Google's unbiasing performance review checklists

When making important decisions about employees, like when to promote someone, it's critical to recognize and address how potential biases can influence the decision-making process.

Unbiasing Checklist for Promotion Decisions

Promotion Nominations	Biases Targeted
Define what success looks like at a particular level and don't allow extraneous data points (e.g., time in role) affect the decision	Stereotype-based Biases
Consider the whole bench of talent and narrow it down from there	Availability Bias
Consider concrete, behavioral examples throughout current level or role to narrow the pool	Recency, Horns & Halos, Availability Bias

Before Promotion Decision Discussions	Biases Targeted
Write down your own evaluation of employees before promotion committee	Anchoring Bias
Restate success criteria (e.g., what's expected of a person for that particular role and level)	Stereotype-based Biases

During Promotion Decision Discussions	Biases Targeted
Consider concrete, behavioral examples for current level or role	Recency, Horns & Halos, Availability Bias
Consider situational factors (in the workplace) that affected performance (e.g., lacked resources)	Fundamental Attribution Error
Consider if a promotion decision would change if your employee was in different social group	Stereotype-based Biases
Play devil's advocate when there are no significantly different perspectives raised	Anchoring Bias, Agreement Bias
Listen to the devil's advocate for employees you are invested in	Leniency Error, Self-serving Bias, Similar-to-me Bias
Consider the benefits of complementary and supplementary skill sets (i.e., the benefits of being different)	Self-serving Bias

Unbiasing Checklists for Performance Review Conversations

Action	Biases Targeted
Communicate the performance expectations for your employee in that role and level	Stereotype-based Biases
Make sure cited feedback and examples come from the entire assessment period	Recency Bias
Discuss important work that may not have been visible	Availability Bias
Differentiate between situational factors (in the workplace) and personal factors that affected performance	Fundamental Attribution Error
Use multiple concrete, behavioral examples from reviewers to support BOTH strengths and development areas	Leniency Error, Self-serving Bias, Similar-to-me Bias, Horns & Halos
Imagine your direct report in a different social group and ask yourself whether your feedback would be the same	Stereotype-based Biases

Unbiasing Calibration Committee Checklist

Before Calibration	Bias Targeted
Write down your own ratings of all employees before calibration	Anchoring Bias
Agree on success criteria (e.g., decide what "exceeds expectations" is)	Stereotype-based Biases

During Calibration	Bias Targeted
Consider concrete/behavioral examples throughout the rating period	Recency Bias, Horns & Halos, Availability Bias
Consider situational factors (in the workplace) that affected performance (e.g., lacked resources)	Fundamental Attribution Error
Consider if rating would change if employee was in different social group	Stereotype-based Biases
Play devil's advocate when there are no significantly different perspectives raised	Anchoring Bias, Agreement Bias
Play devil's advocate for employees you are invested in	Leniency Error, Self-serving Bias, Similar-to-me Bias