

BIAS INTERRUPTERS *small steps big change*

INTERRUPTING BIAS IN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Tools for Individuals

Incremental steps that improve diversity in your organization can yield large gains. Diverse work groups perform better and are more committed, innovative and loyal.¹ Gender diverse workgroups have better collective intelligence, which improves performance by the group and its members, leading to better financial performance.² Racially diverse workgroups consider a broader range of alternatives, make better decisions, and are better at solving problems.³ Bias, if unchecked, affects many different groups: modest or introverted men, LGBT+, individuals with disabilities, class migrants (professionals from blue-collar backgrounds), women, and people of color. We've distilled the huge literature on bias into simple steps that help you and your company perform better.

Bias Interrupters should be implemented at an organizational level. But there are steps you can take to interrupt bias at your workplace.

THE CHALLENGE

A recent study of performance evaluations in tech found that 66% of women's performance reviews contained negative personality criticism ("You come off as abrasive") whereas only 1% of men's reviews did.⁴ We know now that workplaces that view themselves as being highly meritocratic often are, in fact, *more* biased than other organizations⁵ and that the usual responses—one-shot diversity trainings, mentoring and networking programs—typically don't work.⁶

THE SOLUTION

Bias interrupters are tweaks to basic business systems that can yield large gains: Organizational interrupters change existing business systems; individual interrupters are steps individuals can take on their own.

BIAS INTERRUPTERS

1. **Learn how to spot and interrupt bias** by using our **Identifying Bias in Performance Evaluations Worksheet** which summarizes hundreds of studies, and encourage others to do the same.
2. **Self-promote effectively** by using our **Writing an Effective Self-Evaluation Worksheet**, and handing it out to your reports (if you have them). If you are a manager, **don't rely exclusively on self-promotion** to share successes within your department. Set up more formal systems for sharing successes, such as a weekly or monthly email that lists employees' accomplishments. Be sure that these accomplishments are factored into evaluations.
3. **Give everyone honest feedback.** Make sure you give honest feedback to everyone who is evaluated—otherwise some groups won't get notice of problems in time to correct them.
4. **Persuade your organization to use bias interrupters:** small changes to basic business systems—from hiring to performance evaluations to compensation—that can help interrupt bias and improve performance. Use our talking points to persuade your company.
5. **Take the Bias Interrupter Training** so you can identify and interrupt bias in your workplace.

¹ e.g., Dahlin et al., 2005; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Jehn et al., 1999

² Richard et al., 2004, Wooley et al, 2011; Lewis, 2016

³ Phillips et al., 2006, Antonio et al., 2004; Richard et al., 2003

⁴ Snyder, 2014

⁵ Castilla, 2015

⁶ Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006