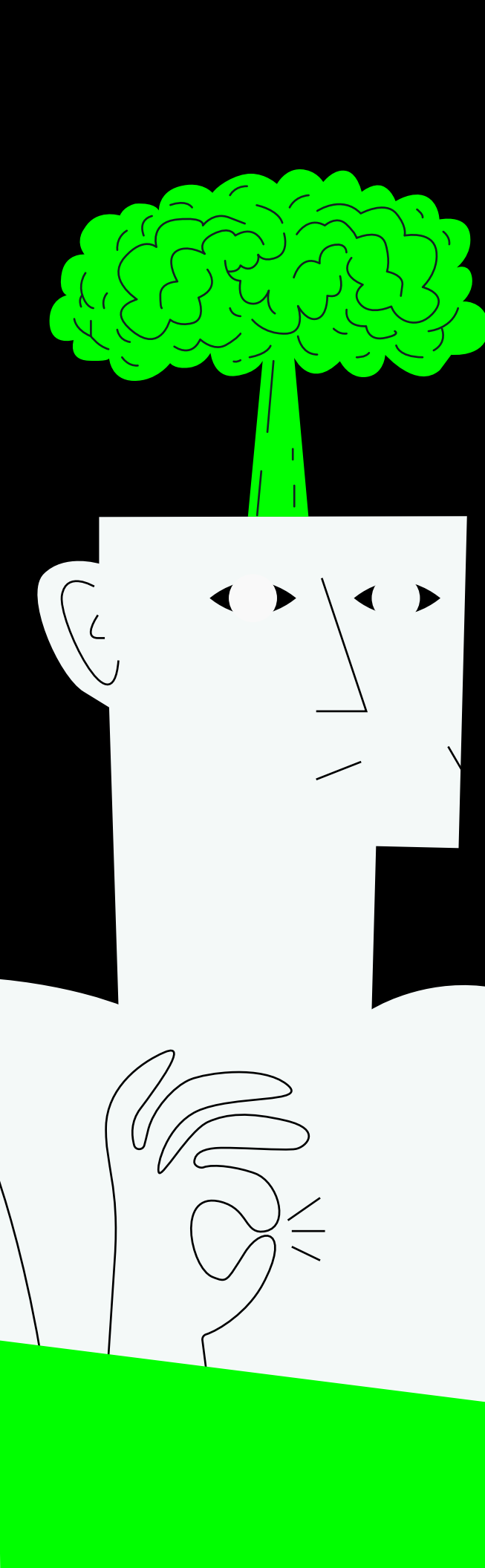


**2021
Edition**

by

**Lorne
Epstein**

A stylized illustration of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. The head is a solid black rectangle. The face is white with simple black line features: two almond-shaped eyes, a straight nose, and a small, slightly open mouth. A large, detailed brain, rendered in a light blue color with many small circles and lines representing neural activity, sits on top of the head, connected by a short, thick black stem. The person's neck and shoulders are also black. The right hand is visible, with fingers slightly curled as if holding something or gesturing. The background is a solid dark blue. At the bottom of the image, there is a thick, wavy band of light blue color.

Unconscious Bias Impact

This past spring, 15 CEOs shared their insights on the impact of Unconscious Bias in the workplace.

Here is what they said....

Unconscious Bias Impact



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Executive Summary

15 CEOs shared their experiences and views with the author on unconscious bias in the workplace. This report presents a summary of what those conversations revealed.

All 15 CEOs acknowledged that unconscious bias exists, and 80⁺ percent had a direct experience in their workplaces.

The CEOs described unconscious bias in the workplace as an unintended attitude, a product of both nature and nurture, that constitutes a violation of the values of honesty, curiosity, fairness, and justice. They agreed that bias could be mitigated and not eliminated.

> Executive Summary Continued

The CEOs agreed that unconscious bias negatively impacted workplaces, particularly in training, finance, productivity, innovation, retention, recruiting, hiring, client relationships, and communication.

When asked what could and should be done about unconscious bias in the workplace, the CEOs agreed that it could and should be addressed. They also offered ideas to address it.

The approaches suggested by the CEOs centered around training designed to shift attitudes and behaviors around vital corporate activities. Areas of particular interest included personnel issues such as retention, recruiting, hiring, external relationships with clients and other stakeholders, and innovation and communication.

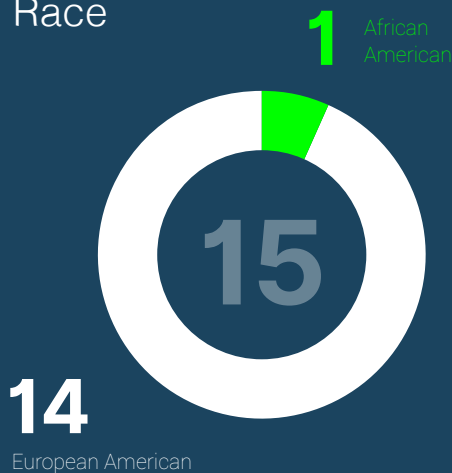
Many CEOs also indicated a willingness to invest significant organizational resources toward the attainment of these objectives.

Methodology

About the respondents

The author conducted a qualitative survey, asking 15 CEOs about the impact of unconscious bias in their workplace. Then an electronic survey using Alchemer.com was used to ask these CEOs what they would do to mitigate bias in the workplace. In some cases, not all of the CEOs gave a response. We noted the total respondents when there were fewer than 15. InVivo, Descriptive, and Values coding were used to code qualitative responses in both surveys.

Race



Revenue of the organizations



Gender



12,098

Number of employees represented by these CEOs

Introduction

The why

Why Should You Care?

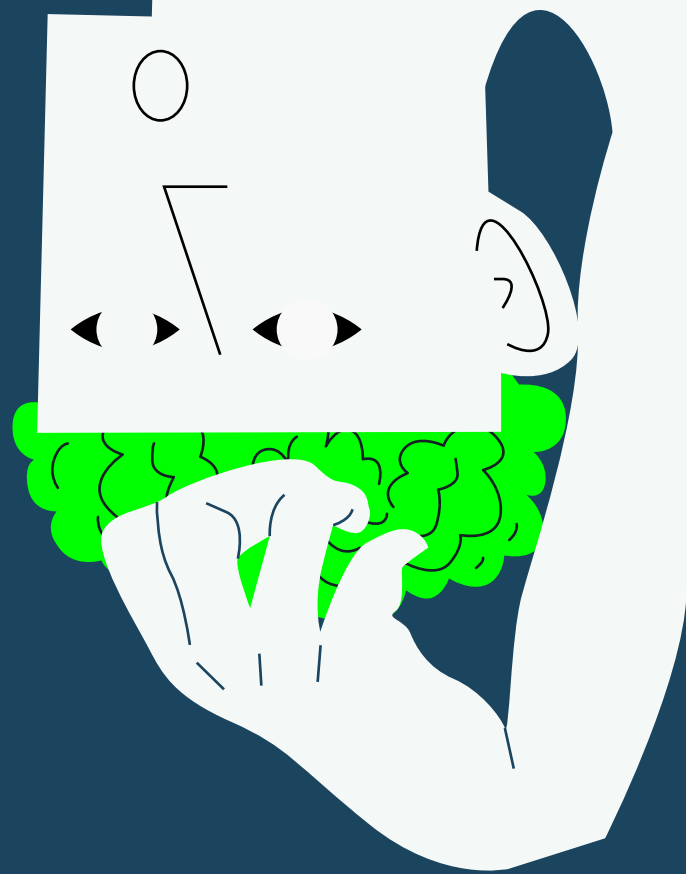
Significant dysfunction in the workplace stems from a lack of diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI). Unconscious bias is one of the biggest influences on this set of problems. Reducing unconscious bias and improving the choices we make can improve DEI and business outcomes.



Why Did I Undertake this Study?

I want to share with the public what leaders see as the impact of unconscious bias in their workplace and what they are doing to mitigate it to make our world a better place. I am committed to improving our ability to relate to one another, learn how to learn, and slow down our thinking to uncover and mitigate our unconscious biases.

I am developing new learning labs to help professionals improve decision-making and reduce the impacts of unconscious bias in the workplace. I believe that much of the harm that biases cause can be mitigated using these strategies. This study is the first in a series conducted with a national and global audience. Leaders who participate in the 2022 survey can join learning labs to dialogue about successes and lessons learned.



Findings

The results

01

Unconscious
bias exists
in the workplace

02

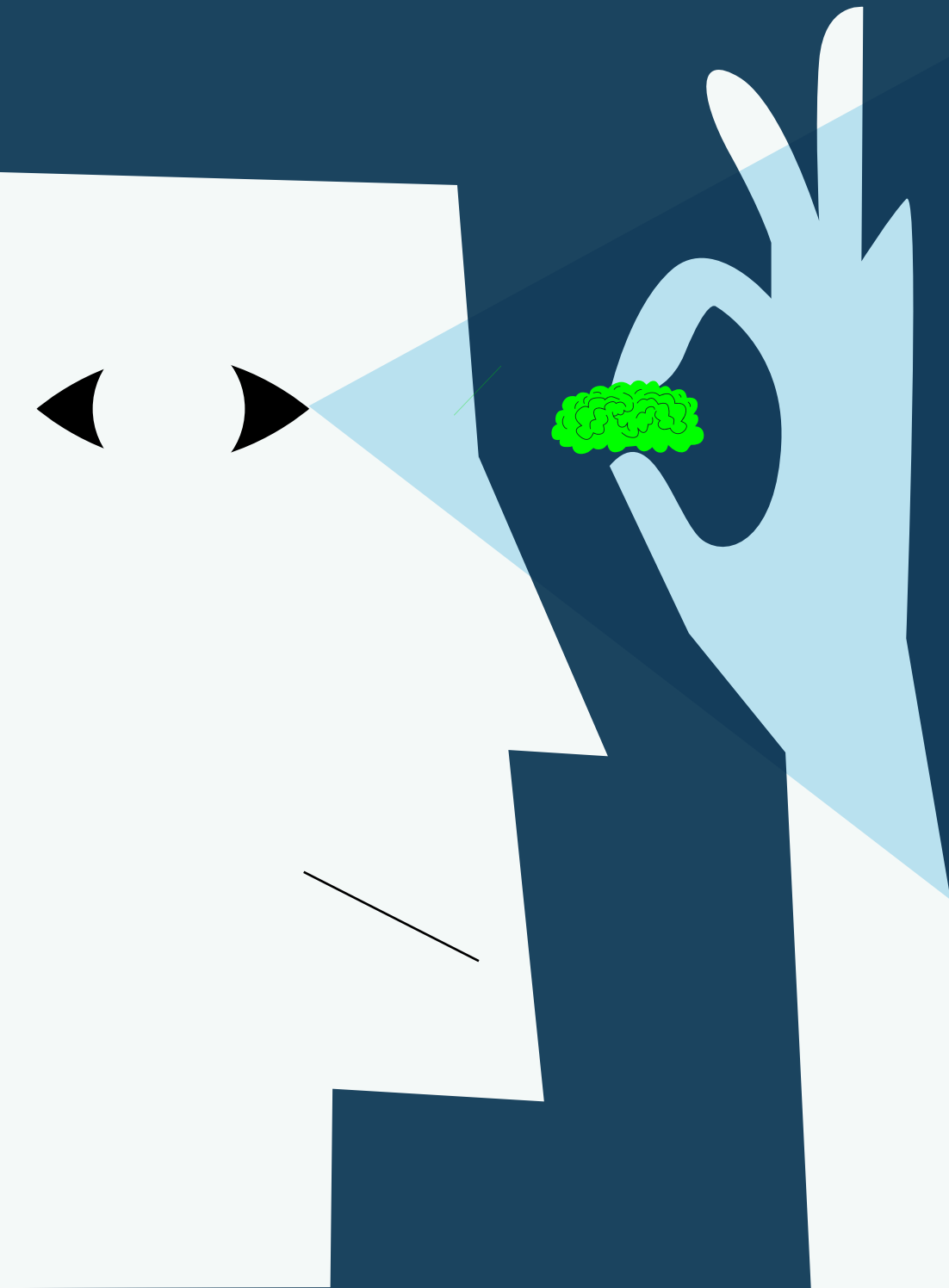
Unconscious bias has
certain characteristics

03

Unconscious bias
has negative impacts

04

Unconscious bias should
be addressed by
organizational leaders



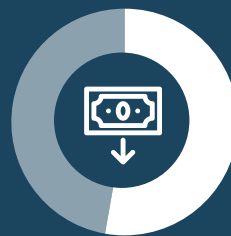
Unconscious bias exists in the workplace.

All 15 CEOs acknowledged that bias exists, and 80+ percent of them had direct experiences of unconscious bias in their organizations.



80%

of the respondents had direct experiences of unconscious bias in their organizations.



53%

said that such bias had an impact on their finances.

67%

reported that they witnessed it impacting relationships with clients.



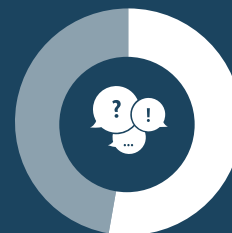
60%

commented that it impacted productivity and innovation.



67%

Said they saw it in hiring practices.



53%

said coworkers have talked to them about the impact of unconscious bias in their workplaces.

“

My views are that it's a constant. Something we need to pay attention to constantly because it is unconscious.

“

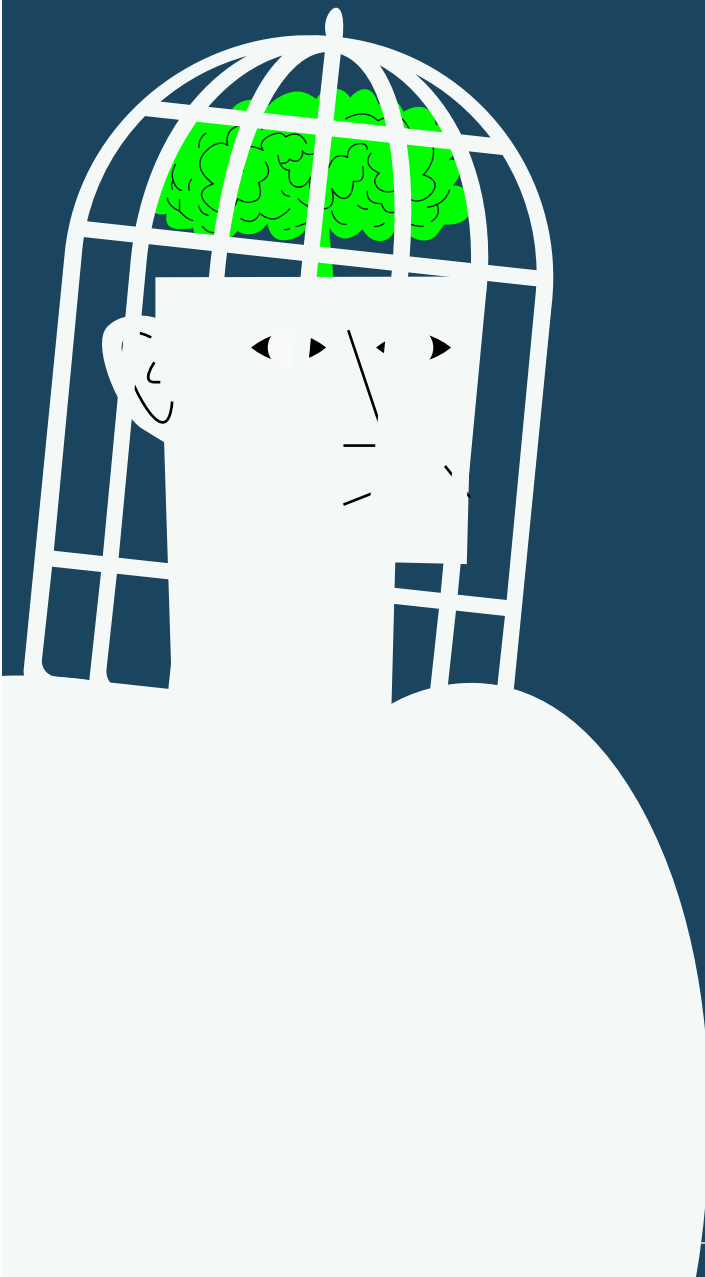
It impacts everything in our lives.

“

I am a firm believer in the fact that unconscious bias both exists and has a significant impact in both our workplace, our families, society in general.

Unconscious bias has certain characteristics.

While the CEOs described unconscious bias in the workplace in a variety of ways, they coalesced around a few notable themes:



It is an unintended attitude.



As the name implies, the difficulty is having any level of awareness.



It can be mitigated but not eliminated.



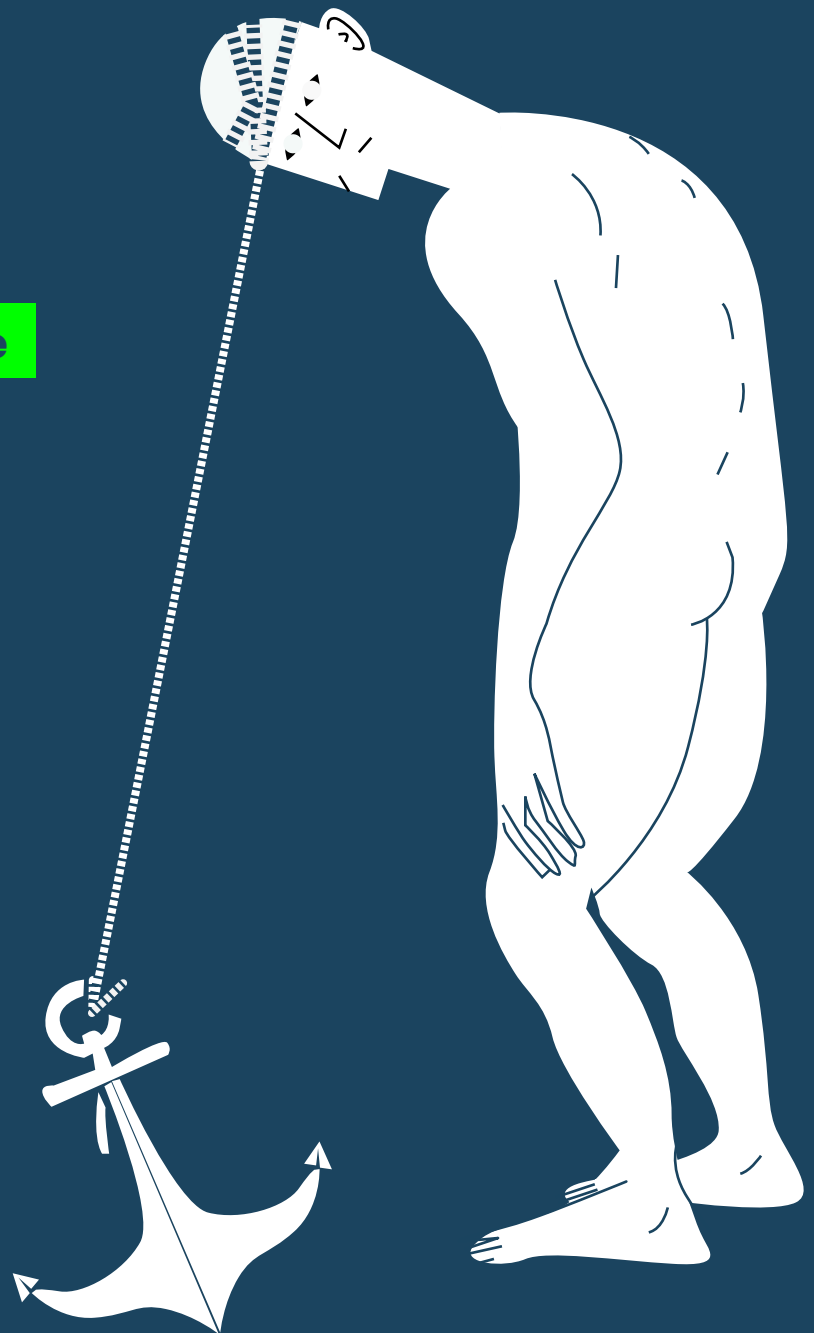
I'm not sure we're ever gonna eliminate unconscious bias. Maybe the idea is not to eliminate, but to reduce.

Unconscious bias has negative impacts.

The CEOs identified two areas unconscious bias impacts the workplace.

Perception of the Workplace

CEOs noted that unconscious bias violated fundamental values of honesty, curiosity, fairness, justice, learning, and communication. This violation of values can, in their opinion, negatively impact the perception of the organization by both staff and clients.



Business Operations

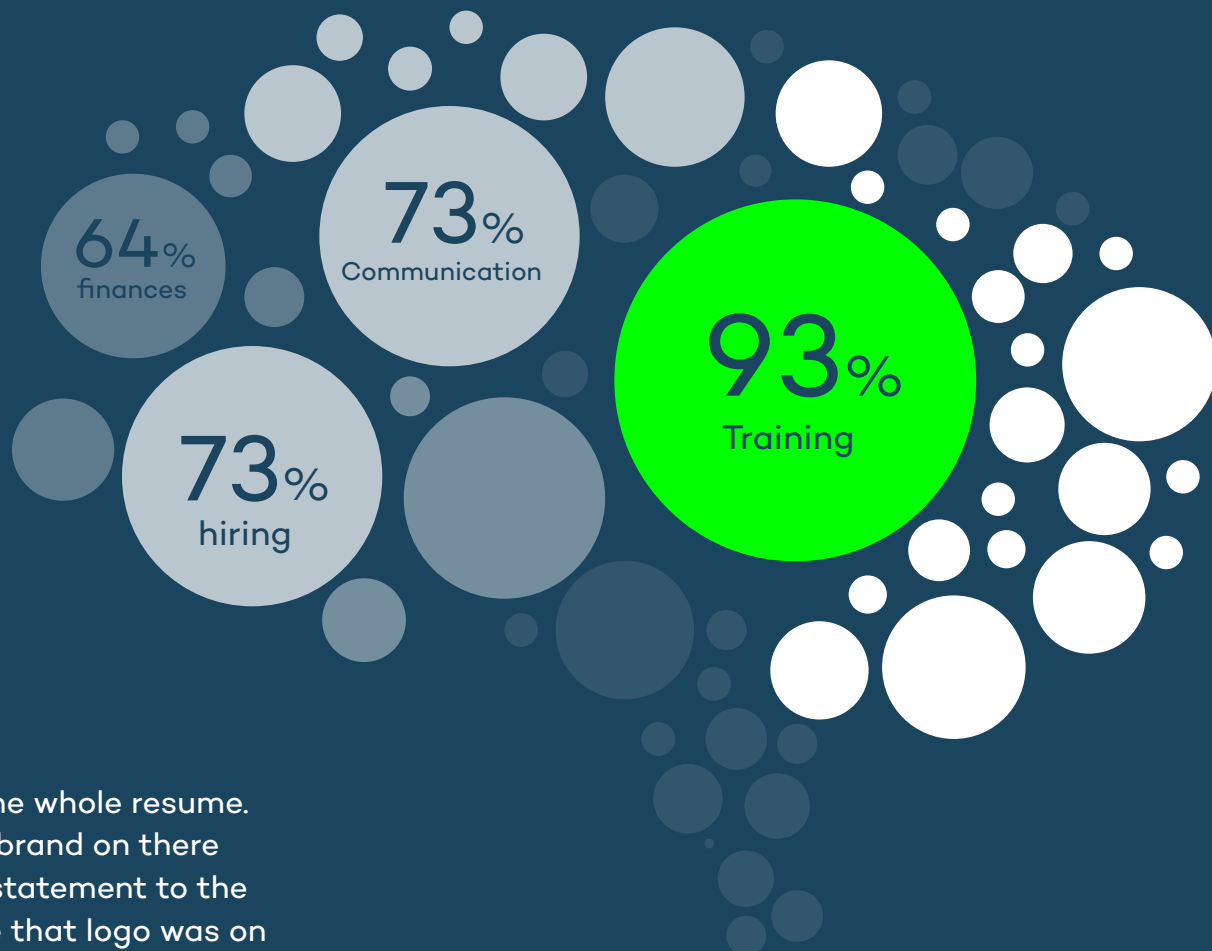
In the second category, the CEOs[†] spoke to specific, measurable negative impacts of unconscious bias on the operation of organizations:



I could definitely extrapolate some of the things I mentioned into a cost.



Diversity has a direct impact on the quality of our client relationships.



You don't look at the whole resume. You see the NASA brand on there and apply a value statement to the candidate because that logo was on their resume.

Unconscious bias should be addressed by organizational leaders.

When asked what could and should be done about unconscious bias in the workplace, the CEOs tended to agree that:



It can be addressed

"You can impact behavior when it's conscious because you can talk about it more concretely."



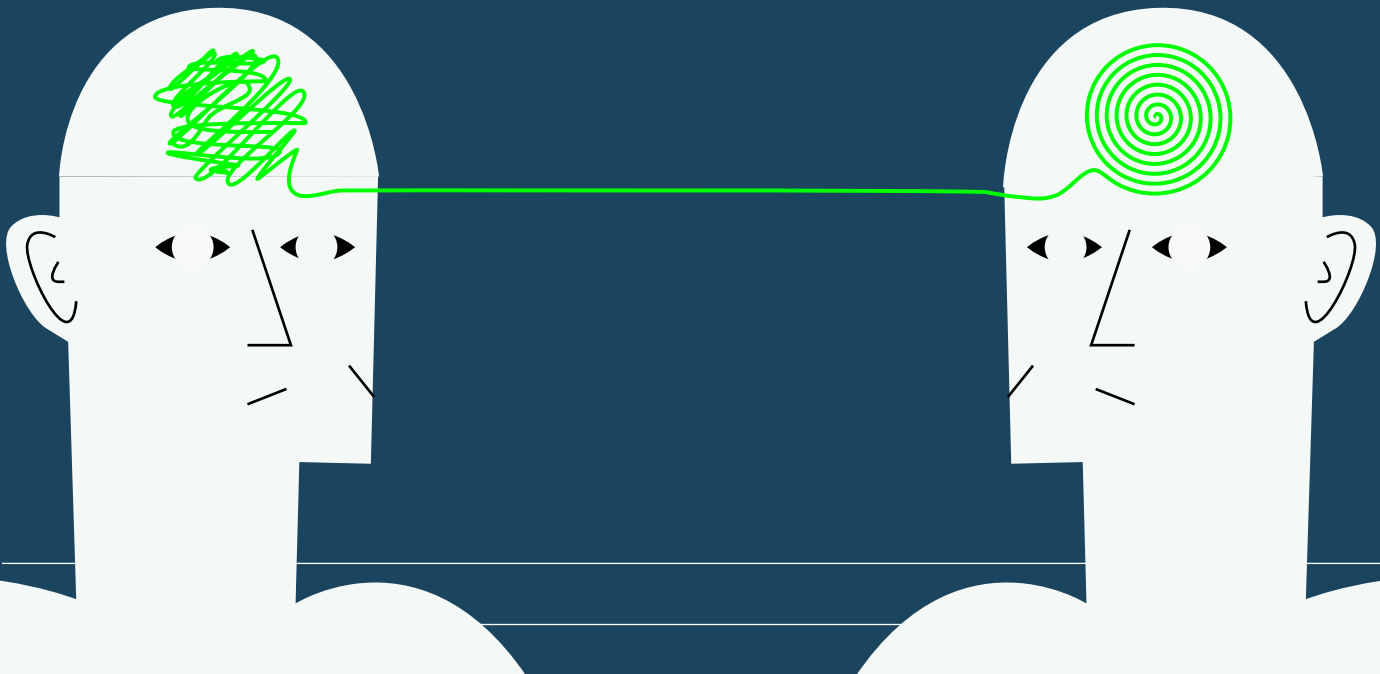
It should be addressed

"I think it affects more than we think it affects. And I think we'll be better off if we know it so we can work toward a solution."



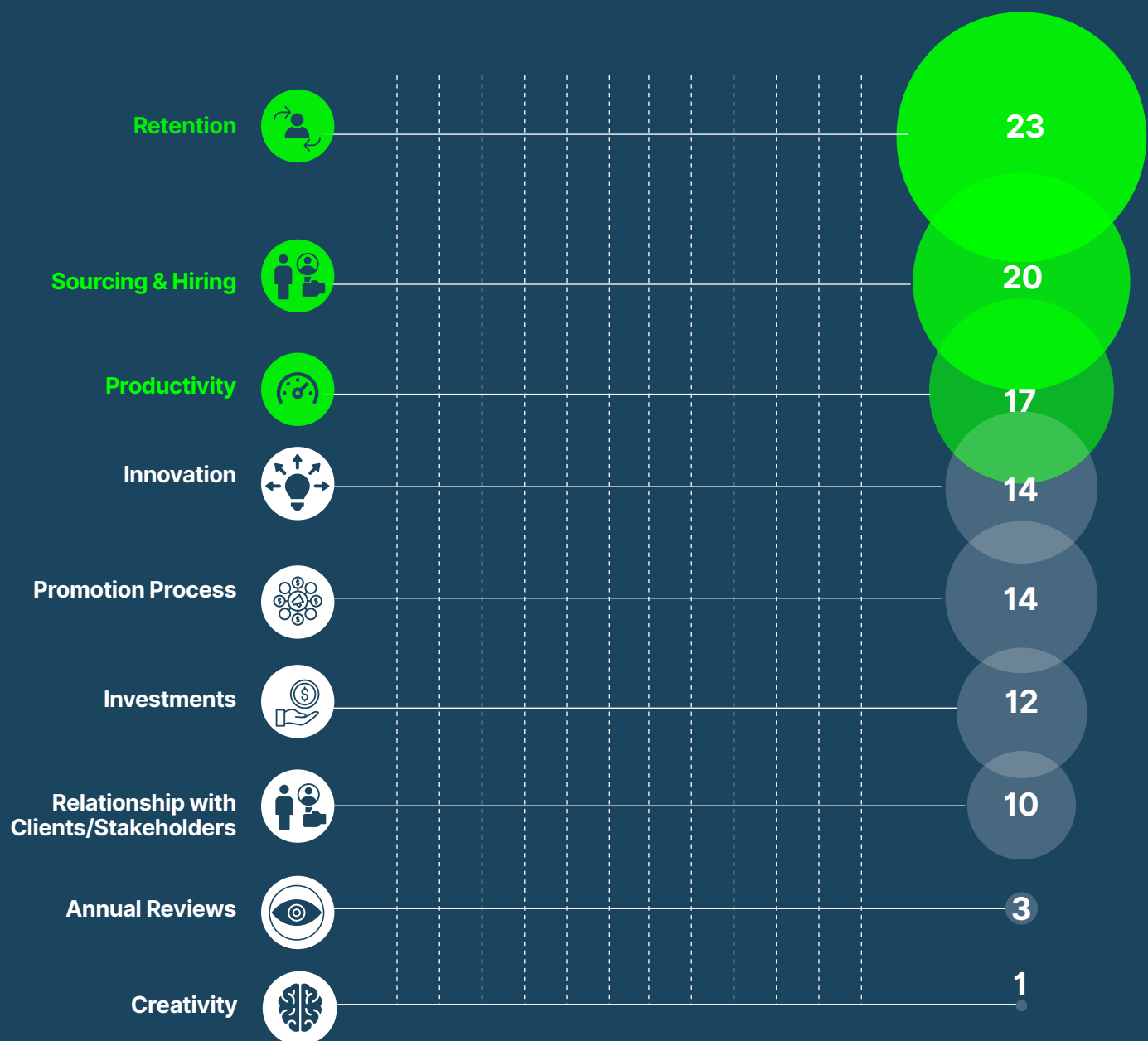
There are specific methods for best addressing it

"Every hiring administrator who is involved in any job fair or hiring event has to go through unconscious bias training."



CEO interventions focused primarily on training designed to shift attitudes and behavior around critical corporate activities. Generally, CEOs said training to raise awareness is a high-leverage strategy for addressing bias. The CEOs believe that training will improve their hiring and psychological safety and their employee's experience.

Key desired-training areas were:



How much money are they investing in training?

The CEOs indicated a willingness to invest significant organizational resources towards mitigating unconscious bias.

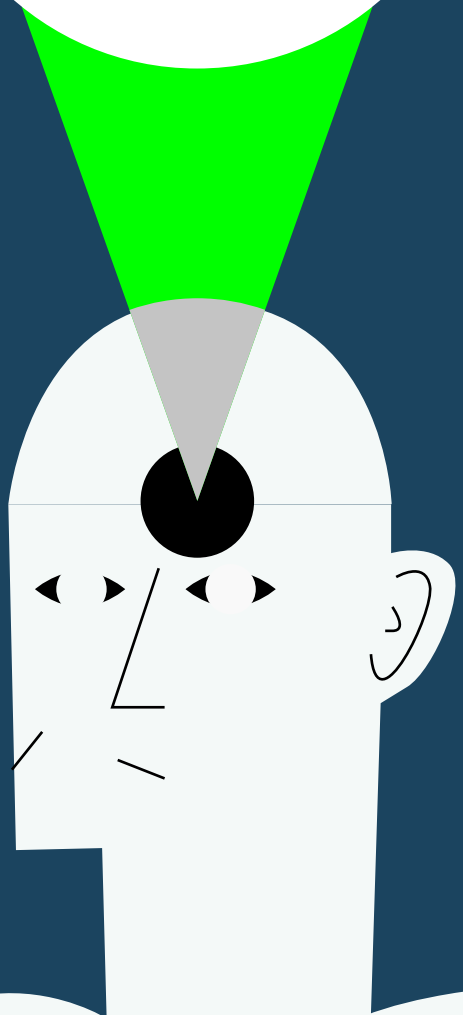
64%

of CEOs[‡]
are planning
to spend an
average of

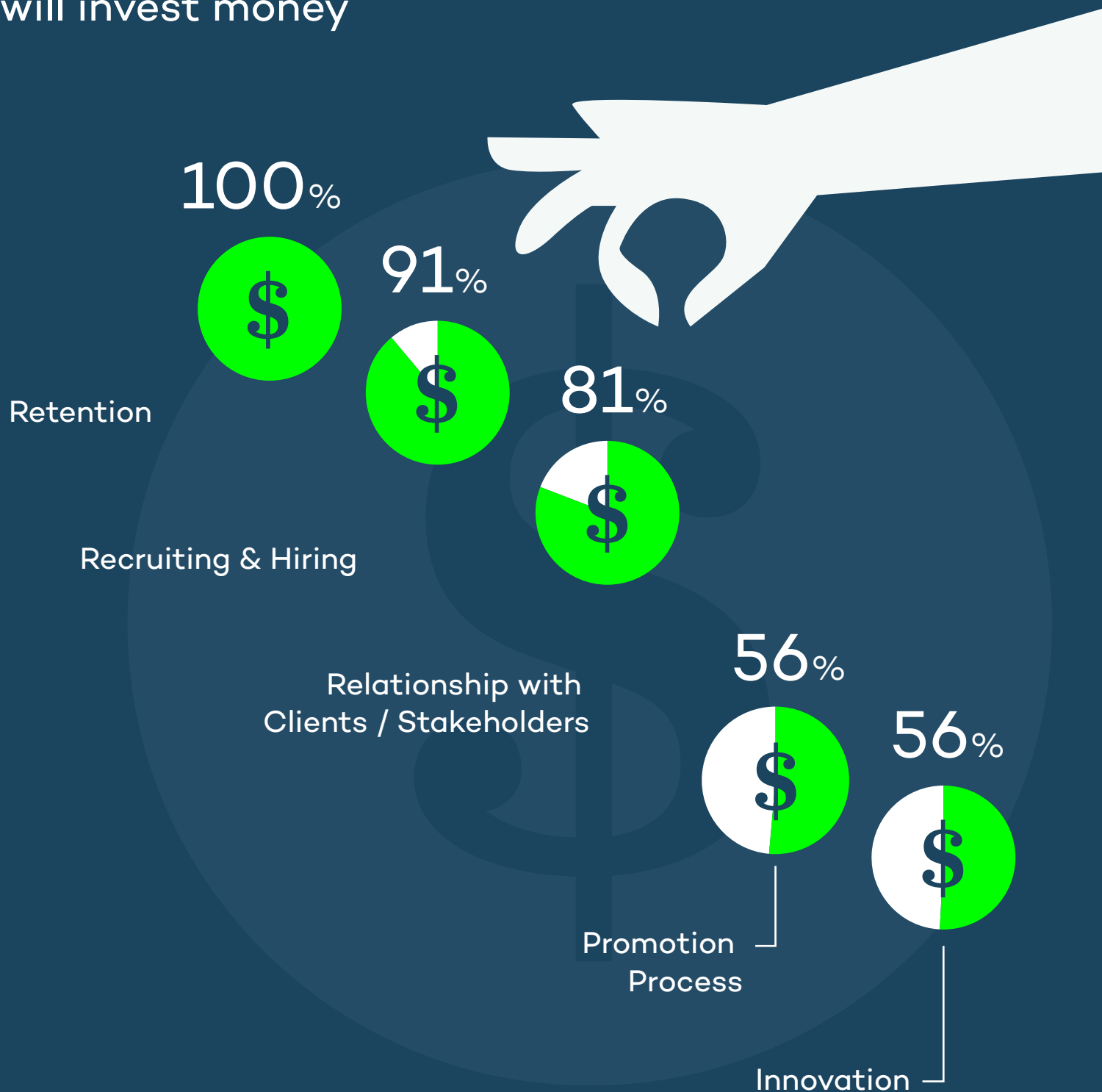
\$86,750

“

It's not a fad. Solutions need to be embedded in the fabric of our organization forever.



The top areas CEOs[‡] will invest money



Author's Notes

For centuries marginalized people have been crying out for justice, freedom, and an opportunity to be heard. Those who do not feel heard have turned up the volume most recently after the murder of George Floyd. Engaged people change the world. In 2015, after decades of marginalized Americans using their political power to change the laws, the United States Supreme Court ruled that same-sex people have the right to marry.

Social movements are influencing the workplace.

I concluded from this study that the diverse CEOs I spoke with are listening to their employees and developing a vision for a workplace that works for everybody.

This report honors the marginalized people on our planet, including people of color, the LGBTQ community, LatinX, non-native-born Americans, women, the elderly, the disabled, and everyone who has been in the shadows of our society and longs to be seen and accepted for who they are.

† - 15 responses

* - 11 responses



Authors

Behind the scenes



> Lorne Epstein

Lorne Epstein, a Brooklyn native, has been leading experiential workshops since 1993. He has been an HR professional since 1996 and has developed and led recruiting teams in the U.S., India, and Brazil. Over 7,700 professionals have learned about their unconscious biases through his workshops and learning labs.

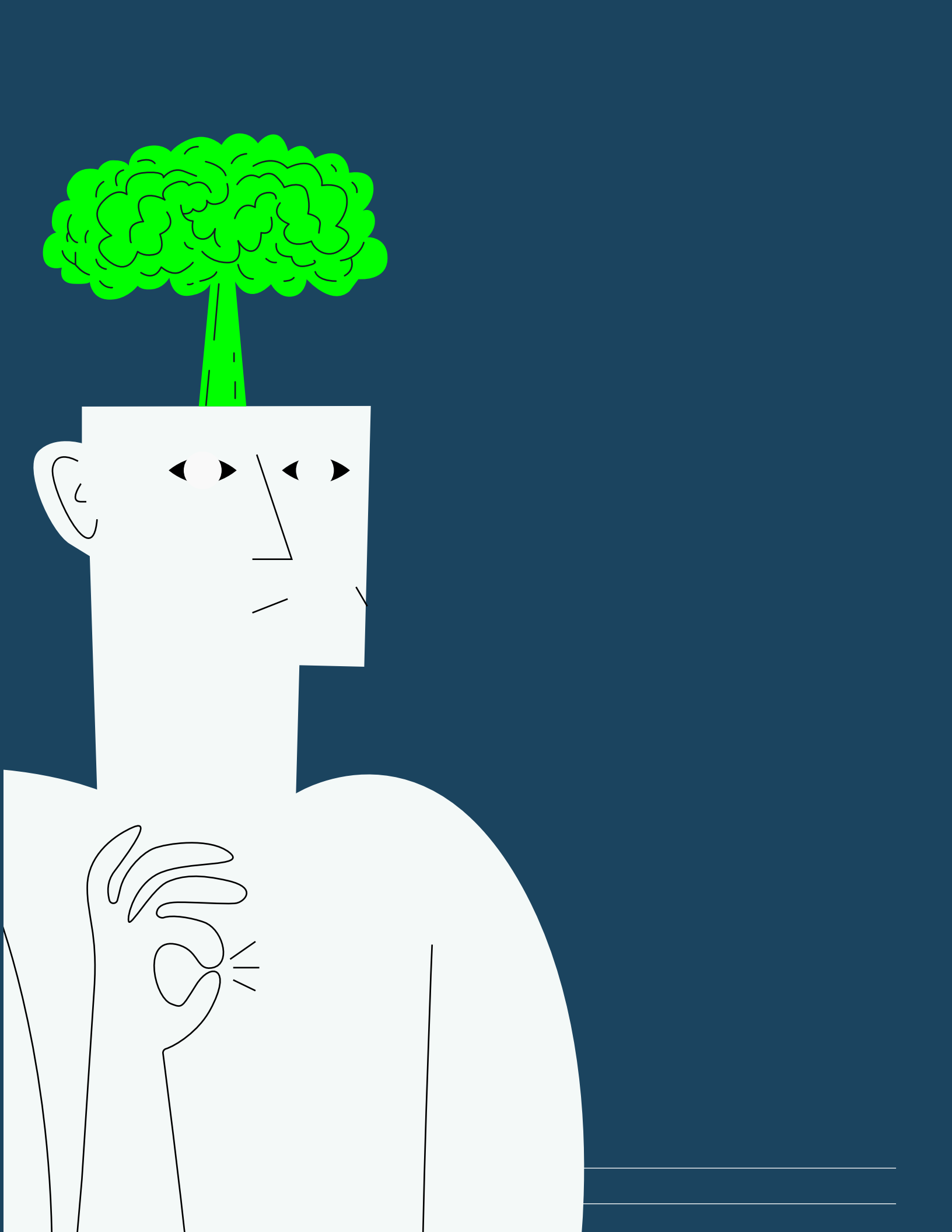
Currently, he is earning his Master's degree in Organizational Development and Knowledge Management at George Mason University. His book, ***You're Hired! Interview Skills to Get the Job*** has been downloaded over a half-million times worldwide. He is SHRM-SCP certified and a Lifetime Charter Member of the Association of Talent Acquisition Professionals.

Lorne will continue to share what is working to improve decision-making and reduce unconscious bias impacts through reports, workshops, and speaking engagements. Lorne lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his wife, Alicia.



> Thomas G. Goddard, JD, Ph.D.

Tom Goddard is Founder and CEO of Integral Healthcare Solutions, a consulting firm that has served healthcare organizations around the globe for two decades. He also serves individuals and groups seeking to accelerate their growth and healing through his practice, Integral Becoming. He earned his MA and PhD in industrial-organizational psychology from George Mason University and his law degree from the University of Arizona.



Share this report with your organization's leaders

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— by —
Lorne
Epstein

Enroll in our workshops

- ✓ Uncovering Unconscious Bias
- ✓ Creating a Conscious Bias Action Plan
- ✓ Using Scorecards in Interviews
- ✓ Experiential Interviewing
- ✓ Nonviolent Communication
- ✓ Creating Psychological Safety
- ✓ Removing Bias from Job Descriptions

Participate in the 2022 Survey

In 2022, we are expanding this survey to include more than 1,000 business leaders, including CEOs, business owners, CHROs, human resource managers and directors, professionals who have the responsibility and authority to guide their organization and you!

Join a Learning Lab

Participants in the 2022 survey are eligible to join a Learning Lab to hear solutions from leaders in these power 25-minute (virtual and in-person) sessions.

Go to <https://bit.ly/30iyKpp> or click on the QR code on the right side.



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