BIAS INTERRUPTERS | *small steps big change*

Performance Evaluation Checklist

1. **Before you start** make sure your evaluation form and process meets the following criteria.
   - ☐ As a reviewer make sure you have clear criteria of what you're evaluating given the employee's role. Share these criteria with the employee being evaluated ahead of time.
   - ☐ Designate separate boxes for feedback about performance and potential.
   - ☐ Designate separate boxes for any personality-related feedback, it should not be clumped in with skillset related remarks.
   - ☐ If there is a self-review component, be sure to distribute the **Writing an Effective Self-Evaluation Guide** to the employee ahead of time.

2. **While you review** keep in mind the following:

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.[1] That said, a comment doesn't need to be negative in order to be harmful. For example, when a reviewer says something like "he's friendly and gets along well with everyone," they're leaving out the skills that leave that impression. It's more effective and accurate to instead say, "he has strong interpersonal skills, best showcased by his ability to lead projects across multiple departments." Instead of focusing on someone's personal vibe, zeroing in on their actions will help clarify your feedback and in turn help the employee better address their strengths and weakness.

Flag Words and Phrases in Performance Evaluations:

If one of the terms below is used, reviewers must attach a concrete example/reason for that evaluation. Providing evidence for any assessment should be expected.

- Abrasive, difficult, rude, aggressive
- Personality
- Loud, outspoken
- Quiet, shy
- Tone issues
- Bubbly, perky
- Not a team player

- Not flexible, unreliable
- Unprofessional or inappropriate attire
- Potential, not ready, too green (for promotion, task, etc.)
- Mother, father, parent, their child, caregiver

Some of these phrases may be appropriate in a performance evaluation, but they *must* be contextualized and supported with skills and role criteria-related evidence.

Carve out time for bouncebacks:

If someone you supervise turns in a performance evaluation that doesn't follow the guidelines you've outlined, then consider a bounceback. Take the time to talk through why your department puts a value on the given criteria and create a plan to remedy their evaluations going forward, including editing the one that sparked your concern.

---

[1] Snyder, K. (2014, August 26). The abrasiveness trap: High-achieving men and women are described differently in reviews. *Fortune.* Retrieved from http://fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/