

Ellen McGinnis, Jennifer Reddien in Business Law Today: Changing Hallway Behavior: How to Interrupt Implicit Bias

April 2, 2020 Ellen McGinnis

This article was co-written by Ellen McGinnis and Jennifer Reddien.

Law firms and in-house legal departments have moved past mere recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion (D&I) to implementing widespread programs aimed at curbing biases that can stand in the way of diversity goals. Formal training programs can only go so far, however. Law firms and legal departments also need employee buy-in on the necessity of giving and receiving real-time prompts aimed at thwarting biased behavior before it takes effect.

Many organizations require their employees to participate in diversity training. Most training starts with the concept of “implicit bias” and seeks to educate employees about its existence and prevalence in the workplace.

The goal of the training is to empower employees to reconsider in real time how they respond to and judge others, thereby “interrupting” their potential biased behavior from taking effect. Training sessions often demonstrate scenarios of clearly biased behavior as examples of what not to do. Sometimes participants engage in role playing to work out better responses, but formal training tends to be infrequent, in group settings, and fairly passive. When mandatory, the audience may not be sufficiently attentive and invested in the desired outcome. It is imperative that law firms and in-house departments educate employees and evaluate organizational procedures for reducing bias; however, without setting the stage for fundamental change in “hallway behavior” by enlisting and educating allies in all ranks of the organization, no formal program is going to move the needle on D&I.

To read the full article, click [here](#).