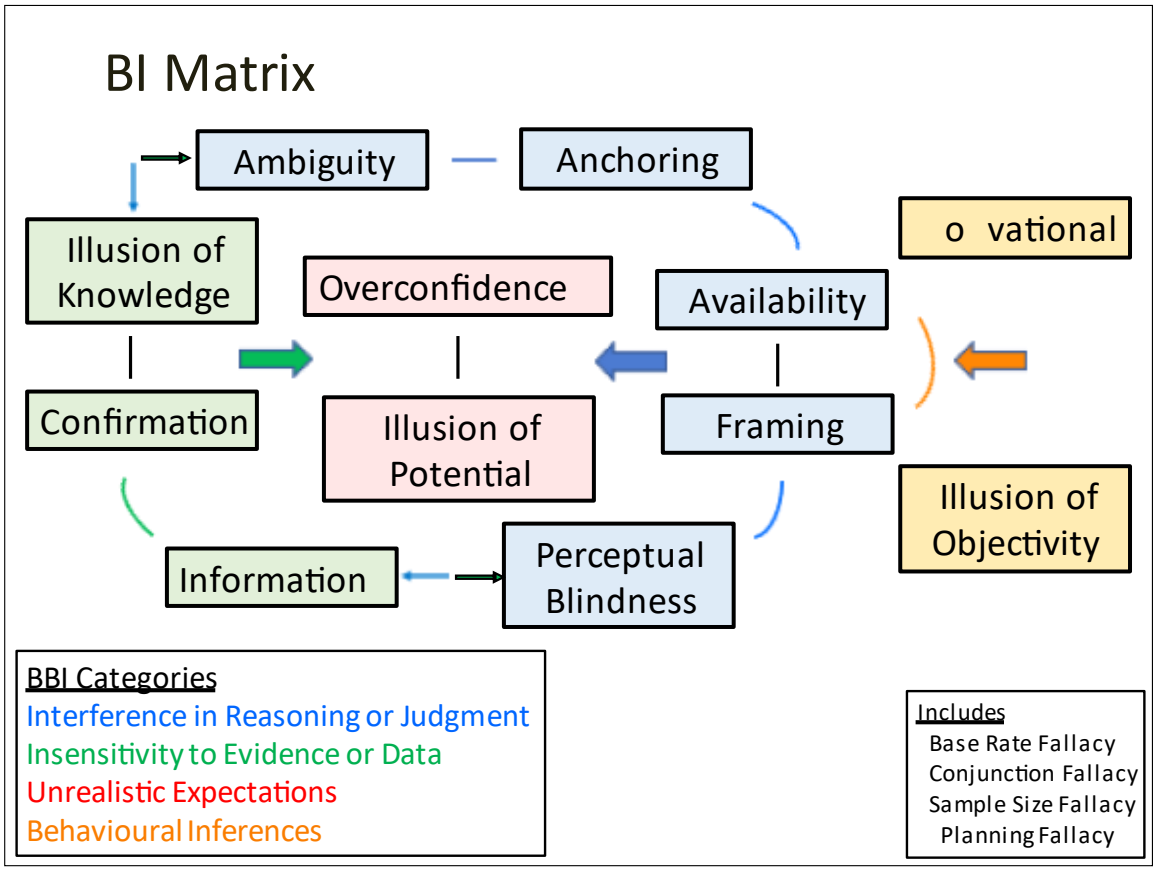
BIAS

#19 Conclusion & Summary

Time has flown by in the past year I've been writing this series on bias. I hope you have enjoyed it, and that it has increased your understanding of cognitive biases and how they influence our judgments and interpretations. On the one-year anniversary of the blog, it seems proper to hit the pause button and summarise.

Over the last 18 blogs we have explored several biases and related themes. I have compiled all the blogs into one location which you can freely access at the following link: Bias Blog. The set will take you through the many biases and how they impact us, and additionally – what I think distinguishes this series – suggested steps on how we can mitigate their impact.

Although we looked at several of the biases and illusions independently, commonalities and interrelationships that impact judgments and decisions exist between the biases and illusions. The following figure illustrates this interaction.



These cognitive pitfalls fit into four distinct categories:

- Interference in Reasoning or Judgments
- Insensitivity to Evidence or Data
- Unrealistic Expectations
- Behavioural Influences

Many of the cognitive biases and illusions result in unrealistic expectations, exhibited by *overconfidence* and *illusion of potential*. Overlaying all of these are the behavioural influences that can trigger many of the cognitive pitfalls.

Given that we cannot rid these biases from our lives, there is no magic bullet to reduce their impact. We all have them, and they serve a function. However, **awareness** of the biases − how they work, situations where they might have a negative impact, and how they can impede our decisions − is the first step. Unfortunately, awareness alone is not enough. One must learn mitigation strategies for each of the biases.

To this end, please consider participating in our Mitigating Bias, Blindness and Illusions in E&P Decision Making course. This course is unique in that we offer specific mitigation techniques and strategies for each type of cognitive error reinforced with real-world, practical examples and exercises. Participants regularly comment that it is one of the best and most impactful industry courses that they have ever taken.

Training is only the beginning of the journey. One must continually be vigilant and ensure one engages in reflective thinking. If not, it is all too easy to fall back into old and familiar patterns of judgment and decision-making. Colleagues should work together to spot where a bias has affected an interpretation and seek rectification strategies.

Before I go, I would like to thank some of my colleagues that helped me publish these blogs. Gary Citron and Lisa Ward, whose editing of my blogs has made them read so much better; Doug Weaver and Lisa Ward for their support in this initiative of writing articles on bias; all my colleagues at Rose & Associates who provided inspiration and guidance for the many topics we have explored over the past year; and finally, to all readers who joined me on this journey.

I would also like to thank my BG work colleagues, Mark Simmons and Richard Wrigley. They joined the assurance team that I designed and managed, together giving guidance and support to technical teams and decision-makers. It was in this role where we first observed the poor predictions and decisions that led me on my path to understand how cognitive biases impact us, and the resultant R&A course (linked above) which Creties Jenkins and I created.

This has been a fun journey. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me anytime to discuss biases, examples that you have seen, or strategies you have invoked to mitigate. Be sure to look for the next series of blogs on the field of Assurance, coming soon to a screen near you!

Please visit our website to view other Rose & Associates blogs.

I wish you all the best.

Stay safe and healthy.

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