testing with friends and family because they are easy to reach, even if they don't represent the intended users.

Innovation Consequence

Reducing solution accuracy by favoring what comes quickly and easily.



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A photograph of a man and a woman in outdoor gear looking at a tablet together in a forest. The image has a red tint. The word "Confirmation" is written in large white letters across the top, and "Bias" is written in smaller white letters below it.

Confirmation

Bias

Paying more attention to information that confirms beliefs and assumptions and downplay what contradicts them.

Example

During testing of a solution, ignoring results that challenge or contradict your assumptions about the solution.

Innovation Consequence

Shaping the solution around one's own assumptions instead of actual insights.



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Cultural Bias

Evaluating and interpreting other cultures through the lens of one's own cultural norms.

Example

Assuming silence after a suggestion means agreement, without recognizing it may signal disagreement in some cultures.

Innovation Consequence

Miscommunication and reduced team cohesion.



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Curse of knowledge

Bias

Assuming others have the same knowledge base as oneself, leading to communicative challenges.

Example

Creating a solution that is intuitive for oneself to use, but too complex for the typical user's skillset.

Innovation Consequence

Reducing solution usability experience and effectiveness.



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Dunning-Kruger Effect

Bias

Overestimating own competence and expertise in a given area, resulting in overconfidence in one's abilities.

Example

Assuming you know the underlying root cause to a problem without proper research or validation.

Innovation Consequence

Misdiagnosing the problem and developing solutions that fail to create impact.



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Emotional Bias

Letting emotions override objective analysis, leading to decisions that are not grounded in evidence or rational thinking.

Example

Favoring a solution proposal based on gut feeling, while ignoring insights gathered through testing.

Innovation Consequence

Developing solutions that reflect personal preferences.



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Groupthink

Bias

Prioritizing group harmony and consensus over critical thinking, leading to suppression of opposing ideas.

Example

Agreeing with a group decision on solution development to avoid conflict, despite doubt that the decision is optimal.

Innovation Consequence

Failing to disrupt common thinking and finding novel or effective solutions.



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A woman with large, feathered angel wings is looking down at a smartphone. The image has a reddish-pink tint. The text 'Halo Effect Bias' is overlaid in white.

Halo Effect Bias

Letting one positive trait of a person or thing overshadow the rest, creating an overly favorable overall judgment.

Example

Focusing on a solution's likeable feature while ignoring major flaws elsewhere that might limit solution viability.

Innovation Consequence

Failing to identify critical issues and choosing a solution that is not optimal.



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Horns Effect

Bias

Letting negative traits unfairly influence overall perception, often leading to an excessively negative judgment.

Example

Undervaluing feedback from some users during solution testing because the users were rude.

Innovation Consequence

Failing to incorporate diverse input, which limits solution quality.



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Loss Aversion

Bias

Avoiding losses at the expense of potential gains, leading to overly cautious decisions.

Example

Sticking with a familiar but outdated solution to avoid the risk of change, even when better options exist.

Innovation Consequence

Holding back innovation by choosing short-term safety over long-term progress.



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Optimism Bias

Overestimating positive outcomes and underestimating risks, leading to unrealistic expectations.

Example

Planning for best-case scenarios, underestimating the actual time required to complete a project.

Innovation Consequence

Creating incomplete solutions and missing goals.



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Self-Serving Bias

Giving yourself credit for positive outcomes, but blaming outside factors when things go wrong.

Example

Taking credit for the parts in a project that receives positive feedback, but blaming the team for the aspects less successful.

Innovation Consequence

Inability to reflect on your process critically, hindering learning from mistakes.



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A photograph of a man with tattoos and a flower lei, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The man is smiling and looking upwards. The text 'Stereotyping Bias' is overlaid on the image in white.

Stereotyping

Bias

Forming simple and generalized beliefs about groups, leading to prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory actions.

Example

Assigning tasks based on assumptions about someone's abilities from their appearance, gender or age.

Innovation Consequence

Letting assumptions overshadow real capabilities, leading to missed potential.



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