The Ultimate Guide To 360 Degree Feedback

How to set up and run a successful programme, interpret the results, and give feedback in the right way.

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Contents

Introduction **3**

What is 360 Degree Feedback? **4**
- How does it work? 4
- As a performance management tool 6
- As a development tool 7
- As a vehicle for gathering training needs 8

Who Should You Ask To Provide Feedback? **9**

The Pros & Cons Of 360 Degree Feedback **11**
- Organisation & Individual 11

Implementing 360 Degree Feedback **13**
- Clear aims and objectives 13
- Communication is key 14
- Anonymous or attribution 14
- Which questions? 16
- Managing the programme 17
- Send, monitor, nudge 20
- Sharing the results & providing feedback 21
- Action planning 21

360 Software **24**
- System Tools 24

Interpreting The Results **26**
- Distributing the results 26
- Pitfalls to avoid 27
- Unwrapping the report 28
    - Spider graphs 28
    - Category results 30
    - Deep dive 31
    - Free text responses 33

Conducting A 360 Coaching Session **34**
- Self-assessment preparation 34
- Coach preparation 35
- Focus and objectives 36
- Structuring the session 37
- Feedback techniques 39
- Action planning 40

Preparation Templates **42**
- Employee 42
- Coach 42

Introduction

Hello!

They say that feedback is the breakfast of champions. It's an old one but a good one. But simply put, without feedback we can't improve.

360 degree feedback as an excellent vehicle for gathering the views and opinions from others if it's done correctly. However, there are a lot of pitfalls and rabbit holes that you can go down when implementing a 360 degree campaign. Plan and run a programme in the wrong way and you can do more harm than good.

There are so many stages that you need to get right. From the system that you will use through to the statements or questions you'll ask. From the quality of the reporting through to how the results are interpreted and fed back to each person.

Every stage of a 360 needs to be well thought through. So, I thought I would create this whitepaper to help you avoid the common mistakes that most people make.

Most of you will know me as the CEO of **The MTD Training Group**. I'm also the founder of **FEEDO**, which enables you to set up and run 360 degree campaigns in less than 5 minutes flat. It's also got over 600 ready-made questionnaires that you can edit and use.

That's a shameless plug if ever you heard one! But please check **FEEDO** out if you're looking for a system to use for your campaigns.

No matter where you are on your 360 journey, I hope you'll take a lot out of this whitepaper.

All the best

Sean

Sean McPheat
CEO - MTD Training

What is 360 Degree Feedback?

How does it work?

The COVID pandemic changed every company's assessment of what was important in the workplace and how people should be seen as more than just an 'asset'.

Leadership models like 'Leading through humanity', 'Agile Leadership' and 'Inclusive Leadership' have highlighted how important the viewpoints of our people are in ensuring their mental well-being and developing the growth mindset.

The 2020s has developed into a decade of 'people-first' and management has recognised the need to measure the effectiveness of their style in developing their team members by giving and receiving feedback in a hybrid as well as face-to-face environment.

An often-used methodology to assess behaviours, competencies and performance levels has been the 360-degree feedback methodology, and our discussions here will cover many aspects of this practice, while delving deeply into how you can make it work in your own type of business.

So, what exactly is it?

In simple terms, it's an activity that gathers feedback on an individual from several sources who know the individual well. These people can include other team members, managers, peers, suppliers, and customers who use the individual's services.

Generally, there are three main areas in which 360-degree feedback comes into its own:

- As a performance management tool
- As a developmental tool
- As a vehicle for gathering training needs

Most appraisals are normally narrowly focused on specific aspects of a person's performance, whereas a 360-feedback can cover a more varied area of someone's abilities and working relationships with others. It can give further information, generally not available when considering a performance review.

The person being given the feedback will probably complete a self-assessment or questionnaire, giving an insight into themselves about how they view their strengths and development areas. This same assessment is then completed by several other people, so they get a fully rounded view (hence 360-degrees) from others who have access to the individual and maybe don't often have the chance to give feedback on the areas under discussion.

There is normally a set of competency statements the person needs to rate themselves against, alongside some 'freeform' questions that allow the responder to make further generic comments that round out their original ratings.

Questions like, 'How does the person demonstrate quality leadership skills?' or 'What specific sales strengths do you believe the person brings to the company and their clients?' help the individual get a fuller picture that backs up the ratings scored by the responders.

Gathering feedback like this can help with appraisals, training needs and performance management.

As a Performance Management Tool

How does a 360-feedback mechanism assist in developing people's performance?

Here are some ideas:

- It creates a safe space for team members to assess their manager
- The team member can give a fair and honest evaluation of their manager, peers, and other colleagues
- The manager gets to hear the opinions of their team members, when this isn't always possible on a day-to-day basis
- This feedback fills a gap in the performance review process by adding value to the whole concept of review and progression within a career or job role
- People's performance measurement is more rounded out, focusing on areas outside the main job role and allowing team members to see what they need to concentrate on to allow for an improved performance
- It eliminates any 'confirmation biases that just one person may have of another, as this 'crowdsourcing' methodology evens out the feedback to reveal a more coherent and generic viewpoint

Performance can be measured against initial goals set at appraisal, comparison against KPIs, and the analysis of results against planned performance levels.

The 360-degree feedback can enhance a person's understanding of what is seen as a fully developed behavioural style, by highlighting areas that others see as important when assessing someone's overall performance. After all, what use is it if a leader shows he or she can create a profitable cost centre, but is losing staff through poor delegation, bad communication skills, or a lack of emotional intelligence?

The 360 method may highlight areas of performance that are not visible through other means.

As a Development Tool

Feedback can also be perceived as an opportunity to help the person to grow and learn from the experiences they go through and the development prospects that open for them.

How can a 360 report help an individual to develop their skills?

Here are a few tips:

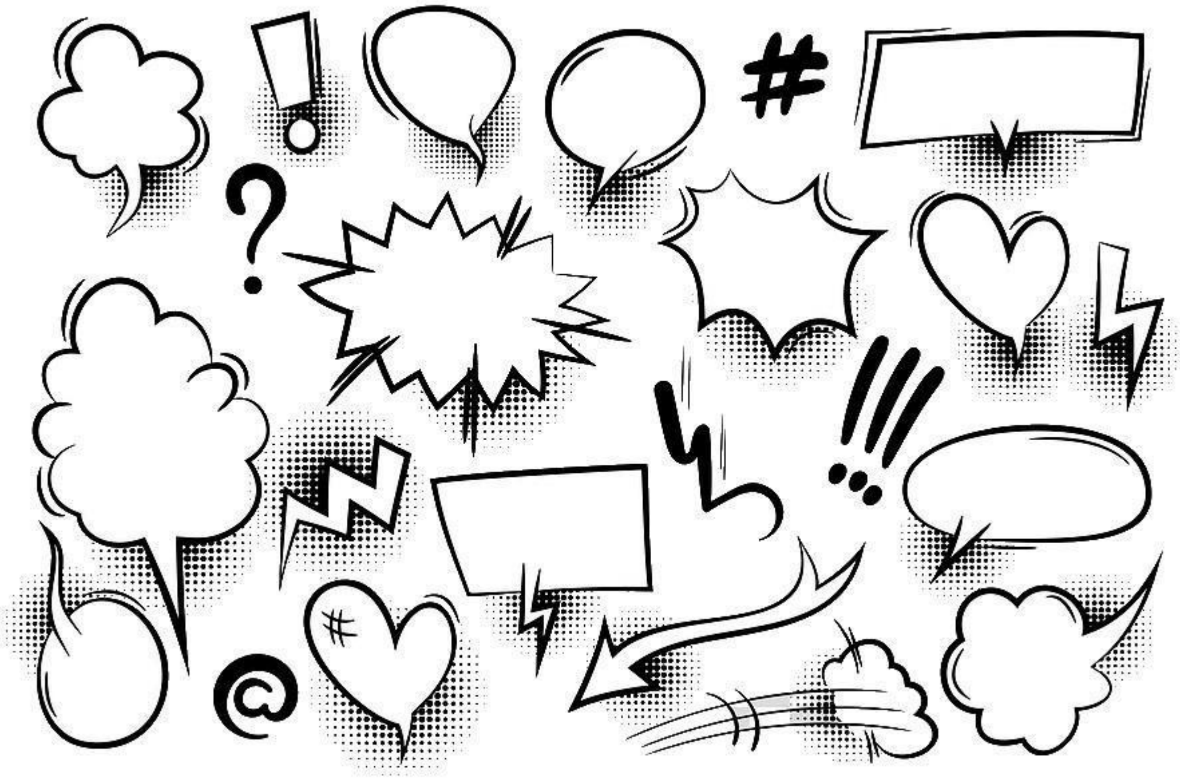
- The process helps managers to see where there are gaps in a team member's behaviour, competencies, and skill sets
- The feedback allows management to assess a person's qualities for future promotion opportunities
- The feedback shows a manager where they can focus their time and attention for an individual, working on areas that may assist in their communication skills, for instance
- It allows people to get a clearer picture of how they are viewed by others, so they can pick and choose which areas they should work on to build further skills
- It shows a person how they are viewed by others, when it's often difficult to get proper answers to questions of personal development
- It increases an individual's self-awareness of what is and isn't important to their progress within their company and career
- It promotes more open communication between people as to what is required for growing within one's position
- It increases a person's accountability for carrying out behaviours that others see as vital for the role they are carrying out and contemplating in the future
- It opens better working relationships with people who they mightn't have thought of discussing certain aspects of performance with before

As a vehicle for Gathering Training Needs

When it comes to evaluating the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that your people need to drive the business forward then a 360-degree process can really help with this.

Here’s how:

- The process can gather training needs at scale so learning and development can identify similar training needs across the employee population and provide personalised development
- Learning programmes and training events are more focused on the needs of your staff created by data from several sources and not just the learner themselves
- Learning and development can run pre and post programme 360 campaigns to evidence the improvements
- 360 can feed into coaching programmes with the output acting as a catalyst and benchmark
- Senior leaders can benchmark the competencies of their leaders throughout the entire company to analyse if they have the required knowledge, skills and behaviours to deliver the company strategy



Who Should You Ask To Provide Feedback?

A mistake many organisations make when carrying out 360-degree feedback is choosing too many people to provide feedback. It's only natural to think 'the more, the merrier' when thinking of who should give feedback to an individual, but in the case of quality feedback, you should think quality before quantity.

While it's true that more feedback would give a more rounded view, if the people asked to give feedback don't know the individual that well, you run the risk of the feedback being vague, poor, disjointed, or just plain wrong.

Our advice is that people who give feedback should be chosen based on their relationship with the individual, the number of touchpoints they have with that individual and how genuine the feedback will be.

We have seen many examples of feedback being given by people who have only been with the company for a couple of months or have joined the company during lockdown and haven't met the person they are rating face-to-face.

It would be better to get fewer ratings of better quality than a whole heap of results that are effectively meaningless.

So, who should you include in giving feedback to an individual?

Here are some suggestions:

- **Immediate manager:** Naturally, this should be your first port of call. They should be able to assess and analyse what is important to the department and organisation, and be able to give quality feedback

- **Peers:** Those who work closely with an individual should be able to review and evaluate their behavioural qualities

- **Any direct reports:** Even if working in a hybrid environment, team members who report directly into the individual should be able to give opinions on the areas under discussion

- **Customers and clients:** If the person has direct contact with customers and clients, there may be some benefits in finding out their opinions. Remember, chosen customers must be able to assess and judge based on the questions or statements asked, remembering they may only see the individual spasmodically.

- **The Individual:** A self-assessment is normally used to compare results against.

As suggested, choose people who can be effective in responding to the statements or questions in the assessment. If someone doesn’t know the individual well, and is asked to assess, their viewpoints may be skewed by ignorance, lack of time with the person, biases based on their overall personality, or not wanting to ‘rock the boat’ with their views.

It's always better to find people who can be genuine in their viewpoints and be able to back up their scores, if necessary, or if asked.

The Pros & Cons Of 360 Degree Feedback

Having spoken about what **360 feedback** is, it would be helpful to pause and assess the overall benefits of the methodology against any drawbacks that may be faced.

Benefits

- You get a more rounded-out, complete picture of the individual's performance and how others view them
- It offers easier chances to assess development opportunities for individuals
- People get more clarity on how they are observed by others
- It assists in the avoidance people have to obtain feedback about themselves
- Information can be used to inspire and engage people for their future development

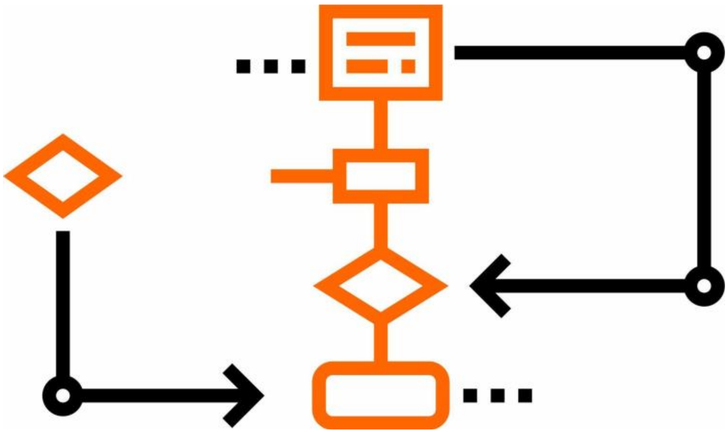
Potential Drawbacks

Drawback	Methods To Overcome
The feedback may not be as complete or as informed as you would like, based on the assessor's relationship and experience with the individual	Have specific people assess who have more accurate knowledge of the person, like those they have regular contact with)

Drawback	Methods To Overcome
People may be reluctant to be honest and truthful in their feedback, because of fear of repercussions for them	Assess if feedback should be anonymous, or determine the best people to offer the feedback
The focus on feedback may be on negativity, grudge-bearing or getting their own back	Ensure the questions and statements allow for constructive feedback, allowing for growth and development
Lack of buy-in from senior management may detract from whole exercise	Don't even start the process until everyone has understood and agrees with the purpose of the exercise
Requires large degree of processing and data collection	Use an **on-line assessment** where paperwork is minimised, and reports are automatically produced at the touch of a button

The main way to get people on board with the programme is to help them see the overall benefits, the biggest of which will be the connection between people's feedback, their performance levels and the agreement between individuals' and the company's values and goals.

If all can see the correlation between the review process and the overall advantages to staff and their growth in the future, there's more chance they will buy into the time and effort needed to achieve a successful result.



Implementing 360 Degree Feedback

Let's discuss the principles of 360-degree feedback and identify how you can ensure a successful roll-out of a campaign.

Clear aims and objectives

The first step is to ensure clarity in the reason why it is taking place. You can guarantee failure if people don't buy into the purpose behind it.

Each person involved needs to be aware of the programme and why it's being run.

We recommend that it should be communicated as a growth and development tool, not something to beat people over the head with a stick.

If you use it as a performance rater for pay rises or promotion opportunities, it can easily skew the feedback, as people will know their opinions could have a detrimental or positive effect on how a person will be viewed for the future. That's why it should be sold as a mechanism for growth and development.

If the clear objectives are seen as something that can be positive and affirmative for an individual, they are more likely to give valid opinions, without any hidden or political agendas taking over.

Communication is key

This is obvious but can be overlooked. We sometimes assume that everyone knows what to do when they receive a request to assess an individual. Depending on the system you use, it could be that the ratings are either overly confused with the scoring mechanism and don't understand the concept or the meaning of the ratings, or they give it lip service, often scoring high right across the board, because they fail to take the time or can't be bothered to give it the effort it deserves.

Benefits of proper communication:

- There is more buy in from participants
- An overall agreement of its purpose is obtained
- Engagement with the programme is increased
- People spend more time devoting thought to their responses
- Relationships between individuals are deepened
- Fewer questions are brought up
- Less misunderstanding occurs

Be consistent and clear in your communications with all involved, and you'll have more commitment to the overall process

Anonymous or attribution

Should you make the assessment anonymous, or should you attribute all comments to individuals?

Remember what we said about the purpose of 360-degree feedback? To enhance the growth and development opportunities of individuals.

It may be difficult for people to assess what they need to grow and develop if they don't get feedback, or don't know who is giving them feedback.

Let's look at benefits of both anonymity and attribution

Benefits of anonymity	Benefits of attribution
People, are more willing to be open and honest, if they feel there won't be any retribution on their comments	The appraisee can challenge comments and build relationships with individuals when they know what has been said
Individuals will be able to see the generic feedback just as it is, without fear they are being told what they want to hear	Individuals can be questioned on the meaning behind what was written and how significant the comments were
Emphasis is on the written feedback, rather than the personality of the person who wrote it	A culture of openness is encouraged, where people share thoughts and opinions without having to hide behind a closed door of fear
Appraisees can spend more time on what is said, rather than thinking of ways they can deny what has been written by the individuals	

If you are considering doing all feedback anonymously, ask yourself what does this say about your culture?

It's very probable that this isn't the only area where anonymity is encouraged within the business.

Clearly communicate the professional standards you are expecting from all participants, so people don't see this as an opportunity to bitch or moan.

There must be a clear purpose of development for the individual being assessed, so comments should be seen as how a person can grow, rather than what they are consistently doing wrong.

Which questions or statements to use

Of course, this depends on who is being assessed and the overall purpose of the programme.

In general, 360s use the **Likert Scale**, which allows a person to score another based on their level of agreement with a statement. Normally, the higher the score, the higher the level of agreement with the statement, measured against 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' and options in between.

Remember, the quality of the questions will determine the quality of the results you obtain and determine what use the feedback is for the appraisee's growth and development.

When considering what statements or questions to ask, think through:

- How will this help me to rate the employee?
- Will it assist me in establishing a performance benchmark?
- Will I be able to compare competencies and skills between individuals?
- Will raters be able to be clear on what they are expected to answer?

Think through what you wish to know about the individuals who are being assessed. In management positions, you may be looking for their competencies and abilities in areas like leadership, communication, organisational skills, delegation, time management, collaboration skills, team building, technical skills, etc.

In sales, the questions may highlight the person's abilities in organising their time, their self-motivation, their skills in prospecting, how they communicate, what their presentation skills are like, how they handle adversity, what they do with objections, their overall negotiating skills, how they close and follow up, and their product knowledge along with their business acumen.

Every question or statement should be clear and unambiguous.

The rater should be able to assess easily whether the statement can be 'strongly agreed' with, 'strongly-disagreed' with, or something in between.

A statement like, 'The person is professional in all they do' could be seen as too vague, as they may be professional in some areas, but not in others.

However, a statement like, 'The person communicates clearly and effectively with me' could be marked easily, as the person can view the statement through their own experiences with the individual.

Open-ended questions are often included at the end of an assessment, where people can write verbatim comments about the person.

These questions could include ideas like:

- What do you consider to be the person's main strengths?
- How well does this person control their own workload?
- What values do you see this person manifesting?
- Use three or four words to describe this person
- How well does this person deal with conflict?

You'll see these questions allow respondents to elaborate on any scores they may have given in the scoring section.

Always start out by clarifying the main goals and objectives of the 360-feedback programme.

After designing the questions and statements, assess whether they help you achieve these goals and what results you hope to achieve with the completed report.

Managing the programme

So, you have decided that a 360-feedback programme will be an effective tool to enhance the chances of growth and development within a company or team.

How would you go about determining a successful roll-out?

Here are some ideas:

1) What are the values and competencies of your company?

Many organisations jump past this first step, which is a mistake.

Resist the temptation to take someone else's ideas of what makes a good salesperson or leader and simply take their statements for yourself. Yes, it may save you time and effort, but it could take you down a deep rabbit-hole that is hard to get out of.

Look at your own management competencies, along with the KPIs, and analyse what statements and questions can be used to measure your people against them.

Very few other organisations will share all your competencies, values, and mission, so be careful you don't just go for generic items.

Instead, build the programme around issues that are pertinent and specific to your department, company, and industry.

2) What behaviours complement each competency you are measuring?

The question here is 'How will we know that this specific competency has been manifested?'

You need to assess what you will see the person doing to demonstrate the competency you are looking for.

Let's take 'communication skills'. Can the person communicate well? Of course, it depends on which area of communication you are referring to.

So, statements like, 'This person listens without interrupting', and 'I can always understand the emails this person sends', and 'This person doesn't sound rushed when dealing with conflict situations', could be used to assess the true areas of communication you are looking for.

Remember to make it easy for the rater to measure the behaviour you are looking at.

3) Clearly communicate why the programme is taking place and its purpose

This is where senior management can take the lead. If top managers have bought into the concept and (please tell me this is so) agree to take part in it, you are more likely to gain ownership and commitment from others for the process you are going through.

This is where you can determine if the programme will be anonymous or attributed, how the scoring system will be assessed, timescales, reporting procedures and follow-up processes.

People need to see this as a positive intervention for learning and development, rather than a witch-hunt or a way of weeding out the people management doesn't like.

Also, let people know what will happen to the results of the 360s. Will they be getting feedback from an internal coach? Will they have the chance to question the feedback or discuss it with their manager?

Clarity like this can make or break the programme, so ensure it is complete, informative and not ambiguous.

4) Include the right people

Some people may be left out on purpose. Ensure you discuss one-to-one with these people why this is the case.

Also, ensure those who are included need to know why. Just saying that it includes everyone may not be enough for certain individuals. Obtain their buy-in by saying the feedback will be specifically for them, and that it complements any performance appraisal results

5) Communicate what will happen to the results

Many companies have carried out survey initiatives and then covered over the results, or not communicated them effectively. That is worse than not carrying out the exercise in the first place.

The rumour mill can take over if people take the time and effort to complete the assessment, sometimes for many people, but then don't get any notice of the end results, or they don't get discussed in a way that justifies the time and effort taken.

It is always recommended that, as part of the process, you tell everyone how the results will be collated and communicated to all concerned. That way, they see the value in taking part and have reasons to dedicate time to participating effectively.

Send, monitor, nudge

These three steps are vital in maintaining the programme, as people may well need time to assess what the requirements are and how they can submit their results.

Send

Everyone who is involved should be expecting the assessment, along with instructions on how it can be completed. There should be no surprises.

- Send it to the appraisees and the raters at the same time.
- Expressly lay down the parameters of the programme – timescales, how to ask questions, comments to be made, etc.
- If using a system that requires an email return address, make sure responders are clear on how, when and where to send the results

Monitor

Let's say you have allowed 3 weeks (21 days) for people to complete their assessments for themselves and others.

A monitoring system may look like this:
Day 1:
All responders to be sent the assessments with instructions and deadlines.

Day 8:
Reminder of where they should be at this point.

Day 15:
Further reminder of deadline, along with information on how to return if not done so already

Final Day:
Cut off reminder to all those yet to respond

Nudge

You don't want to get on people's nerves, but a quick nudge to remind slackers that the results are dependent on them sending in the completed reports could suffice.

We suggest you allow a short time for late returns, but also have a cut-off point. It would be a shame for one person to not have their report because they are waiting for one from ten responders to send in their report.

If everyone understands and has bought into the value of the 360-feedback process, the number of late returns should be low, and you can still produce reports from, say, 90% of the returns.

Sharing the results & providing feedback

The real power of the 360-degree report comes in the quality of the feedback.

If this is done haphazardly or within the true buy-in of the people involved, it could cause more issues than benefits. Here are four tips that should help:

- The report is presented to the individual, either in a group setting (if multiple people are taking the instrument at the same time) or in a one-on-one coaching conversation.

- He or she is provided with context and guidance to understand the data.

- They also receive a customised set of developmental recommendations, mapped to the company's leadership or sales competencies, to help them create a personal development plan.

- There is follow-up from the talent professionals within the company to ensure accountability

(Source: Harvard Business Review, December 2020)

You'll see from this that the report should be given the kudos necessary to elicit the right response from the individual being assessed.

A qualified coach should be used to provide feedback, because if the person receives some data that could be construed as critical, you don't want them to feel discouraged or demotivated. Even worse, you don't want a person's feedback having a detrimental effect on the relationship with the responder.

As the above points highlight, providing the feedback in the context within which it is given is paramount to determining the impact the report will have on an individual.

Let's take two differing scenarios:

The individual rates themselves higher than their responders

At first glance, this may appear demotivating to the individual.

For many people, especially those who are extrinsically motivated, a poorer score from others may affect their self-esteem, their self-worth and their self-confidence.

One way to feedback this kind of information is to view it as ***a visibility issue.***

Let's say a person rates themselves highly on Communicating with their team, but the respondents mark the leader lower.

One point that can be fed back is that the results are the team's opinions and responses to the statements that have been made. It doesn't necessarily mean the leader is a poor communicator; it may mean they want him or her to be ***more visible*** in their communications.

This is where a good coach comes in, assessing the results in the context of all the other statements, and determining if they are personality traits or behavioural tendencies.

A good coach would ask, ***'What message does that send you? Do you have any ideas why these marks would have been lower than you would have expected? What are your team trying to tell you?'***

Those questions will get the person concentrating on what they could do about the feedback, rather than trying to justify the scores they have given themselves.

Remember, the marks people give are simply a perception of what they see versus their expectations.

Maybe they want a much higher level of communication from their leader to the hybrid team. Maybe their expectations are that the leader should be in daily contact with the team, but the leader assumes three times a week is enough.

The feedback should be used as an example of what the responders are looking for from the individual, rather than a criticism of their current ways.

If the coach can feedback the areas of improvement that way, the individual is more likely to see what needs to be improved, rather than justify their own scoring as being correct.

The individual rates themselves lower than their responders

There could be various reasons for this, including:

1) The individual is quite humble and realises they can always improve in all aspects of their role
2) They think they won't be scored highly by others, so they don't want to stand out as different from others
3) Their perception of their own skill sets and competencies is lower than others see them

A good coach can assess the reasons for the lower scores when conversing with the individual, and then determine the way it can be handled.

You'll be able to read more about giving feedback in the **section "Conducting a 360 Coaching Session"**

360 Software

System tools

Whatever system you use, it should be seen as easy to use and implemented quickly and efficiently.

You don't want to end up with a series of complicated tools that don't produce the results you initially set out to achieve.

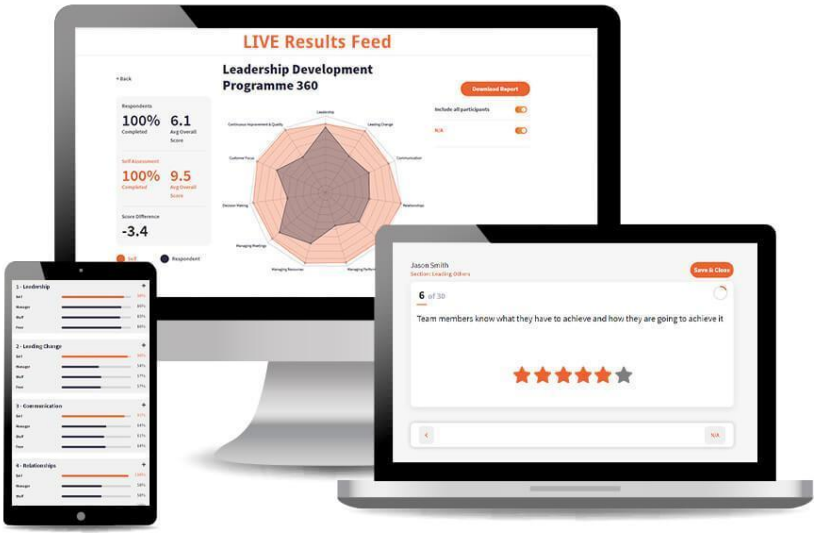
The set-up should easy, so you don't have to struggle and spend inordinate amounts of time reviewing processes and procedures to make it work

Everything should be understandable, insomuch as people should find the instructions straightforward and easy to use

Managing the whole system should be simple, with reports and assessments produced at the touch of a button

The responses by the responders should be easy to submit, with a simple push-button process that sends the report through complete

The review of the reports should be easy, with the headings and all other report details clear and understandable, so people can review and assimilate information and data quickly and efficiently



A **[360-feedback system like Feedo]** is easy to use, agile, and with great reporting. One of the advantages of Feedo is that it has a subscription model too where you do not need to pay per report. This is very rare in the 360 provider marketplace.

Whichever 360 system you use, it needs to adhere to the following protocols, so you don't have to worry about them:

- Available for people to complete on-line
- A tool that adapts to varying bandwidths
- Compatible to email templates
- Having a mobile-friendly interface
- Pre-loaded questions and statements to help you
- Easy administration interface
- Having reports that show actions that need to be taken
- Affordable for small and large organisations

Interpreting The Results

Distributing the results

So, you've carried out the assessment, all the responders have completed their reports and the results are in!

Now's the time to plan for the feedback sessions.

- Write to responders and appraisees, saying that reports are complete, and you will shortly be distributing them

- If you are going to have coaching sessions with individuals, decide if you are going to forward the reports on to them for their perusal before the coach visits or calls, or whether you will wait for the coach to take the report with them for the discussions

    - The benefit of sending it through beforehand is that the individual can get a handle on the report and see what they will be discussing with their coach

    - The disadvantage of doing this is that they may see results that they don't understand or see some critical points that may upset them if they don't have someone to bounce the points off

    - The benefit of holding back until a coach is available to discuss the results is that they can immediately highlight the most important points from the report and focus on the action points in detail, rather than be engrossed in negative feedback, if it has occurred

    - The disadvantage of waiting is that the individual will want to know what the feedback is and may see any delay as a worrisome distraction

- You will want to assess which is the best way to get the results to people before feeding back

- Remember the whole purpose of 360-degree feedback is to enhance the growth and development opportunities of your team members, so identify what feedback mechanism will help you achieve that before deciding on how to start the feedback

Pitfalls to avoid

There are some things you need to be aware of before giving feedback on the report, so bear these in mind:

- Some people could see the whole report as negative

Human nature is designed to make us feel safe and secure. When we see any form of criticism, our inclination may be to defend ourselves, and we may become emotional as a result.

Something to avoid is allowing the whole process to become over-emotional. This won't be easy, depending on the nature of the person and the feedback they have received. If the person is sensitive and cautious in their responses, be aware of that and make allowances for what may come.

Remember, the feedback data isn't just coming from one person, so highlight what others have said about the individual, so they feel the balance of opinion is in the positive. Focus on any strengths you see, and what actions would be useful to take in the future

- Ensure you focus on actionable feedback

There may be some feedback that is simply not changeable, so don't fall into the trap of taking too much time trying to justify comments made by others.

Instead, help the person realise they are in control of their actions, in control of their overall performance, engaged in their accountabilities, and given a chance to self-motivate to improve.

Concentrate on behaviours that can be controlled by themselves, through coaching and mentoring. This will help relieve them from the helplessness they may feel if seeing negative responses

- Don't see it as a delivery, but rather a discussion

Some 360 feedback sessions can degenerate into a one-way passage of 'this is what was said, this is what it means' process. You need to remind yourself that the person themselves should be considering the meaning behind the results.

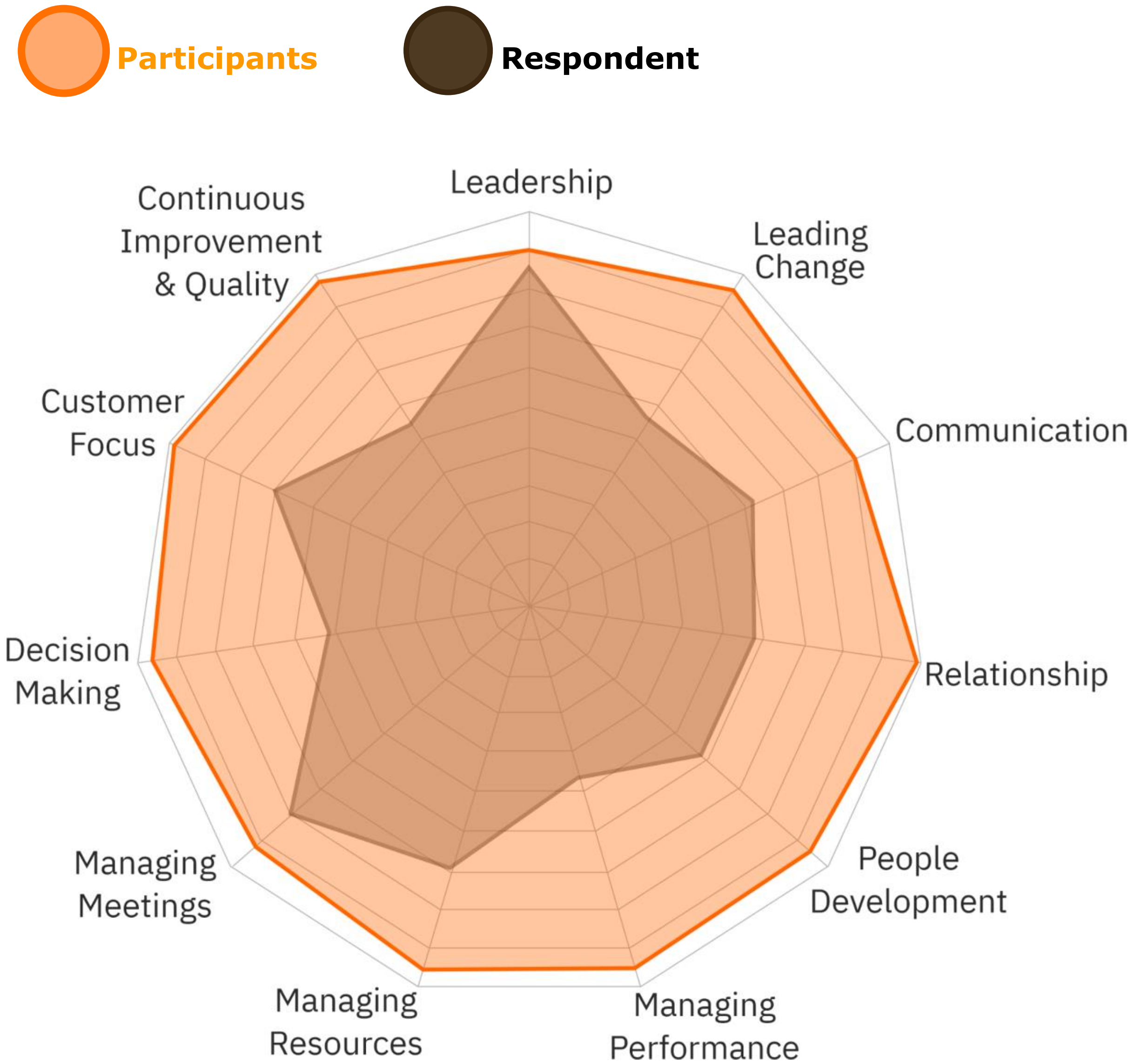
As we said earlier, lower scores should be an indication that competency or behaviour is not as visible as it could be. Discuss what needs to be done to make it more visible, so you're focusing on what they can do about it, rather than trying to justify what they have done and why the feedback is wrong

Unwrapping the report

Spider graphs

Most 360 reports will include a spider diagram of some sort, so called because it resembles a web and gives graphical representations of the key results of the feedback.

Here's an example:



Source: Taken from a report and LIVE feed on Feedo

You'll notice each point of the spider graph equates to a specific category that has been marked by the individual and their assessors. Each of these can be bespoke to the assessment that is being carried out.

The scores are an amalgamation of the individual's scores (in this case, the pink shaded area) and the average of the feedback scores from their respondents (in this case, the grey shaded area).

At a glance, you can see the overall results, and the differences between how the individual rates themselves alongside the amalgamated respondents' scores.

A big-picture analysis like this gives the coach an opportunity to see what the main points will be and prepares them for all the information about to come in the report.

In the example provided, it shows **the individual themselves has marked themselves much higher** than their responders, so they will need to see what discrepancies the most important ones are to concentrate on.

Category results

Feedback for: Leadership Development Programme 360

feedo

Breakdown

23rd June 2021

Area	Self Score	Avg Respondents	Difference
Leadership	9.00	8.56	+0.44
Leading Change	9.57	5.69	+3.88
Communication	9.11	6.25	+2.86
Relationships	10.00	5.82	+4.18
People Development	9.50	5.82	+3.68
Managing Performance	9.58	4.55	+5.03
Managing Resources	9.60	6.98	+2.62
Managing Meetings	9.20	7.98	+1.22
Decision Making	9.57	5.04	+4.53
Customer Focus	9.80	7.00	+2.80
Continuous Improvement & Quality	9.75	5.50	+4.25

The purpose of this leaderboard is to illustrate the differences between how you scored yourself and the average results from all of the respondents as a whole.

The table above highlights the areas where the respondents scored you LESS than your own self assessment and also those areas where they marked you HIGHER than your own self assessment.

Key:

Positive Difference represents where your respondents have marked you higher than your own score.

Negative Difference represents where you have marked yourself higher than the respondents score.

This section provides you with a breakdown of the results for each question/statement.

The breakdown of the results next looks at each category and compares the results given by the individual themselves against the reported results from all the other responders.

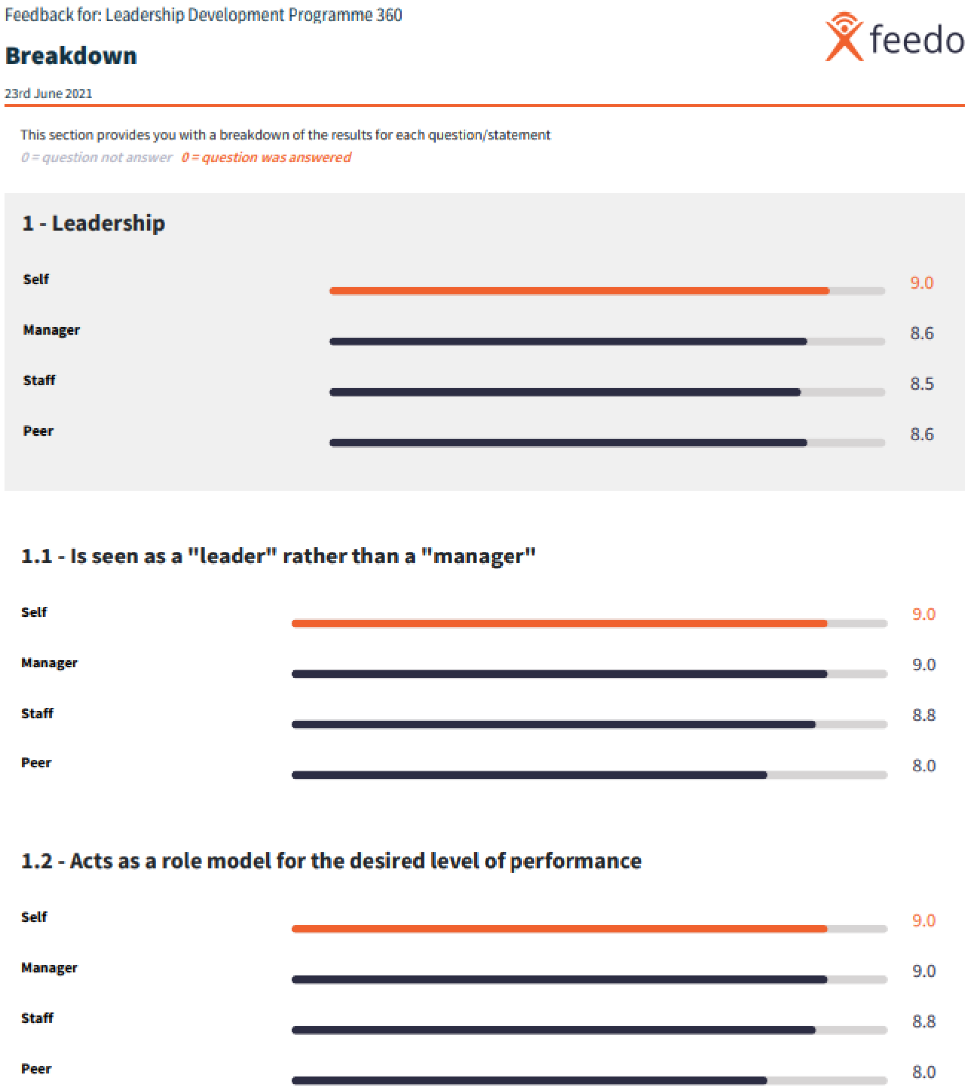
The table shows each category, what the scores were in each column and the difference in the scores, so a quick glance can assess which areas were marked higher by the individual, and which was marked higher by the responders.

This enables you to see immediately how the differences can be discussed and which ones may be more important to cover with the individual concerned.

In the example given, it would be advantageous to highlight the areas that should be given the most attention and focus, rather than concentrate on all areas.

You will see how useful this table is, as it will help you work on the areas where there may be some discrepancies, but also discuss where the individual is doing well in their job role.

Deep dive



Each category within Feedo is then divided into the various questions or statements that complete that category.

The statement is followed by bar charts that mirror the individual's score (in orange) and an amalgamation or average of the other responders' scores.

You'll see in the example that, under the category 'Leadership', the first statement is 'The person is seen as a leader rather than a manager'.

The results show that the individual gave themselves a mark of '9' for this statement.

Their manager also scored them '9' and their staff and peers scored them '8.8' and '8' respectively.

Those scores are the average of all the staff and peers scores in the feedback.

The next statement in the leadership category asks about the responders' opinions as to whether the person acts as a role model when it comes to the desired level of performance they display.

Again, the individual gives themselves a score of '9', with the manager, staff and peers scoring 9, 8.8 and 8.0 respectively.

These are relatively close scores and so it appears there isn't much difference between how the individual views themselves and how others view them.

The value of this is that you can see at a glance where there may be some disagreement between the person being scored and what others think of them.

In this example, under the category 'Decision-Making', the individual gives themselves a score of '10' (Always demonstrates this behaviour), whereas the average of the responders' scores is '5' (sometimes demonstrates it).

You can see that this may require a discussion about the visibility of the person when it comes to weighing up the pros and cons of making a decision.

It may be that the person needs to be clearer in their communication before making decisions, especially as their manager doesn't agree with their own assessment.

Free text responses

Most systems will also allow free form text responses.

This part of the feedback tool is important because it allows people to comment on the scores they may have given when marking the report.

Here's an example:

11.9 - What should you/the participant start doing more of?

Self

"More development/succession planning of Managers & Team Managers."

Manager

"Push things forward on own initiative & identify opportunities for improvement"

Staff

"Coaching"

"Assessing for improvements in the department"

Peer

"Great meetings - well structured"

By allowing people to make verbatim comments, the **360 feedback tool** gives a chance to enhance the opinions made in the feedback scores, embellishing what was scored so the individual can ascertain where they should continue to improve and where they should focus in the future.

Conducting A 360 Coaching Session

Self-assessment preparation

There are some procedural steps that an individual can take prior to receiving feedback on their 360 assessment, and these can include:

- **Review the overall spider graph.** This will give a big picture of what the results are and where there may be any discrepancies between their own views and those of others. It should provide an overview of areas that the person has similar views to others, alongside those categories where there are differing opinions

- **Analyse the key scores for each category**. This involves checking in with the key areas that were assessed and identifying which ones will be focused upon. Remember that there needs to be an assessment of any discrepancies, as this means there may be cognitive biases one way or the other

- **Consider the specific differences.** Here, the person can check on the categories where they wish to focus. Each category should consist of between five and 10 statements that, when amalgamated, give the overall score for the category. It may be that specific statements highlight areas that need to be made more visible to the team or, conversely, where the individual is being seen as better than they consider themselves

- **Focus on the Free form statements**. Most 360 tools allow for verbatim comments to be made, and these should be analysed when the appraisee is going through their self-assessment. Consider the reasons why a manager, peer, colleague, team member or customer may have stated the things they have.

- **Consider the following questions**:
    - Where are the main differences in the results from what I thought about myself and what others think?
    - Why would there be a difference in those specific areas?
    - What messages do those discrepancies send me?
    - What might those messages mean about my relationships with the responders?
    - Logically, why would my responders mark me the way they have?
    - Which areas are most important for me to work on?
    - What actions are my responders telling me to take?
    - How can I make a difference in my role now that I have this feedback?

Coach preparation

The coach who is planning to converse with the person about their 360 feedback can also prepare themselves for the discussions. Here are some tips:

- **Review the spider graph and the messages it produces**. Are there any surprises here, in terms of the differences between the self-assessment and the responders' views? If so, in which areas? What will the individual think about the spider graph?

- **Check any imbalances**. Where are the biggest discrepancies? Are these in categories that are important to the individual? What are their opinions? You need to check in with the person at this point to ascertain their overall impressions of what the meanings are behind the big picture

- **Review any categories where there may have to be changes**. Here, you can start thinking about what messages the person will be getting from the 360 feedback and analyse how they will be receiving those messages. Are there categories they may see as being more important than others? If so, which ones and why?

- **Consider any verbatims that have been added.** Do these comments send any further messages that back up the ratings the responders have given? If so, how will you handle them with the individual?

- **Prepare some action items**. Based on what you have seen in the initial feedback results, what do you see as the categories you feel the person may wish to be working on in the future? How do you wish to conduct those discussions?

Focus and objectives

There will always be too much information in a 360 report for everything to be considered.

Therefore, focusing on the main categories for discussion and setting specific objectives for yourself are vital if you are going to get the most from the reports that have been generated.

Reflect on the following points:

- Why did I actually carry out the 360 feedback?
- What was I hoping to achieve?
- How did I feel when carrying out the exercise?
- What results was I expecting to get from my manager? Peers? Team members?
- How will I feel if the results aren't what I expected?

Now, set some objectives for the review of your 360:

- Review all results on the spider graph and big-picture analysis
- Decide which categories are most important for me to concentrate on
- Analyse the results I gave myself
- Determine the reasons for any differences between self-scores and responders' scores
- View individual statements and the scores for each
- Read through comments and highlight messages that mean I must act
- Decide on action points I wish to make

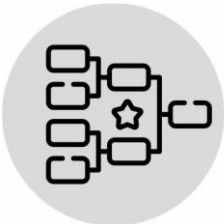
Decide on what you need to focus on:

- Where are there similarities between my opinions and others' views?
- Where are these differences?
- Are those differences worth paying attention to?
- Based on the feedback you received, where would you most like to focus your efforts over the next few months?
- Did you feel comfortable receiving feedback from your peers?
- How did you feel giving feedback about your colleagues?
- Was it more challenging for you to give feedback to a certain person? If so, can you describe the reasons?
- Which category should I concentrate on that would make the biggest difference to my role?
- Which other categories may make a difference if I applied myself to them?
- What would be the results if I applied myself to those specific categories?

The answers to these questions will allow you to concentrate on the areas that will bring the best results for you and the team.

Don't feel overwhelmed by the results you get, thinking you have to make adjustments in all areas where you may be falling short, or have differing scores from responders.

By focusing on the categories that will really make a difference, you can plan effectively for any changes you may have to consider making.



Structuring the session

The correct structure of the feedback session is vital if the individual and coach want to get the most from the process. If it's unplanned, you may find the whole session drifting into a whinging or griping discussion, which will defeat the object of carrying out the process.

Feedback has been a prime source of communicating information and data for as long as management has been part of business. It should be seen as an opportunity to not only give the results of the 360 to the person, but also as a chance to solve any issues that may be hindering the performance levels of team members.

There is also a concept named 'feedforward', which is designed to assimilate all learning initiatives and apply them for the future, in a forward-feeding manner. If you structure any discussions with this in mind, it can assist you in designing your discussions around the outcomes for which you are planning.

Here are some tips for the structure of any discussions you may be planning:

- Be fully cognisant with the results of the 360 for the person involved

- Make plans for how long you can set aside for the session. A 20-minute window may not be enough, so ensure you can spend the requisite amount of time for discussing the results

- Set the agenda for how you will make the discussions work. Will you start with the big picture and work down to the details? Will you decide to only cover certain aspects of the report? Agree how you should structure the session

- Decide on what would be the best use of both of your times.

- Listen to their viewpoints first

- Go through what the results are telling the person, bearing in mind the ratings are personal opinions rather than facts

- Highlight positive aspects of the results. There will always be areas that can be commended, so look out for these, in particular those areas that are important for the role they are playing or will be in the future

- Keep an eye on the time, so you don't rush things in order to finish on time.

Feedback techniques

There are various ways you can plan your feedback sessions. Having set the objectives and built awareness of what the end results are that you both are aiming for, you can use some of these tips to plan your feedback session:

- Ask for the person's feedback first. You may have ideas and points to make, but the person's viewpoint on the report could take the discussions off in a different direction, so find out their opinions first

- Deal with any emotive issues up-front. Emotions may be running high if the person sees some of the ratings or comments disparaging or unwelcome. Find out what the person thinks and feels, and then identify if the planned structure needs to change

- Identify the categories that are most important for the person to concentrate on. You can then spend your feedback time discussing what is most important, rather than be dragged off into areas that won't be relevant for their future

- Emphasise that you will be discussing **people's opinions based on the visibility of each behaviour rated.** Remember that if the respondent doesn't know the person that well, or hasn't been with the organisation very long, their opinions may be based on what they have and haven't seen in a short timeframe, so help the person be aware of what perspective the respondent may be viewing from

- Highlight the positive aspects that others have said. As humans, we tend to focus on poor or bad comments, as our fragile self-esteem or self-belief needs injections of positivity to make us feel good but can be affected in a negative sense if our own idea of ourselves isn't matched by others.

  Positive comments and ratings can boost our self-worth, so pinpoint these when applicable

- If there is the occasional negative vibe coming through, ascertain if it could be due to a lack of visibility, especially if the person being assessed feels they really do carry out that behaviour, and can't understand why the respondent would give a lower mark than anticipated

- Ask the person what actions they plan to take because of the feedback. As we discussed, it would be impossible to change everything related to the feedback, so focus on what will make the biggest difference in real terms

- Spend most of your time asking questions. Getting the person's views is more important than giving your own opinions, so be aware of how the person is responding to the feedback and ask questions about meaning and future actions

- Be frugal in giving your own advice unless you know the person really well. Any recommendations or suggestions you make will be understood by the person as advice for the future, so be confident it is something they recognise could be part of their actions

- Confirm the person understands and appreciates all aspects of the feedback, rather than having to justify all their own comments

Action planning

Of course, the real reason for carrying out, responding to and analysing a 360-feedback process is to see what changes may have to be incorporated into the working practices of a team member, hence assisting in the overall performance management process.

It is therefore vital that attention is given to the actions that need to be put in motion based on the feedback. Here are some tips:

1: Focus on 2-3 areas only. As we have discussed, it's pretty much impossible to change everything that is covered by a 360 process, so get the person to look at what categories are going to offer the best chance for results in the near and medium future.

2: **Use the 5 whys.** Narrowing down the rationale by asking 'why that one?' gets the person to dig deeper and come up with reasons behind the decisions they are going to make. As the term "why" can lead some to believe that they are wrong, an alternative could be "what makes you pick that one?"

3: Find more than one solution. There will always be more than one way to implement the ideas you are discussing, so don't just rely on, for example, more delegation of tasks, or longer meetings to get your point across. Identify actions that will help you achieve the goals, with contingencies if necessary

4: Make plans for applying the learning points. No action will take place without effectively planning how what steps need to be taken first, so build plans to help you achieve the overall results you have determined

5: Determine the results you are looking for from the actions. What did you learn from the feedback? What results can I hope to achieve by working on these actions? These are good questions to consider before taking action on the feedback

6: Plan achievable milestones. You don't want to change everything about the way you do your job; the feedback can be used to make firm and steady inroads into areas of development, rather than being a world-changing event. Set milestones that will help you see growth and development that is measurable

7: Have a mentor. This is someone you can rely on to assist when you need it. Trying to improve by yourself often leads to failure, but with your manager, a coach or mentor helping you on the road to development, you get a clearer idea on how things can be implemented and build on ideas that you can discuss with this other person

8: Build on your strengths. The whole purpose of carrying out the process is to learn, develop and grow. Take the ideas and use your strengths to determine the best way of developing the behaviours needed to improve your ratings. Concentrating on your strengths will give you greater momentum and drive than focusing on your weak areas

Preparation Templates:

For Coach and Employee

As a coach…

Before you dive into the person's 360 report you need to think about who you invited to respond to the 360 feedback, and why those people in particular. Would some people have skewed the report in some way?

Did everyone know the reportee well enough to score on every aspect of the report? What could it mean if the respondents were new to the company or new to the group?

As a person completing the 360 report….

How's the working relationship with your respondents, and how often do they see you or interact with you?

What are you honestly expecting from your respondents?

Have you been honest in your interpretation of the results for yourself?

Our suggestions…

Read through the whole report and get a feel for the big picture first, rather than stopping and starting and focusing in too much.

Remember your respondents' scores and comments come with positive intent, helping develop your self-awareness

Focus on the positives too. Your respondents are also telling you what's working for them as well as what would make you more effective

If you see a low score or adverse comment, think objectively, don't react, and ask yourself, ''What could I have done that has led to this feedback? Or ''What do I do that could be interpreted differently to others?''

Working with the report, complete the 360 coaching planner located on the next page and come prepared to the session with your completed planner.

360 Coaching Planner: For Respondent

Overview page Look at your "spider diagram" which compares your own scores with all your respondents' scores. What are your first thoughts on the overview?	**Highs and lows** Looking at the 5 statements that received the **highest average score** Any surprises here, or did they confirm what you already knew? What are your thoughts on your top 5?
Highs and lows Looking at the 5 statements that received the **lowest average score** Any surprises here, or did they confirm what you already knew? What are your thoughts on your lowest top 5?	What other **observations** do you have about your scores /report? What questions do you have for your coach?

360 Coaching Planner: For The Coach

Overview page Look at the "spider graph" What messages are coming out of the spider diagram? How will the person feel when they see it? What impression do you get of the individual from this big picture?	**Highs and lows** Looking at the 5 statements that received the **highest average score** What are your thoughts on the top five? If not, what messages is it sending you? Plan out some questions to ask around this.
Highs and lows Looking at the 5 statements that received the **lowest average score** What are your thoughts on the lowest five scores? What messages is it sending you? Plan out some questions to ask around this.	What other **observations** do you have about the report? What questions can you think of for the person you are going to coach? What questions might they have for you?

Conclusion

So, what have we covered?

- Your 360 feedback process should be seen, not as a check-up and opportunity to find things to critique, but as a development tool to help you grow and develop the specific behavioural skills and competences that will take you further in your current job role and future career

- You can see it as a chance to verify if you're working at the levels you wish to, in conjunction with your peers, your manager, your team members and people outside your organisation

- A 360 review should be seen as a vital feedback tool as it provides responders with a greater insight into what makes a good co-worker, aligning with the values, competencies and behaviours that are seen as valuable to the success of a team, department or company

- Feedback from a variety of people who know you allows for formulation of clear messages as to what people's viewpoints are for you now, and what changes may be necessary for the future

- You can see your 360 review as:
  - A look back at how you have been carrying out your job role
  - A current perspective of how you are seen by others in comparison to your own view
  - An opportunity to assess what changes need to be made for future improvements in your career

- "Feedback is the breakfast of champions" (Tom Peters). We should see feedback as the chance to get a clearer picture of how we are viewed by others at different levels of the organisation. You seldom get this chance to assess your performance as seen by others

- See any 360 review as complementing, not replacing, a performance review. It will certainly provide feedback, much of it valuable and informative; but it can't be a substitute for the up front and personal discussions you will be having with your manager

- Identify what you can learn by listening to others' comments about you. And remember that any less than glowing scores could simply mean that you haven't made yourself as visible as you think you have in various areas of importance.

Feedo is part of the 5-time award winners, the MTD Training Group.

Created on the basis that you can't improve what you can't measure, Feedo is the tool that **enables you to measure** a whole host of **performance improvement and engagement** feedback.

Most systems are clunky for both user and admin, Feedo is different.

It's **been designed by L&D and HR professionals** instead of programmers.

360 Feedback

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Training Needs Analysis

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You can run 6 different types of campaigns on Feedo.

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