

# Promotion Process

## What this is:

A guide on how to structure an inclusive promotion process.

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## Why it matters?

Anytime we are making a personnel decision (whether to hire, what to pay, whether to promote) there is opportunity for bias to occur, especially if one person has unilateral control over the decision. Creating structure in your promotion process can help to reduce bias and create an increased perception of fairness in the process.

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## Example:

**The key factors in creating an inclusive promotion structure:**

- Process is clearly documented and communicated to all employees
- Criteria (which requires evidence of having been met) for securing promotion is defined before the promotion process
- Does not rely on one individual for the nomination or final decision

**Below are the specific steps to take to create your promotion process:**

- Define the criteria against which employee's performance will be assessed. Similar roles should have similar goals and be evaluated by similar standards.
- Communicate the criteria to employees.

- Create a promotion nomination form that includes evidence from the employee's outcomes to assess whether they met the expectations.
- Create prompts for the nominating manager such as "describe the ways the employee exceeded expectations."
- Rely on data as much as possible. The more open ended the criteria, the more likely they are to be biased.
- Solicit feedback from others beyond the hiring manager.  
Consistently apply standards with evaluating employees for promotion.
- Consider promotions in cycles so that you are evaluating people collectively and can ensure you hold the same bar for all promotions.
- Some companies use committees to review promotion nominations. Again, by taking final decisions out of one person's hands you reduce bias.
- Run disparate impact analysis on your promotions. If 40% of your employees are women and over the course of the year only 20% of promotions are women, you likely have a bias problem.

## Links to other resources:

[The broken rung report](#) page 6 of women in the workplace study

[How to structure a bias free promotion process](#)

HBR [Why Most Performance Evaluations are Biased](#)

[Bias Interrupters](#)