HEALTH WEALTH CAREER

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK



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INTRODUCTION

360-degree feedback picked up pace in 1950s at Esso Research and Engineering Company. And by the end of 1990s, human resources, talent experts and organizational development professionals started understanding and implementing it on small and large scale. Furthermore, the advent of the internet and online mode of assessments through survey-based feedbacks gained popularity.

> Studies found that job satisfaction and motivation among employees experienced a significant growth when they received timely, fair and accurate information related to their performance.

This is why organizations slowly shifted from traditional superior-subordinate evaluation system to a more comprehensive approach of providing feedback, characterized by 360-degree feedback system methodology. Another reason which created a strong market for the tool is outsourcing of human resources functions. Since more and more employers are using 360 performance appraisal methods for development and continuous improvement, the adoption of 360 assessment tool is on the surge.

Intrigued to know more about **360 Degree Feedback?**

Well, you have come to the right place.



1.
WHAT IS 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK?

360 assessment is also known as multi-rarer feedback or even performance appraisal. It helps in giving an overall picture of employee performance, his or her behavior expected at the workplace. Once the opinions have been compiled and analyzed, the tool also helps in tracing how efficient and productive a certain employee is. Analogous to the multiple points on a compass, 360 feedback provides each employee the opportunity to receive performance feedback. 360 performance appraisal proves to be one of the most credible forms of employee assessment. When conducted at regular intervals, it proves to be a boon for developmental activities for employees and subsequently goes miles in helping organizations fulfil their vision.

> The 360 assessment process helps leaders increase awareness of their leadership strengths and development opportunities and forms the foundation for their leadership development plans. When the results of a function or team are consolidated, it provides invaluable input about organizational opportunities to build leadership capability, enhance employee engagement and improve business results.

CORE CONSULTING INC. PRESIDENT
Joan Hill

BENEFITS OF USING 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK



Improves credibility of performance appraisal



Strengthens personal development resolve



Persuades individuals to change through unison in opinions



Motivates employees who undervalue themselves



Improves work culture

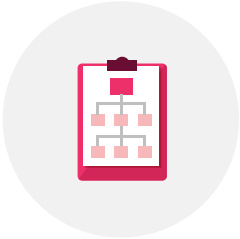
2.
WHY IS THE FEEDBACK CONDUCTED?

The research on 45 users undertaken by Ashridge Management Research Group (Handy et al, 1996) revealed why organizations use 360 degree feedback:



71%

used it solely to support learning and development



23%

used it to support a number of HR processes such as appraisal, resourcing and succession planning



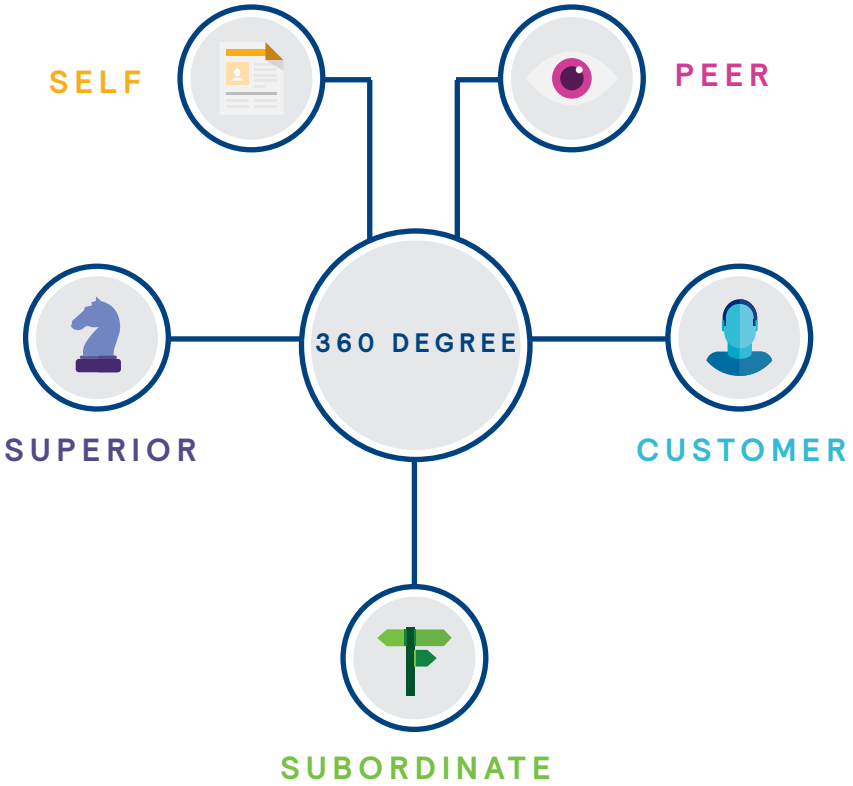
6%

used it to support pay decisions

As the above research indicates, organizations have known to use 360 feedback for a number of reasons ranging from training needs identification to annual performance appraisals. After the survey has been filled out, the generated report helps in mapping personal development plans for feedback seekers. Individual analysis aids employers in making long-term decisions related to promotion and succession planning, in which case the assessments are often termed as 360-degree review.

The result compels organizations to take necessary steps for employee training and development. Organizations have also been known to use the feedback for succession planning to train bright minds to take up leadership positions in near future. It's a useful tool for identifying and training those younger employees who have the skills and aptitude to step into positions that will one day be vacated.

3.
WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS?



Generally, 360 degree feedback is introduced to the employees via administration consisting of the human resources. The tool is used for employees at middle and senior-level majorly. It includes direct feedback from an employee's subordinates, peers and supervisor as well as a self-evaluation. The number of feedback providers ranges anywhere between 5 and 10, keeping the anonymity of the feedback intact. In some cases, the feedback can also be from external sources like suppliers or clients. Others opinion is as vital as self-evaluation, for it leaves individuals to reflect on the gap that lies between what they think of their work performance as opposed to how others rate them. It gives them a visual of their strong and weak areas.

Superior's appraisal forms part of the traditional system, subordinate's rating gives an overall view of the employee's communication, motivational skills along with his delegating abilities. Last but not the least, peer's review can help in identifying an individual's team work, collaboration and sensitivity towards colleagues.



4.
WHEN SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS CONDUCT FEEDBACK?

- INCREASE IN ATTRITION RATE
- DROP IN EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION
- BAD COMPANY REVIEWS
- ANNUAL/ HALF-YEARLY APPRAISAL

When to conduct 360 degree feedback totally depends on your organizational needs. A number of factors contribute to adoption of a reliable 360 assessment tool. Whenever appraisal time nears, instead of resorting to verbal feedbacks, it is always better to get valid opinions and ratings to offer competitive compensation to hardworking employees. Also, it is a good time to implement performance appraisal within the organization if you experience a sudden increase in attrition rate. It may be a sign that the employee satisfaction rate is continually dropping. Rolling out 360 performance appraisal system will help in determining the cause behind low employee satisfaction and bad company reviews. If you wish to standardize the whole process, you can either conduct performance appraisal annually or half yearly. It is required to conduct the feedback after a year to keep a track on the development of employees based on the report.



5.
SELECTING THE RIGHT 360 DEGREE TOOL FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Selecting a performance management system that suits your organization is not an easy task. You need a solution that both integrates seamlessly with your workflow and efficiently manage your performance management process.



Must Have Features of a Good 360-Degree Feedback Tool



Affordable & Easy Sign Up

E-Mail Failure Notification





Autosave Responses

Customizable E-Mail Templates





Tailored Personal Development

Performance Tracking





Comment Section

24X7 Support



AFFORDABLE & EASY SIGN UP

An efficient and reliable 360 assessment does not burn a hole in your pocket. It becomes a cost-effective means, considering the number of employees seeking and giving feedback. A pocket friendly tool gives you the option to pay online through netbanking, e-wallets, credit or debit cards, which further simplifies the process. Once the online payment is done, you can begin using the tool right away.

E-MAIL FAILURE NOTIFICATION

If your employees don't receive e-mails, the performance feedback survey can never get completed on time. This is where a good performance management tool comes as a blessing in disguise. It automatically informs the HRs if there is any failed deliver or bounce e-mails, post which you can re-send the e-mail and make sure you receive the feedback on time.

AUTO-SAVE REPONSES

Perhaps, auto-save responses immerge as one of the most striking features of a 360 degree appraisal. They turn out to be a boon for both HRs and feedback providers when it comes to on-time delivery. The feature specially becomes important for managers, HODs and other senior job roles that have strict timelines to meet their KRAs. If the responses are auto-saved, feedback providers can fill surveys as per their convenience. Even if their system crashes or they have other tasks to attend to, feedback providers can fill the survey in multiple sittings and not worry about starting from scratch.





CUSTOMIZABLE E-MAIL TEMPLATES

HRs waste a considerable portion of their time drafting and scheduling e-mails. This piles upon their routine work. However, when they get e-mail templates that can easily be customized as per individuals, it makes their work simpler and smoother along with regular KRAs. No extra time needs to be delegated to writing and scheduling e-mails for feedback. The functionality to set-up auto reminders helps keeping a track on the progress.

TAILORED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Once the responses have been analyzed and compiled, the performance management tool rolls out extensive reports which have been tailored as per individuals. The reports highlight qualities and areas of improvement, competency wise ratings, skill gaps and accordingly prepares a personal development or group development plan. The plan helps in making employees self-aware and further work on the skills they lack.

PERFORMANCE TRACKING

If you are going to select a performance appraisal software, you would also need to keep a track on the progress of the participants after the report is out to check the impact of implementation of a new system. A goal evaluation system aids in keeping a check on the after effects of 360 degree survey. The system gives a holistic view of where an individual is in his development journey- whether he is improving, stagnant or getting worse. The feedback is then combined in a report to provide accountability.

COMMENT SECTION

While considering a 360 degree assessment to buy, look for one that allows you to write comments. Many tools available in the market are survey based, which means participants are only expected to rate the employees. This is done to keep the process concise. But, when a tool lets you make additional comments which cannot be summarized in form of rating, they serve as a source in making more informed analysis and validation against the numerical data.

24X7 SUPPORT

At times candidates may need guidance when they get stuck and you may not always be available to help them through. In such circumstances, a 24x7 support comes to the rescue. A comprehensive feedback tool is hardly one call or e-mail away. Employees can send e-mails or call on toll free numbers whenever they need assistance. Subject matter experts can help employees sail through such times.





No matter how good you think you are as a leader, my goodness, the people around you will have all kinds of ideas for how you can get better. So, for me, the most fundamental thing about leadership is to have the humility to continue to get feedback and to try to get better – because your job is to try to help everybody else get better.

Jim Yong Kim
World Bank President

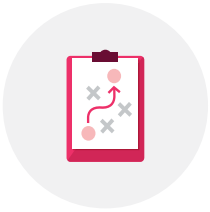
IMPLEMENTING 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK IN YOUR ORGANIZATION



DEFINE THE OBJECTIVE



DECIDE THE PARTICIPANTS



OUTLINE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



PREPARE RELEVANT QUESTIONNAIRE



PILOT THE SURVEY



PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS

Often, when organizations do not reap the proposed benefits of a feedback tool, they either shun it away entirely or do not look out for better options. Not always, the tool efficiency needs to be blamed. Sometimes, the issue in yielding quality results rests on the way HRs implement the feedback, process of performance appraisal.

So, let's quickly take you through few easy steps to successfully conduct a 360 degree feedback in your organization.

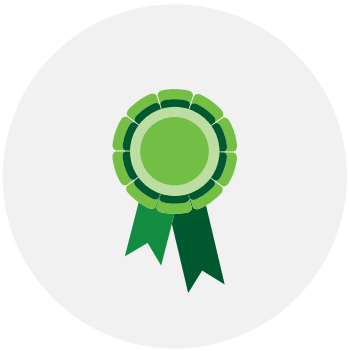
DEFINE THE OBJECTIVE

Having a vision is perhaps the first and most important step for conducting 360 degree assessment. Before setting out on the voyage to adopt a performance appraisal method, setting a clear objective is of essence. As one organization is different from the other, so is the difference in the work culture, ethics and values. Hence, it becomes imperative to define the objective of conducting the feedback survey. Having an aim goes a long way in determining how successful your feedback tool turns out to be. 360 feedback can be rolled out for determining performance appraisal, skill gap and hi-potential identification or succession planning. Accordingly, the workflow of participants is charted out.



DECIDE THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants, also known as feedback providers or raters should be based on the feedback seeker's job responsibilities and the frequency of his or her communication with the raters. This will help in getting relevant and accurate feedback. Feedback providers can be classified into various groups including subordinates, peers, managers or customers. Additionally, the seeker's feedback is also taken into consideration to find any disconnect between what he thinks of his work and others opinion. When compiled and analyzed, the feedback from all these groups prove beneficial for both the company and individual.





OUTLINE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Certain competencies, be it behavioral or job-role based are integral to every firm. They vary with individuals, job type, industry or other factors. To understand the company dynamics through in-person interactions with HRs or functional heads, expert psychometricians create a competency framework prevalent in the industry. Once the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) finalize a set of competencies to map employees on, they identify behavioral indicators associated with those competencies. The indicators reflect how employees handle stress, manage high priority tasks, deal with ambiguous situations and other factors that affect their performance and overall productivity.



PREPARE RELEVANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Preparing survey questions is vital in assessing employee performance or identifying training needs on individual or group-level. Since experts have a keen eye for detail, they come up with questions to analyze employee performance and behavior. In order to meet this goal, SMEs carefully design a questionnaire which helps in accurately evaluating feedback seekers. The right set of questions go a long way in creating self-awareness which in-turn makes employees work on their weak areas. Without expert assistance, the feedback mechanism would render inaccurate results. Hence, skilled psychometricians should be consulted to create questions as per relevant competencies.





PILOT THE SURVEY

After sensitizing the employees, make the survey live for a particular group or department including human resources. Start filling out the survey for a teammate and rate him or as based on the questions. It would be an occasion to identify any kind of repetitions, confusing questions or missing items. Try the same activity on a particular department. After they are done filling out the sample survey, ask them for specific comments, any plus or minus points associated with the feedback. This practice will help in figuring out any potential problems which can be nipped in the bud. Secondly, pilot participants can also act as an agent in propagating the new feedback mechanism within the organization.



PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS

An effective 360 assessment culminates with the final report. Which is why it is of utmost importance that the results of 360 degree feedback survey are presented in a coherent and concise manner. Employees should easily be able to understand where their strength and weaknesses lie. This will urge your workforce to focus their development goals in order to get maximum output. 360 reports should explain the purpose and guide individuals to look back and use the information for their development journey. While individual reports are good for self-awareness, group-level analysis helps in training needs identification, group insights being much more actionable.







To become more effective and fulfilled at work, people need a keen understanding of their impact on others and the extent to which they're achieving their goals in their working relationships. Direct feedback is the most efficient way for them to gather this information and learn from it.

Ed Batista
Executive Coach

KEY CHALLENGES



PROCRASTINATION



LACK OF TRANSPARENCY



RELIABILITY



RESISTANCE TO FEEDBACK



HESITATION



IGNORING THE NEGATIVES

HOW TALENT EXPERTS OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES

The full potential of 360 assessments can be unveiled only once you can fix the loopholes that lie in the system.

But that cannot be done within silos. Right?

To broaden your spectrum and get a better understanding of real-life problems existing within the product, we interviewed HR managers, organization development executives, coaches, talent and industry leaders who have been using 360 assessments to further their goals. The following segment is a product of experience which subject matter experts have gained over time.



Burr Consulting HR Consultant Matthew W. Burr considers procrastination as the foremost challenge which every human resource executive comes across.

1. PROCRASTINATION

The first challenge is holdingfolks accountable to fill out the 360 degree feedback form and ensure there is solid feedback. People will put it off until the last minute and pencil whip a 3 out of 5 to ensure no ones feelings are hurt.

Solution:

Remind supervisors and employees the value of feedback and the importance of being honest on the forms. We train folks on how to fill these forms out and have crucial conversations. Well-rounded feedback and a wide range for area's to focus when you provide feedback. It needs to be easy to use and easy to calculate.

The next in line comes transparency and resistance to feedback which according to Panoramic Wisdom Organizational Development Consultant Tracy Mauro considers a roadblock during the execution phase of 360 degree feedback.

2. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

Regardless of whether the respondent is kept hidden, most people worry about the feedback recipient figuring out who they are, especially when providing constructive feedback. I see this concern most often with direct reports in a smaller team. The question of true anonymity can cause a respondent to be less than candid about areas for improvement.

Solution:

To counter this concern, I always have a standard introduction that I give to all respondents and it includes to what extent I can protect their anonymity. I am honest in telling them that I can't realistically keep their comments confidential (although I will try), and I explain in which cases the receiver might be able to attribute a comment to a specific person. I also give people the option to opt-out if she/he really doesn't feel comfortable providing feedback.

3. RESISTANCE TO FEEDBACK

There will usually be at least one person who doesn't take constructive feedback as the gift it is intended to be. These are the people who lack self-reflection and see any constructive feedback as a personal attack. There isn't much you can do to convince this person to hear the feedback and consider it.

Solution:

I often ask the person to take a few days to think about what was said, especially if the feedback is quite negative or surprising. Sometimes, people have an immediate reaction and need some time to process the information. Hopefully, emotions settle down and the person is able to have a follow-up conversation to look at the feedback rationally and come up with a plan to address it. Another tactic I make a practice of is never debriefing an assessment on a Friday. No matter what was said, people tend to obsess over it all weekend, and not enjoy their time off.

Once the feedback is conducted, the reliability and validity of the results become another issue. Maple Holistics HR Manager Nate Masterson Masterson says,

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4. RELIABILITY

Another challenge to completing 360 assessments is gauging the truthfulness and objectivity of other staff. Some employees might want to bump up their friends' standings and make them look extra good. Yet others might have a vendetta against an employee and want their reviews to reflect negatively on them.

Solution:

Apps and other 360 Degree Feedback tools which have questionnaire templates are ideal. They also should obviously allow for many people to rate a specific employee, as well as provide a comprehensive analysis afterward."

In a candid conversation Walmart Facilitation Manager, Lucy Duncan revealed two challenges that she often faces while implementing 360 degree feedback tool

5. HESITATION

Considering the individuals providing feedback, some may not feel comfortable evaluating others.

Solution:

As a leader we should consider the *why* behind this hesitancy: is it a fear of retaliation? Apathy? Feeling as though there will be no change in behavior? Reflecting on these factors, we can address concerns upfront.

6. SKIPPING THE NEGATIVES

Finally, the results of a 360 need to be delivered with care. We've all received assessment results and manically scrolled or flipped through pages to get to "the good stuff." In the process of fast forwarding to the things we need to address, we bypass the positive remarks. We bypass the positive comments that people have taken the time to say about us to laser focus in on one odd, flippant remark saying we occasionally seem impatient.

Solution:

This is when a certified consultant of the assessment or a coach would be the best individual to walk the leader through their results. An objective party can help the leader receiving feedback recognize the patterns that exist: *patterns* that need to be addressed and can make a positive impact."

CONCLUSION

To keep up with the rapidly evolving skill ecosystem, organizations need to be well versed with the basics of 360 degree feedback. This is the first rung of the ladder to creating a better work culture. Everyone needs a culture which makes employees more efficient and skilled, which ultimately leads to enhanced productivity as mentioned earlier. It's high time that we sit back, analyze and carefully chose a feedback mechanism which aids in performance appraisal, skill gap identification or adheres to any additional organizational goals which may arise in future. Since employees also aim for personal growth side-by-side professional growth, it becomes crucial to successfully adopt and implement 360 degree feedback to create a culturally cohesive workforce.



THINK TANK

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ABOUT US

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