Performance Management: Rater Bias and Mitigation Strategies

Common Rater Biases	**Definition**	**Mitigation Strategies**
Recency Bias	When managers focus on the most recent time period (i.e. last month or two) instead of the entire cycle year. This happens because it is easier to remember things that happened most recently.	1. Create and use a system to track performance throughout the year. 2. Request self-evaluation before you complete the final evaluation. 3. Consider using a formal or informal 360 process to collect feedback from a variety of peers, colleagues, and direct reports.
Primacy Bias	When managers only focus on first impressions or information they received early in the relationship. This happens because first impressions have a large impact on how we view people going forward.	1. Ask yourself: what data or performance information do I have to support by evaluation? Am I going off of my "gut" or impression instead of objectively rating the performance?
Halo/Horns Bias	When managers allow one good or negative trait to overshadow performance (i.e. you appreciate your employee's sense of humor even though you have received complaints about their professionalism). These types of bias occur when we are annoyed or we overly value one aspect of the person.	1. Consider <u>how</u> the work gets done just as much as <u>what</u> work gets done. 2. Ask yourself: are their actions and intentions aligned with your values and expectations? 3. Conduct a mental simulation. If someone else you trust were to behave or perform positively or negatively in the same way, would you provide the same rating and feedback?
Leniency/Strictness Bias	When managers are more lenient or strict with one direct report over another. And when managers of a similar work unit are more	1. Clearly define what not meeting, meeting and exceeding

	lenient or strict from manager to manager. This can happen for a variety of reasons from personal preferences, opinions about performance management, years in leadership roles, etc.	expectations looks like for each goal. 2. Two to four times a year, check in on the goals and ask where they would currently rate themselves. Use this opportunity to manage and re-set expectations. 3. Conduct unit wide calibration exercises.
Similar-to-me Bias	When managers rate employee higher because they have similar interests, skills, and backgrounds. This happens because we have mirror neurons in our brains that make us feel good when we have something in common with someone else.	1. Find something in common with all of your direct reports. 2. Conduct a mental simulation. If someone else you trust were to behave or perform positively or negatively in the same way, would you provide the same rating and feedback?
Confirmation Bias	When managers search for or interpret new information in a way that confirms their preexisting beliefs. This happens because our brain has to process so much information in a day. It is constantly trying to make quick connections and this can lead towards accepting information that confirms our ideas/beliefs and rejecting information that does not.	1. Seek information to disconfirm rather than confirm your beliefs – think like a scientist! 2. If you have an impression, intentionally find evidence that the opposite is true too. 3. Conduct a mental simulation. If someone else you trust were to behave or perform positively or negatively in the same way, would you provide the same rating and feedback?

Sources:

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