

# Retaliation Stories

self-link: [go/retaliation-stories](https://www.google.com/go/retaliation-stories)

A collection of Googler submitted stories in solidarity with [go/retaliation-at-google](https://www.google.com/go/retaliation-at-google). You can read Meredith's and Claire's statements at [go/retaliation-statements](https://www.google.com/go/retaliation-statements).

Have a story that you would like to share? [go/share-your-retaliation-story](https://www.google.com/go/share-your-retaliation-story)

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Disclaimer: Some stories may have been minimally edited to further protect the identity of workers involved or for conciseness of retaliation.

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## Asked to develop leadership skills then stripped of all autonomy

I'm the only woman and the senior of what was formerly a two software engineer team. My manager had previously told me I was on track for a promotion but needed to "exercise more leadership." I suggested that since we were looking for a third engineer that I could take on a tech lead position. My manager said the team did not need a tech lead.

We were looking for a third team member at the time and when my manager suggested taking our part time engineer on full time. I respectfully objected considering their performance on the team thus far and their "uncollaborative" work style. The part time engineer had so far refused to collaborate on shared designs and instead dictated interfaces to me, demanding that I let him submit code without review and even had my intern reassigned to him without telling me. They made a team I had previously been very successful on poisonous.

When I brought up concerns about our new team member's behavior I was told that I simply "had to follow their orders" because they were the team's tech lead. The other engineer and I

were shocked. Neither of us had heard this before, and I remembered being recently told the team did not need a tech lead.

Following this conversation, my manager canceled our 1:1s for nearly two months. During my performance review I suddenly received a lower rating of “meets expectations” and was told that it was all my own fault. I was told that I was difficult to work with, that I had yelled at another teammate and that I had walked out of a meeting — none of which was true. I was shocked and defended myself by repeating my concerns with our new team member’s work style but was told that I was wrong to feel the way I did and that my manager had approved the new tech lead to take my intern because they expected me to leave the team. I filed a complaint with HR and was told there wasn’t enough evidence to substantiate my complaint.

When the project was canceled I was given a new manager and assigned a little technical writing to summarize my work on the project so far for a white paper. A couple of days later they expanded their request from “a few paragraphs” to two full papers, due by the end of the week. I worked evenings to get them done. When the end of the week came the deadline was extended and I was asked to write even more. At this point I was being micromanaged. My writing was being rewritten and incorporated into other documents. I raised this concern and was told to get back to work. I was uncomfortable moving forward and found it difficult to do creative work under duress. I communicated this thinking it was unfair to the team to pretend otherwise and insisted to return to my other duties.

Next, I found myself in a meeting with my manager, chaperoned by HR. I was told that I would be fired for insubordination and disrespectful behavior. Then they walked it back, giving me a final warning, and offered me the rest of the day off. When I showed hesitation the offer turned into a demand alongside with being escorted off the property and even refused access to my car which was parked on the property. A little while later she emailed me offering a small severance package if I agreed to quit within one day. When I escalated this further into HR and an investigation was opened it only took one meeting with two representatives to conclude that there was “no evidence” to support my claims. I was told that I had violated the code of conduct and that I was to be fired. I was put on involuntary leave and offered another severance package if I agreed to quit. I was about to accept the offer when another manager convinced me to join their team.

# **My 10+ years of experience and trajectory was sabotaged for reporting unethical behavior**

I reported unethical behavior of retaliation I witnessed, first through management, then through HR and finally through the ethics and compliance team. It was uncomfortable raising to my manager, agonizing to through human resources, but nothing more traumatizing than my experience with the ethics and compliance investigation that was carried out.

I have over 10 years experience in the tech industry before coming to Google and the months-long investigation that ethics and compliance subjected me to was a campaign of gaslighting and harassment in an attempt to discredit me and my claims. I was being defamed in the same industry I had already built my livelihood in and my future career prospects jeopardized. Even after my original claims of retaliation were substantiated by the investigation the underlying concerns of unethical behavior were not addressed. The person in who had been perpetuating the retaliation simply received additional “managerial coaching.”

After all of this, retaliation did not stop and now my reputation has been damaged both inside the company and throughout the industry at large. The whisper campaign and outright defaming has had long-term effects on my career and the ethics and compliance investigation only made matters worse. I am doing everything possible to rebuild my professional reputation, but it will take years.

## **Threatened to keep quiet**

When I came back from sick leave my manager did not want to work with me any longer and asked me to leave the team. He threatened that if I stayed any longer my ratings would drop. I went to the VP and several senior folks on the team and did not get any support. HR investigated the case and after talking to two arbitrary people who weren't connected with the case, closed it.

As part of the investigation they told me that the manager acted in “bad taste,” but due to “business needs” they believed he had made the right decision. Thinking I had no recourse I moved onto a new team. HR told me that because I found a new team there was nothing else for them to do. Following the “investigation” I was threatened that if I spoke to anyone about the incident I would be terminated. The manager is still at Google and has harassed or treated

several women on his team poorly. He was promoted multiple times and has senior leads's support.

## **“Warnings” are meant to scare you away**

I identify as a LatinX female and I experienced blatant racist and sexist things from my coworker. I reported it up to where my manager knew, my director knew, the coworker's manager knew and our HR representative knew. Nothing happened. I was warned that "things will get very serious if continued." I definitely felt the theme of "protect the man" as we so often hear about. No one protected me, the victim. I thought Google was different.

## **Fearful of physical retaliation**

I spoke out at the walkout on stage about being drugged at an offsite and HR investigating and not doing anything about it. During that story, I mentioned that after the HR incident, I decided to leave my team and my manager said to me, “tell me who the perpetrator is, and if he is less important to the team, I will try to fire him.”

After my speech at the walkout I got an email from employee relations about my comments on the manager. I asked explicitly that they do not investigate my former manager (now a director) because I was afraid of retaliation. They replied back saying they would investigate anyway. Several weeks later, I heard that they fired my old manager.

I was told by HR that the firing had nothing to do with me (it was due to other HR allegations), but due to my visible appearance at the walkout, I was afraid of a physical retaliation from the former manager and was afraid that he would harm me knowing it was my fault he was let go. HR did nothing to protect me. I was not harmed, but was mentally paranoid and fearful for my family for several weeks afterward.

## **The “No Retaliation Guarantee”**

My retaliation story is about a disappointing experience with a “no retaliation guarantee” that was promised to me by a Super Senior Leader (SSL) last year. The SSL came to our quarterly meeting with a call to action for more escalations, promising to personally punish anyone found to have committed retaliation as a result of an escalation.

So, since there was a no retaliation guarantee, I decided to escalate a tough issue I was having with my manager, M1. To this day, unfortunately I don't know how the escalation was processed, or whether the SSL read it. All I know is that the people and programs around me suddenly and noticeably chilled. Here is everything that happened:

First, I was transferred from my then manager M1, a group leader, to a Noogler, M2. After a couple months, M1 fired M2 and assigned me to M3, who (3 weeks later) assigned me to M4, who (4 weeks later) assigned me back to M3. Overall I had five manager changes in six months and no manager had time nor interest to set OKRs with me.

When it was time for perf, I ended up receiving a "Needs Improvement," with no concrete feedback from M3 or anyone else. The perf deadline came and went; the NI rating was autoreleased to me with no comments from my manager.

The rating had a significant impact on my personal and family obligations. I flew to M3's home state to meet in person and discuss my performance. During this conversation, M3 conceded that he had given me an NI specifically because M1, the manager I privately escalated about, had directed it.

I contacted HR to report retaliation. They conducted an investigation over the following 2 months, and summarily explained that they had found no evidence of retaliation. Rather, HR explained that, "Your communication style can limit the effectiveness of your escalations; it's an illustration of the broader feedback you received."

HR told me that the investigation consisted of a review of paperwork and one interview --- an interview with M3. Case closed.

I guess there really is no such thing as a "no retaliation guarantee."

## **Denied promo for pushing back**

I consider myself an activist. When I see the company making a bad decision I push back against it. I often try to call attention to issues around racial representation and equity, but when I'm often met with being called "strident" or "abrasive." When I was last denied a promotion I was sent "go/no-jerks" as the rationale for not making the cut.

## **I reported, I got moved**

I reported harassment I received from a coworker to HR who “fully substantiated” my claim. While I was tech lead of the team and he was a more junior engineer, they were kept on the project while I was moved off and to another project slowing down my career trajectory. Eventually the same person harassed another woman. The incident was reported and also substantiated by HR, but like me, the woman was simply moved to another less impactful project and her career trajectory similarly slowed down.

The person who harassed us still has their same job on their original team and we were punished.

## **Threatened during transfer**

I told my manager that I was looking for a new team two months in advance of my desired transfer date at the end of the quarter. They were initially very understanding and said that they were sad that I would be leaving, but that they were thankful I was forthcoming and told them in advance. Our relationship was not great, but after telling them I wanted to leave, they became much more of a micromanager. After I clicked the “request transfer” button, no more than 15 minutes later my manager pulled me into a room where they raised their voice at me, saying I couldn’t leave the project. They threatened that if I left they would pass negative feedback to my future manager.

## **“Needs improvement” for transferring**

My previous manager was marginalizing, discriminating and would yell, talking down to me and other team members. I was the only one who spoke up. When I brought this to the attention of our Director they told me that they would help me find a new role. After four months I left the team along with three other women. Even after I had left the team my previous managers were able to give me an “need improvement” in performance, which I’m now living with the impact of. I’m the breadwinner in my family of four so this has huge implications on our family’s budget. Watching the town hall just now was really triggering. I still don’t have a resolution for my situation. After a year, I finally got one of the other women to speak up and her testimony just opened up more questions from the investigation team. Still, nothing has been done. Our former manager is still managing the same team.

# **I was only protected when I went to EEOS**

While at a conference my tech lead sexually harassed me. After I reported the incident to HR and they conducted an investigation they decided to move me to a different project. I objected, but it was only after I mentioned that I might report the case to the Equal Employment Opportunity Staff that they decided to let me stay on my current project.

# **Punished for reporting sexual jokes**

While at a team dinner our manager started making sexual jokes. I was the only woman present and felt uncomfortable. I asked our HRBP if it was out of line and they then reported it to my skip level manager. Previous to this my manager and I would have regular conversations about my career growth but following this being reported to my manager those stopped. I had previously been told I was one of the strongest candidates to go up for L6, but I was also suddenly put on more exploratory projects that were much more difficult to show impact on. My work has never been discussed in the broader org and even while our director has asked for a review of my work my manager always found reasons to stop it.

# **Vocal and held to a higher standards**

I have always been very vocal about unfairness within my team and wider org — especially with regards to work assignments and promotion weighed against workplace politics. I've always suspected this has been held against me in calibration. I have been repeatedly told by my manager, director (as well as other managers on the team) that I should be less vocal. I have witnessed my director giving men preferential treatment who are the same level as me and other women on the team while holding us to a higher standard. When I finally spoke about about this I was told I was wrong. I have had really strong ratings and feedback for the past four cycles, but I have not been promoted. On top of this, when I was going through a serious health issue I was told that I need to be “less emotional.” No one asked me if I was okay. I was not.

## **Given impossible targets**

I moved to the US last year to join the cloud sales team which is well known to be a notorious boys' club. I am the only woman in my role and I've been given an impossible target to deliver a large revenue within a few months of joining (while others have gotten at least six months to build their pipeline). I pushed back and I found three of my other male peers had also told their manager to stop "meddling" and putting the revenue at risk, but in my case I was retaliated against.

I suffered from stress related health issues and I learned that this was true for my predecessor as well. When I brought this up to management, their attitude immediately changed. I was told I was not showing "googleyness" and despite my stellar peer reviews received a "needs improvement." I later found out that past woman on the team also received similar performance ratings. I brought this to HR's attention and was told I should practice more "vulnerability" and not to "trip male egos." There have been numerous complaints about my manager from women, but there has never been consequences for him and people continue to suffer under him.

## **Managed out for reporting calibration misconduct**

When I came back from parental leave my team had completely new leadership. Six months later when calibration came around, a couple of the new directors in my org led the conversations and promotions resolution. It was one of my worst experiences at Google. Not only did they force managers to lower calibration scored of L4/L5 people for no reason, they made terrible comments about people in all kinds of protected situations — including saying that a woman could not receive an "exceeds expectations" because she had recently been on leave and that someone should be rated downward for being "too much of an activist."

I reported these circumstances to HR immediately. Within six months I was managed out of the organization (a team I had worked on for years). When I was given a "needs improvement" on perf I was also given the feedback that I should make sure my team didn't report negative feedback about leadership in Googlegeist.



# Told I was “not the right type to succeed at Google”

When I joined the company my first manager told me I was “not the right type to succeed at Google.” I fought very hard to prove them wrong and regularly worked 10 hour days. As people regularly started leaving the team my skip-level manager scheduled a 1:1 with me. They recommended that I file a complaint against my manager to HR for sexual discrimination (along with two other teammates). We did and HR ended up finding “no fault” with our manager, but concluded that they “lacked the expertise” to act as manager and moved them into an IC role. After this my job turned to hell. I received a new manager who also formerly reported to my last manager. They acted like good buddies and frequently joked with each other (one such joke was adding “Make <team> great again” to their job description.) My new manager’s immediate feedback was that I should “stop being overly sensitive” and that I had communication problems that if I didn’t fix I would be fired.

I was greatly disillusioned with Google after joining the company, the blatant misogyny, vindictive managers and the gaslighting, everything I assumed I would be safe from, I have encountered my first year. In a way I am finally relieved to be part of Google, even if it is by sharing the same experience as the undercurrent.

# Helped recruit my friend into a horrible position

I once referred a good friend to join Google and they were brought on as a TVC within the sales team. Within two months they were known to be extremely successful within their org but following the end of the quarter, when the entire account wasn’t hitting quota, they started being scapegoated for the team’s missed goals. Despite meeting their own output metrics they began being overloaded with additional work and told to “not talk to anyone about what we’re doing.” In the end they left the company voluntarily, but only after it was implied that they would be put on a performance improvement plan if they stayed.

## **Moved to a new office to avoid abuse**

I once raised regular harassment and unprofessional treatment from my director to my manager and was told “that’s just how they are, I don’t know what to tell you.” I was told that I needed to leave the team if I wanted my situation to improve, that it was too hard to “prove” any of the dozens of incidents that occurred during the 1-2 years I was on the team. I ended up having to move and join a whole other office to get away from the abuse, which came with a significant pay cut and delay in my career growth and success.

## **Gaslit on cloud**

I have experienced the toxic culture within the Google Cloud Customer team for a few years and have faced backlash for pushing EDII and social justice concerns in the form of debased performance ratings, daily microaggressions and gaslighting. HR has been unhelpful in all instances, from never following up on cases to being the ones to gaslight me for my reports of discrimination.

## **I whistle blew a colleague**

I whistle blew a colleague who used the N-word in jokes. HR found nothing conclusive. I was on track to becoming our team’s tech lead, but now I can barely even get an invitation to lunch.

## **I didn’t feel safe and was told “the opposite was true...”**

I called out a senior member of my team for discrimination and using double standards for men when compared to the women on the team, for harassing me and trying to micromanage my projects — and I was led to believe I would lose my job if I didn’t do what this person asked of me. And I was gaslit about what is and isn’t an appropriate reason to take a sick day. I don’t feel safe working around this person, but after telling my manager I am told that the opposite is true. That I don’t make them feel safe and it’s because I called out their behavior.

I've had to take medical leave due to severe depression and anxiety. I worked for just under a month this perf cycle and received a low rating despite the manager knowing I was ill during the time I worked. I was told that my work is great but I work "too slowly." I was discriminated against for having a medical condition and I was retaliated against for calling out a more senior member of the team for misconduct.

## **I reported my abuser and found I wasn't the first one**

I reported a sexual harassment case for my previous lead and the case was substantiated with ER escalation. It turned out that this person was reported by multiple people in the past for bullying. The manager failed to take any action to support me or other victims and we had to loop in the director to change the team structure. The perpetrator figured out that it was me who reported them and because both myself and the other victims are all junior to the perpetrator we all feel constantly threatened and unsafe.

## **No one feels safe enough to speak up**

I was repeatedly harassed and discriminated against by my skip level manager for several years, starting from the first weeks on the team.

I did not go to HR with the reports because I feared retaliation. Even now that I am no longer on that team, I am still afraid of this manager's vengeful response, and therefore don't feel safe reporting him.

Other coworkers who had witnessed some of the instances reported it to HR, but although HR contacted me about it, they did not take it seriously enough and dropped the case.

I have evidence that I am not the only person on the team who feels this way. But no one feels safe enough to speak up.

## **Be a "good girl"**

I had a manager with clear favorites — he even openly called them his "proteges." After a year on the team, during perf, I gave my manager an average manager review. In an effort to find out

who wrote what about him, he read all his review feedback out loud in a team meeting and watched for his report's reactions. Later, I told him I was going to look for a new team and he immediately put me on PEP, blocking me for six months from moving teams and one year from receiving a pay rise. He said he did not want to fire me, but wanted me to start behaving like "a good girl" (I was 32 years old at the time). After three months of obeying his orders he got bored and left me alone. I never spoke about promotion once in the next five years at Google.

## **I ended up quitting**

My boss sexually harassed me. After bringing it up to my HRBP, and even with text messages from him on my Google work phone and witnesses to his inappropriate comments, I was told that it was just my "perception." After this I received a bad performance review that prevented me from transferring to a new team. My boss was promoted. I had to leave the company.

## **Punished for code review concerns**

During the week of calibration I expressed a concern about a code review by one of my teammates. After calibration my manager called me in for a meeting. They were livid. They didn't object to my concerns (and made a point of noting that). Rather, they were angry that I had raised such a concern in our code review tool where other people could see it. When I got my perf rating it was dramatically lower than the previous cycle and up until the meeting with my manager I had never heard concerns about my perf.

## **HR called it a "good result"**

I witnessed my manager bullying my teammates and stood up to them when they started to do the same to me. My manager was abusive and threatened to end my career. They told me I was an embarrassment and that people were laughing at me. I spoke to HR and shared the various examples of misconduct and explained that I was afraid of being retaliated against. I went through an investigation which resulted in partial substantiated misconduct. They gave him coaching and I remained on the team.

They subsequently belittled me, refused to acknowledge my work, reduced my perf grade because they "just didn't feel comfortable working with me." Again, I chose to talk to HR about retaliation and specifically requested that they didn't investigate, but they proceeded anyway.

They got away with it time and time again, but eventually wouldn't even speak or look at me. I had to take diazepam each day in order to come into work.

I left the team and they remain. People in the office know about them. They know what has been done, but no one does anything about it. My spouse quit their job and we moved our kids out of school to relocate because of this manager forcing me out of the team. My career, health and family suffered because of this person. HR were very happy when I found a new role outside of the country. They called it a "good result."

## **I did not feel safe being honest with him**

My first manager at Google frequently made inappropriate jokes, insulted team members to their faces as well as behind their backs, changed team priorities daily, played favorites and had different expectations of men and women. I did not feel safe enough to go to HR, or even to be honest about him on Googlegeist until I found out that multiple people had already made complaints. He had to go through some training and solicited 1:1 feedback from everyone on his team during perf, before feedback was finalized, so I did not feel safe being honest with him at that time. I eventually went to his manager, but nothing came of it.

They got promoted to being my skip-level manager and under a different direct manager my situation improved. My ratings got better and I got promoted. I also grew confident enough to push back on their more unreasonable demands, or provide more direct feedback in team meetings. Eventually I tried to complete a ladder transfer and went through a full transfer process, including interviews and was told by my HRBP that it was approved and was just being finalized.

Then, the toxic skip-level manager met with HRBP and decided that my new team had to interview me before the role and ladder transfer could go through. My new team found out, said they weren't consulted, and immediately wrote a statement of support so I wouldn't have to go through more interviews. Still, my ex-manager managed to manipulate HR to put up roadblocks and add stress to my transfer.

I don't know whether it was because he thought I must have gone to HR in the past, or if he knew I had gone to HR and his manager when things didn't improve, or because he was angry when I started speaking up or because I was trying to leave his team. At any rate, going to HR did nothing and things only improved because I was able to switch teams.

# Left questioning my self-worth

Shortly after transferring into a new role with a new manager there were some disagreements in working styles and I did not feel supported. After sharing my feelings with others, I felt that I was being retaliated against. I was micromanaged. Every 1:1 was nitpicking what I did wrong and I internalized it. Meetings happened without me being included.

My manager shared a timeline document of what happened between us with HR and my skip level without my edit access nor meeting with me first. There were multiple events that were left out of the document and it was very one-sided. Shortly afterwards I was put on an improvement plan, which I disagreed that was needed to begin with (my previous perfs under different managers were consistent CME and EEs). But both HR and my skip level manager insisted that this was at my manager's discretion.

I was very anxious for two weeks before the plan was delivered to me. I was encouraged to take leave or take severance when I reached out to HR and felt very helpless. This event still haunts me today as I suffered from it mentally, emotionally and financially. I am speaking with a therapist today to sort through self-worth and doubt that was sparked through these events. I wish HR was more helpful and Google places less power in the hands of one manager.

# I will think twice before speaking up next time

As I was leaving a team that I felt had become too "unhealthy", and upon the specific guidance of my manager, I provided emails to HR in the context of an internal investigation involving several VPs and directors. I was afraid of retaliation, and specifically asked for confidentiality treatment. I felt though that sharing the truth (email threads in that instance) was the right thing to do for Google.

I did not hear back on the outcome, but several of the individuals involved left Google shortly after.

I learned recently that my involvement had most probably been leaked, resulting in disparaging rumors circulated against me to this day. This is psychologically difficult: it feels unfair and there isn't much I feel I can do about it.

While I am proud of having participated in the internal investigation, given the consequences, I will think twice before speaking up next time I see something I feel is inappropriate. That's what retaliation (or merely the fear of retaliation) does to you.

It may be worth noting that I identify as part of the powerful majority as far as gender and race are concerned.

## **Acqui-hired and should be content just being here**

My team all came to Google after being "acqui-hired." For four months we were kept busy with small bugs (like typo fixes, slight color changes in UI, etc...) while the team did not have any projects, charter or strategy and our managers frequently filibustered meetings with moonshot ideas.

Four of us spoke to our director about our lack of projects and the stress it was creating and were responded with verbal abuse, "You didn't interview when coming to Google, you should be content just being here," or "Go talk to a therapist." We folded and saved face.

Three months later, during our first perf three out of four of us get NIs and PIPs. These ratings were surprises for all of us as each of us had our manager consistently tell us our work was going well during our 1:1s. The PIP was 30 days and with no clear goals. The senior manager informed me that I should "not worry as jobs are plenty in the Bay Area," and was being "a drama queen for stressing on over the PIP."

Six out of seven of the people on the team transferred within seven months after joining Google. I was immensely stressed during this entire period, which was exacerbated by the HRBP telling me to simply "deal with it" w.r.t diagnosed PTSD.

Having said all that, the HR supported a transfer immediately, suggested an option of short term disability leave if I wanted a break. This was enough space to start recovering from the harassment of bad managers. Our senior manager was promoted in the next cycle.

## **Assigned nothing for advocacy**

I was tech lead of a small team under a manager of about 20 people. I witnessed first hand (and was told second-hand) of several situations where women were being belittled, insulted and

ignored. As the person with the second-longest tenure on the team, I suggested in a few 1:1s that my manager confront some of these issues.

Because of my advocacy I was removed from my tech lead position and moved to another team along with the only woman left under my then-manager. The new team had no projects or near-term plan for future work. After waiting three months with no projects or team charter, any time a side-project or prototype of ours showed promise it was given to one of the other teams to work on without crediting us.

## **Forced off of my team for being sexually harassed**

When I was sexually harassed on my former team by my TL I quickly reported it to my manager. I was told I was “overreacting” and that I should just “get over it.” This led me to report the incident to HR, which immediately opened an investigation. Regardless of this investigation, both my TL and my manager were still in charge of handling my performance review.

HR did nothing to remedy the situation, but instead put pressure on me to transfer teams. While I was punished and pushed out of my old position, my former TL and manager still have healthy careers on the team.

## **Promo blocked over manager feud**

Last perf cycle, my director admitted he removed my name from the promo list. It is publicly known on our team that my director and manager don't get along. Thinking that this was retaliation against me and my manager I confronted my director and simply got a sigh and a "that's the way it is."

## **Scolded for go/saysomething**

An uncomfortable incident occurred between my manager and I so I reported it to go/saysomething. I explicitly asked that the details were not shared and escalated because they were too difficult to anonymize and I didn't trust my manager to treat me fairly afterward. Sure enough, one week later I was approached by my manager and scolded for “making them look



terrible their boss." If I can't stay anonymous I can't stay safe. This person is in control of my performance review, and my career at the company.

## **He used perf to keep us quiet**

I had to leave my former team after being harassed by a white, male manager along with the rest of his diverse, multicultural, multi-gender team of reports. He held Perf over everyone's heads to keep us quiet about his behavior. My Perf suffered under his mismanagement. People Ops and his manager were completely inactive, and upon reporting him were absolutely unhelpful, telling me to "talk things out". Nobody else intervened. I felt unimportant, unheard and discriminated.

I felt reporting him only put me in the spotlight as a troublemaker, a complainer. My step manager stopped talking to me unless strictly necessary. Luckily, I wasn't the only one that wouldn't put up with this and more people stepped forward.

My only option to stop hating coming to work was to leave that team. The system is NOT working for new Googlers and people in the lowest ranks. Aggressors get second chances, managers are not held responsible, victims get their time and effort wasted, their pain and anger dismissed. There is no apology, no accountability. No free food can pay for that.

## **Ethics & Compliance aren't always so ethical**

When I reported something unethical (possibly illegal) happening at Google, Employee Relations fudged data to protect Google.

Eventually, Ethics & Compliance sent my HRBP over who ended up delivering a veiled threat that if I continue pursuing this my immigration status would be at risk. Fortunately, I was no longer dependent on Google for my immigration status but the case highlights how E&C and HR are leveraging personal vulnerabilities of Googlers to quash concerns, protect abusers and retaliate against those who speak out.

## **My retaliators were punished with “coaching”**

I reported my tech lead to my manager for sexual harassment, but my manager thought I was “overreacting.” I then reported my manager, as I could no longer feel comfortable working with this colleague every day while no action was being taken. The tech lead provided unsolicited feedback in my perf that took four months for the perf team to remove. The manager boxed me out and denied my promotion nomination by my peers. Eventually HR found there was retaliation but simply offered “coaching” to the tech lead and manager. I was asked to accept this. I refused. No additional actions were taken. They both still work at Google.

## **New leadership forced me out for speaking out**

I co-founded a diversity and inclusion group within my organization and was often the lone voice bringing up issues of equity, diversity or inclusion over email, in all hands and with leadership. When I continued this after new leadership was put in place my consistent exceeds expectations ratings went down to CME. I was given 90 days to find a new role within Google.

## **HR made us regret saying anything**

I was working on a team with a terrible “boys club” culture. One day the women came in, including myself, but the boys had all left to go do a “male” sports activity. We were shocked to be excluded and uninformed before realizing they were absent. We wrote a letter to HR and went to see HR later that same day. Nothing happened.

The next day, the manager called the women into his office one by one. He was furious. Every one of them came out crying, regretted writing the letter, and said they would never interact with HR again, and that we should never have said anything. He retained his job, was promoted while we all left the team.

# **Retaliated against for defending a mother who reports to me. HR dismissed it as “poor behavior.”**

When my manager started repeatedly saying inappropriate things about a mother who reported to me (e.g. she’s probably trying to get pregnant again and is super emotional and hard to work with then pregnant) I reported the behavior to HR.

HR shared my concerns directly with my manager, who started retaliating me by immediately interviewing people to replace me. When I reported the retaliation and asked for an investigation to occur, HR acknowledged my manager’s “poor behavior” but said an investigation wasn’t necessary because “poor behavior” didn’t constitute retaliation.

# **Same performance. Same tenure. No promotion.**

My first two years at Google I was not promoted due to bias. While my peer was promoted with the same ratings and same tenure, I was not. When I asked my manager about this I was told that I was being an “emotional woman.” After escalated to HR, despite being responded to with a “not too positive” attitude, I received the promotion.

After my promotion I was assigned to a new manager. From then on I have consistently received lower ratings and lower salary. I am currently in the same situation as before where my male colleague got promoted last cycle and I haven’t despite us being at the same rating. It’s impossible to prove retaliation and my colleagues just keep telling me to “stay quiet and do your job. Speaking out will just make things worse.” How is this happening at Google?

# **Leadership position removed and push out of my team for reporting harassment**

I once reported frequent verbal harassment on my team to my manager who took no action. When I decided to escalate this to HR my manager then removed me from my leadership position and put me 100% on a project I had repeatedly asked to be removed from. My peers that were responsible for the toxic behavior were moved onto the project they asked for. I had to leave the team.

# **Forced to leave my team and my next promotion sabotaged for disagreeing with my manager**

After some time as a high performer on my team (high impact, positive peer reviews) once I disagreed with my manager's suggestion for a new direction for my team's work (I wasn't the only one who believed it would be a distraction from our core goals) I was threatened with a negative rating if I didn't leave the team within the next month.

I discussed the situation with my manager's manager, who was very troubled by the account I gave of the conversation, and advised me to get HR involved immediately. An HRBP was then in the room for the next few conversations with my manager. During these conversations my manager admitted to deliberately withholding feedback, and wasn't able to point to any specific thing I was doing but essentially admitted that he didn't feel comfortable around me. He also mentioned some very vague things like "one person said they didn't like your emails", when I questioned him about this further he didn't have anything to add, but considered this all justification for why my rating should suffer. He admitted that my performance was not any different than it had been previous cycles where I had received good calibration scores.

I found a new team quickly, and my new manager was very supportive me going up for promo, given my impact and peer support from my previous team. I asked the HRBP who had been present in the meetings to confirm my account of the conversation (I had taken detailed notes immediately afterwards). The HRBP didn't respond to my request at first, and then told me were only there for "emotional support" and would not confirm (or deny) any account of what took place.

I found out after the process that my promotion was rejected because the HRBP had written a long letter assassinating my character, full of accusations against me that I couldn't see, and thus couldn't defend myself against. However from what I did hear this account was not at all accurate. At most the examples mentioned (ex: forgetting to add someone to a meeting) were one-off issues that had taken place over a year ago, and had not happened again.

Ultimately this experience taught me to avoid any interaction with HR at all costs, as they will not only protect leadership over the employees, but they will not hesitate to punish the employees to try to correct for having received unfair treatment.

## **Being managed out for “unsanctioned dissent”**

I participated in the walkout and I speak up for LGBTQ+ issues. I once wrote an email to our SVP and YT about our child-comment-apocalypse, expressing concerns that our comms emails focused on sales and didn't expand scope (at the time). I've submitted to [yes@google](mailto:yes@google) and not seen my submission presented in our newsletter. I am the person responsible for putting up Dragonfly protest poster in the NYC offices.

Eventually, I was spoken to regarding policies for posting flyers (that it requires an LDAP and a take down date) and my director told me that there was “an appropriate way to register dissent” and called me a “negative detriment to my team.” In the perf cycle immediately following the events above I received a “needs improvement.”

I am told that I am not “inclusive” enough and don't “collaborate,” but I've worked with the culture committee, reached across orgs to build umbrella groups and advocated for team events and helped get budget for entertainment. I've reached out directly to team members and co-workers for direct, critical feedback and none can back up the idea that I'm overly negative or exhibit non-inclusive behavior. I'm constantly being “managed out” and I don't know what to do.