

[BIAS INTERRUPTERS] *meritocracy now!*

BIAS INTERRUPTERS FOR ASSIGNMENTS *Responses to Common Pushback*

Here are some of the most common justifications that supervisors/managers give for why plum assignments go to a homogenous pool, and women end up with office housework—and some responses:

“It needs to get done, and the women are the only ones who volunteer!”

“Staffing office housework by asking for volunteers puts subtle pressures on women to volunteer, to show they’re good team players. It also put equal pressures on men *not* to volunteer, to show they’re go getters. Instead, allocate tasks like parties to admins; for the rest set up a rotation so that less valued work gets shared out equally.”

“The women just do a better job at it. When I give it to the men, they blow it off, so I end up having to give it to a woman anyway.”

“That’s because the women sense that there will be negative consequences if they blow it off—they’ll be dinged as prima donnas. And the men know that if they do a bad job, the only consequence is that they won’t be asked to do office housework again.”

“He worked out successfully in the past,” “I trust him to do a good job.”

“This is justifiable in a crisis. But operating always in crisis mode is not good for the organization in the long term. It means that the person who happens to get a career-enhancing assignment the first time around becomes the golden employee, excluding others who are equally talented from career opportunities. That means they will leave—and the golden employee may leave, too, because they’re asked to do the same thing over and over again.”

“I’m too busy to train someone new.”

“That may work well for you in the short term, but it will hurt the organization in the long term, as we lose valued people who are not given career-development opportunities. Having a deeper bench also gives you insurance: What if your go-to-guy gets hit by a bus or leaves the company? Taking a little time today could save you time and money in the future.”