NOTICE, NAME, NAVIGATE

How does your company’s search and selection process implicitly and explicitly reinforce preferences for whiteness and masculinity?

That question is multifaceted and important, and it can feel hard to answer. We want to help. Let’s start with this phrase: Notice, Name, and Navigate.

NOTICE

Notice, without assigning too much meaning initially, the patterns you and your team engage in in your hiring processes that relate to race and gender (whether you’ve ever considered that relationship before or not). Remember, the concept “culture” has a three part definition:

Shared patterns / That we use to make meaning / To determine what is and is not appropriate

For example:
- When we think about “appropriate” dress for an interview, we have in our minds what men, women, and trans people who are “taking the interview seriously” would wear.
- We start talking about candidates as “diverse” if they have a name that doesn’t seem white.
- We assume we will interview and select a certain gender for this role.

Choosing to notice means choosing to slow down enough to surface what may not be regularly in your awareness because it is lurking beneath the surface, it is skewed by your experience of dominant culture identity and/or agent identity experiences. For most of us, we are most acutely aware of what causes ourselves stress. There is a lot we miss because it is outside of our own lived experience.

Practice slowing down, and rather than assume singular, “universal” rights and wrongs in a hiring process, what can you simply NOTICE about a candidate, an application, a hiring committee member?
**NAME**

**Name** the impact of those patterns in *preferring certain job candidates over others*. Acknowledge how you have assigned meaning—good and/or bad. Specifically, are those patterns viewed differently for candidates who are People of Color versus white, and for candidates who are men versus women or trans?

Here is how we might name what we noticed:

- “She was showing a lot of cleavage—that didn’t feel work appropriate.”
- “I’ve never even heard of that college; I wonder if it’s accredited/decent/good.”
- “I bet he will end up having to take so much time off for medical emergencies and birthdays and soccer games.”

Oooof, this stuff can feel rough to acknowledge thinking, let alone saying any of these things out loud. But here’s the deal— if we don’t, and we let these biases and prejudices simmer just a thought, we limit our ability to catch them with our words and go deeper to determine whether or not we believe the conclusions we are programmed to jump to first.

Be sure to play the tape through to the end, if what you noticed doesn’t feel “neutral” to you. **what is the meaning making you’re engaging in?** What are the boundaries and projections you are most curious about, especially when someone behaves in a hiring processing in a way that you would not.

Remember, because of near-constant conditioning, the question is **not if** we will be judgmental when we are noticing another person’s behavior and/or pattern of thinking, it’s **how** will our snap judgments show up and impact how earnestly we do or do not consider a job candidate.

The opportunity during the “name” period of Notice, Name, Navigate is to surface the judgments that are arising along with your more benign pattern-spotting.

Cross-referencing with some of our key terms and concepts, with as much **specificity** as you can muster, practice naming: the realities of identity, the likelihood of colorism, white supremacy, and masculine supremacy working their way into how we are experiencing job candidates.
Navigate the distance between your current process and where it should be to align with your company values and stated hiring goals. Consciously and explicitly compare your espoused goals with your current behaviors.

In order to make sure we don’t miss a facet of a person and a context (simply because it isn’t fresh or regularly in our own awareness), we keep the Team Dynamics’ Embodied Identity House handy to take a tour of each room. As we are beginning to sort applications and applicants, and as we are beginning to compare and contrast the lived realities, opportunities, experiences, and likely barriers our different candidates have faced, practice navigating the co-occurring realities of identity.
Here are examples of Notice, Name, Navigate in action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Navigate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender example</strong></td>
<td>When we discuss candidates who are women we talk about how well they might fit in and with whom they would get along. When we discuss candidates who are men we talk about their leadership presence.</td>
<td>The impact is that we select women based on likeability and men on leadership qualities—both of which are not defined and neither of which have been included in a shared rubric for selection. Moreover, in these instances we are most often picking men for management roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race example</strong></td>
<td>When names like Maria or LaShawn are on a résumé we wonder out loud if they are “ready” for this role in comparison to names like Heather or Brian.</td>
<td>Are we imagining “unprofessional” or “underprepared” People of Color when we see names we don’t associate with white people? Our finalist pools are predominantly white, and the kinds of names that make it through résumé screening are more often than not stereotypically white sounding names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender example</strong></td>
<td>A person logs into Zoom for an interview, their name is Cory, and we can’t tell if and how this person identifies with a gender.</td>
<td>I’m curious if we will feel less close to this candidate or become reticent to discuss Cory because we’re afraid we might refer to them incorrectly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notice, Name, and Navigate helps you answer the question *How did we get here and what needs to change?* We know that it is *not* fun to acknowledge these noticings and the associated judgements and wonderings. Putting words to what we notice helps ensure we don’t skip over the effects of our own programming and subsequent preferences for whiteness and masculinity. And by putting yourself in that place of discomfort, you are working to give that programming less influence over others’ lives—and your own.

This practice helps you go upstream to understand how seemingly small, in-the-moment thoughts and behaviors reinforce preferences for whiteness and masculinity.

When you can spot a pattern (Notice), discuss its racist or sexist impacts (Name), and choose a new way (Navigate) you can begin to see the revolution take root in your hiring activities.

*How are you imagining incorporating the use of Notice, Name, Navigate into both upcoming solo and group hiring processes? What do you think you’ll be able to do better and differently in your equity focused hiring processes by consistently using this tool to slow down and check in?*