



Frequently Asked Questions About 360 Degree Feedback

What is 360 Degree Feedback?

360 Degree Feedback is a process in which employees receive confidential, anonymous feedback from the people with whom they regularly work. This typically includes the employee's boss, direct reports, internal peers, and external peers. A mixture of about eight to 15 people fill out an anonymous online feedback form that asks questions covering a broad range of leadership competencies. The feedback forms include questions that are measured on a 5-point rating scale and also ask raters to provide written comments. The person receiving feedback also fills out a self-rating survey that includes the same survey questions that others receive in their forms.

Managers and leaders within organizations use 360 feedback surveys to get a better understanding of their strengths and opportunities for improvement, to identify blind spots, and discover perceptions that need to be addressed. The 360 feedback system automatically tabulates the results and presents them in a format that helps the feedback recipient create a personal development plan. Individual responses are always combined with responses from other people in the same rater category (e.g. peer, direct report) in order to preserve anonymity and to give the employee a clear picture of his/her greatest overall strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Why do I need to solicit feedback from others?

There is one 360 rater who is highly unreliable and rarely predictive of future performance at all. That person is you. That is, your own perception of yourself is rarely accurate or predictive. For a GPS system to get an accurate picture of your location, it requires four different satellites. For leaders to get an accurate picture of their own effectiveness, they need feedback from their manager, peers, direct reports, and others inside and outside their organization.

I've heard that many 360 feedback programs fail. What accounts for that?

A flawed implementation of a 360 process can happen. Sometimes the senior executives don't support the program, and in the worst cases they don't participate themselves. Perhaps reports go to participants with little or no explanation of how to read them and without follow-up from the participant's manager. Or perhaps the 360



isn't used to guide and inform people's progress within an overall system of development. Yes, there are too many 360 implementations that are pathetic wastes of time, resources, and — worst of all — opportunity.

What makes the Effective Leaders With Courage 360 Assessment a good use of my time?

- We begin by measuring the attributes that really make a difference in a leader's effectiveness.
- We take the time to properly explain, both to participants and to the people giving feedback about those participants, why they're going through the exercise and how the data will be used for the participant's development.
- We make it clear and known that there will be can be no breaches of confidentiality.
- Our on-line assessment usually takes Raters less than 10 minutes to complete. This is to avoid the survey fatigue that tortuously long instruments cause.
- We present each person's results in a way that enables them to digest them constructively and use the data to create a personal plan of development. We make the feedback report itself simple to read, presenting data in a graphical format that is easy to absorb.
- Our process and reports have been described as "simple", "actionable," and "practical." For example, our typical report is 25-30 pages, compared to other services whose reports approach 100 pages and are more difficult to understand and interpret.
- Our certified executive coaches are available to help you interpret your feedback in a confidential, one-on-one session. The coaching session makes your feedback personal.

I just went through a 360 process.

If it has been more than six months since you went through the process, you can probably go through it again without fear that you are pestering your raters. This is because our Assessment takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

More important, assessments are like snowflakes and finger prints – no two are the same. With each assessment, you'll learn things about yourself that are different. You'll also be able to confirm or refute observations based on the common themes and trends you identify among the assessments. Soliciting feedback using several



instruments will allow you construct a more complete and balanced picture of how you're perceived by others.

If it's been less than six months since you went through the 360 process, consider taking our leadership self-assessment. Then, compare your results on it to those on the 360 you have completed.

I'm new in my job, so it's too early to seek feedback.

That's probably true if you've been in your role for less than nine months. In those cases, consider seeking 360 feedback from the people you regularly worked with in your previous position/company. See how the President of Wilson College found this to be a most valuable development exercise: [Barbara Mistick's Article in the NYT.](#)