

OVERCOMING COGNITIVE BIAS IN DESIGN

Preferred Length:	45-90 min + 15 min Q&A
Presenters:	Anthony Vade, CED
AV/Technology Needs:	In Person: Video Screen with laptop audio (1/8 inch TRS and HDMI output) 2 Flip Charts per table or Large Whiteboard
Room Set:	Flexible - Aim for interactive session, not passive theatre experience

50-Word Summary:

This 90-minute interactive workshop delves into five common cognitive biases that impact team collaboration and hinder organizational innovation. Participants will explore how these biases influence decision-making, communication, and creativity. Through engaging activities, teams will learn strategies to recognize and mitigate biases, fostering a more collaborative and innovative work environment.

Full Description:

In this engaging and interactive 90-minute workshop, participants will embark on a journey to explore five common cognitive biases that significantly impact team-based collaboration and an organization's ability to innovate. These biases, often subconscious and deeply ingrained in our thinking, affect how we perceive, interpret, and respond to information, leading to misalignment, confusion, and frustration in both team dynamics and decision-making processes. By understanding the science behind these biases and their effects on our brains, participants will be empowered with tools and strategies to foster collaboration, align goals, and embrace creative, innovative approaches.

The workshop will focus on five key cognitive biases and their implications for team environments and organizational success, with other biases exploration subtly integrated into the workshop elements:

1. **Collective Illusions:** Participants will learn about how groupthink and social conformity influence team behavior, often leading to decisions that prioritize consensus over creativity and innovation. This section will explore strategies to encourage diverse perspectives and constructive dissent to avoid falling into the trap of collective illusions.
2. **The Anchoring Effect:** Teams will analyze how initial pieces of information, or "anchors," can disproportionately influence decisions, even when irrelevant. The workshop will provide tools to challenge anchors and encourage more objective, data-driven decision-making.
3. **The Contrast Effect:** This bias makes judgments about ideas, people, or situations dependent on comparisons, rather than their intrinsic value. Participants will explore how to mitigate this effect and focus on evaluating concepts and contributions on their merit.
4. **Availability Cascade:** Teams will discover how repetitive exposure to certain ideas or information can create a false sense of truth, hindering innovative thinking. Strategies to encourage critical analysis and avoid over-reliance on popular narratives will be discussed.
5. **The Sunk Cost Fallacy:** Participants will examine how the tendency to persist with failing projects due to prior investments can stifle innovation and waste resources. Practical techniques for identifying sunk costs and pivoting toward more productive paths will be shared.

The session will integrate scientific insights into how our brains work, including exploring **System 1 and System 2 Thinking**—our fast, intuitive mind versus our slower, analytical mind—and how these systems

interact to influence decision-making and collaboration. Participants will gain an understanding of how cognitive biases arise, the roles they play in shaping team dynamics, and how they can be identified and addressed.

Through interactive activities, case studies, and group discussions, participants will practice recognizing the 5 biases and others in real-world scenarios and explore actionable strategies to mitigate their effects. For example, teams will engage in exercises designed to highlight the **Zeigarnik Effect**, which demonstrates the brain's tendency to focus on unfinished tasks, and how to leverage this for more effective project management. Similarly, the **Paradox of Choice** will pop up and its impact on decision-making will be explored, with practical tools provided to simplify choices and avoid decision paralysis.

The workshop emphasizes reflection and contemplation, encouraging participants to think critically about how biases influence their personal and professional lives. By fostering an **experimentation mindset**, participants will learn to challenge assumptions, reframe problems, and seek novel solutions. Additionally, the session will highlight the importance of **cognitive dissonance** in driving change and growth, equipping teams with the skills to embrace discomfort as a catalyst for innovation.

By the end of the session, participants will leave with a deeper understanding of the cognitive biases that affect collaboration and innovation, as well as practical tools to align teams, foster psychological safety, and create an environment where novel and useful ideas can thrive. This workshop is designed to inspire reflection, promote self-awareness, and empower teams to avoid the negative mind traps that hinder progress, paving the way for stronger collaboration and breakthrough innovations.

This session might interest you if you:

- Are challenged to bring different personalities and perspectives together in the creative process
- Have been frustrated by other team members' inability to see the world as you see it.
- Want to foster a collaborative culture that is innovative and able to better align to the shared objectives within our organisation

Learner Outcomes:

1. Understand how our brains contribute to both positive and negative human interactions
2. Explore techniques to avoid the negative aspects of cognitive bias and ways to improve collaboration
3. Discover how to better recognise cognitive bias in yourself and others, with key skills to help all parties rise above limitations and find success in the co-creative process.



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SHORT FORM BIO:

Anthony Vade is an innovative and engaging facilitator globally renowned for catalysing improvement and innovation through experience design. He has impacted hundreds of teams, traversing four continents, from small start-ups to Fortune 50 organisations. He empowers corporations, associations, and non-profits to flourish by engaging customers and crafting immersive experiences that captivate audiences and drive positive change. Anthony is an inspiring instigator working to drive transformation and a passionate advocate for applying a structured and strategic approach to purposeful innovation. In his role as co-founder at Strategy Table he makes change and disruption accessible to teams, while empowering, enabling and encouraging collaboration in the most positive direction.

EXTENDED BIO:

Born and raised in Australia, Anthony now calls Toronto, Canada home. For over 25 years, he has helped businesses create meaningful and memorable connections with employees and customers. He has worked with Fortune 50 corporations, including the world's largest technology, hospitality, and production companies. Designing and executing workshops, innovation projects and large-scale conferences and entertainment events.

Anthony loves to push the bar and bravely challenges the status quo. Actively reinventing and redefining strategic collaboration and co-creation for business innovation, experience design and customer engagement. His team-based approach embraces and encourages an elevated way of thinking. Grounded by human-centric design methodologies and a zealous focus on outcome-targeted idea generation.

Anthony's collaborative approach has earned him global acclaim for his contributions to award-winning programs and his involvement with industry associations on local, national, and international scales. Having served on multiple boards and advisory committees, he has spearheaded programs focused on digital transformation and value proposition development.

He is a contributing author to multiple business books focused on business innovation, customer engagement and experience design. Guiding co-authors through the process while inspiring them to explore their thinking and make ideas more accessible. He regularly contributes to media publications and is a sort-after thought leader and global keynote speaker.

Anthony consults customers and educates industry professionals on innovative design strategies. He empowers teams and leaders by equipping them with the tools and mindsets to craft impactful moments with intention and tangible return on experience.