

review szn survival guide

making perf reviews less scary (with 💜 from skully)

Why are perf reviews important?

- Check-in with previous goals
- Create new, important-to-you goals
- Practice continuous learning/growth
- See evidence of your improvement
- Help the people you work with succeed

**Performance reviews
should be unsurprising,
fair, and motivating.**

Lara Hogan “Performance reviews should be unsurprising, fair, and motivating” 2021

**Receiving a review means
being vulnerable with someone
who holds power over you.**

Matt Newkirk “How to make performance reviews more productive” 2023

**What should I do
when my **manager**
delivers my review?**

- Lead with curiosity
- Note how you feel (privately)
- Reflect back what you've heard
- Work yourself through any hard parts

**Good feedback is specific,
actionable, and helps
the other person grow.**

Lara Hogan "Feedback Equation" 2018

How do I write a 360/peer review effectively?

- Be specific; use tangible examples
- Trust that they are looking grow
- Avoid one-offs (unless it was egregious)
- Check your biases (like gender bias)
- Be unfailingly kind (not “nice”)



This is a **fact**, not a **judgement**, about someone’s behavior.

How the observed behavior makes you **feel** and affects your work.

A question about this behavior or a **request** to behave differently.

What is my self-review actually for?

- Reflect on accomplishments
- Identify areas of improvement
- Plan for the next 6 months

**Why does the idea of
writing my self-review
make me nervous?**

- Time-consuming
- Overwhelming, emotionally taxing
- Hard to remember everything
- Reflection can be scary

Feedback cycles can be wonderful things: rarely do we get the space to reflect on and bask in the accomplishments of our team members.

Jill Wetzler "Writing Better Performance Assessments" 2019

**But they are also likely to fill us
with dread. Feedback cycles are
time consuming, they involve
heavy process...**

Jill Wetzler "Writing Better Performance Assessments" 2019

**and since the business doesn't
stop moving during this time, they
amount to an additional workload
that we often avoid addressing
until right before the deadlines.**

Jill Wetzler "Writing Better Performance Assessments" 2019

How do I take the pressure off self-reviews?

- Use bullet points instead of sentences
- Focus on showing progress
- Trade your draft with a coworker
- Remember it's not a persuasive essay

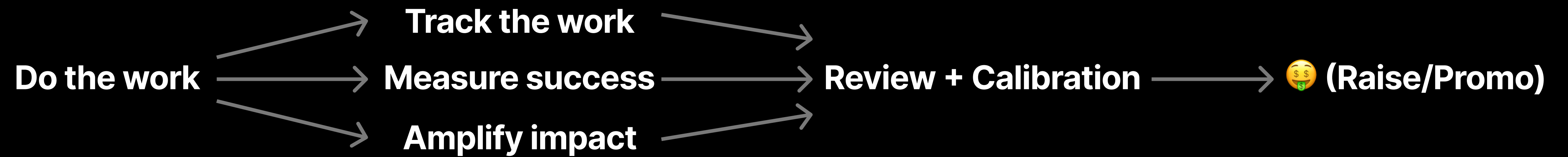
**You can't write a self-review so
amazing it will get you promoted.
You can't write a self-review so
terrible it will get you fired.**

Someone who changed Skully's life at GitHub, 2021

What a performance cycle feels like

Do a good job —————> ??? —————> 🤑

What a performance cycle actually looks like (for the most part)



Focusing on growth areas will help you navigate your career with *intent vs. happenstance*. Ask yourself: “Where do I want to go and how will I get there?”

Smruti Patel “Navigating engineering performance reviews” 2021

How do I make it **easier** to **write** my self-review?

1. Research/Brain dump
 - Monthly recap docs
 - Closed authored/reviewed PRs
 - Figma Drafts and Recents
 - Non-recurring calendar events
 - Slack @mentions in #general
2. Find metrics/impact
3. Include skills, not just deliverables
4. Acknowledge your wins

How do I make it **easier** to **write** my self-review?

1. Research/Brain dump
2. Find metrics/impact
 - Analytics (before and after shipping)
 - Volume of work (icons, PR reviews)
 - Social validation (tweets, comments)
3. Include skills, not just deliverables
4. Acknowledge your wins

How do I make it **easier** to **write** my self-review?

1. Research/Brain dump
2. Find metrics/impact
3. Include skills, not just deliverables
 - Soft skills are skills!
 - Resilience and personal growth
 - Glue work, leadership, collaboration
 - Improving/learning new hard skills
4. Acknowledge your wins

How do I make it **easier** to **write** my self-review?

1. Research/Brain dump
2. Find metrics/impact
3. Include skills, not just deliverables
4. Acknowledge your wins
 - It's easy to be hard on yourself
 - Balance shows self-awareness
 - Advocate for yourself!

**How do I make
it easier to write
my self-review?**

1. Research/Brain dump
2. Find metrics/impact
3. Include skills, not just deliverables
4. Acknowledge your wins

**You are the only person with
complete insight into everything
you do. You are the person who
can most accurately and
effectively hype yourself.**

Marie Chatfield Rivas "You Are Your Own Best Hype Person" 2018

**How do I make this
process easier for
myself *next year*?**

- Start a brag doc
- Ask your manager/skip for alignment
- Keep recapping/reflecting each month
- Collect nice things people say
- Mentor, coach, or sponsor your peers

Give yourself permission to pause on your work and reflect on what you've accomplished. Don't skip your reflection just to get something submitted.

Neha Batra "An engineer's self-review guide" 2021

you've got this

