

## 7 Practices for High Impact 360 Assessment



There are a lot of feedback and development solutions. However, there is one tool that we've seen profoundly and consistently have sustainable impact — what's generally referred to as the 360-degree feedback process. 360 assessment is an efficient method of providing comprehensive, multi-rater and multi-level feedback on one individual. Among other benefits, when feedback is provided from one person (manager, peer), it is easy for a person to disregard or minimize the feedback as being “that person's opinion.” However, when multiple people provide feedback it is very difficult for a person to go through the process and disregard the feedback. In fact, when done well, 360 assessments will change behavior, drive results, change careers, and even change lives.

However, the important thing is getting the 360 assessment process right. Below are key practices for leveraging your 360 assessment for the highest impact.

- **Measure the right skills** – there is great variety in what 360 assessments measure. It is critical to pick a 360-assessment instrument that measures the capabilities critical to the person's performance in the role. Be sure to partner with a provider who is not selling “their one instrument” but instead can select the 360-assessment that best fits the company and role requirements.
- **Communicate to both to participants and raters how the data will be used** – it is critical to assure anonymity, and be clear on whether the direct manager and/or HR will see the results. Being transparent on confidentiality is critical to drive honest responses and reduce any “noise” in the data.
- **Be efficient with rater time** – pick a survey that requires just 15 to 20 minutes to complete to avoid the survey fatigue and central-tendency responses that tortuously long instruments cause.
- **Ensure there is an intuitive report** – some 360 assessment reports are difficult to understand and interpret. So, even if the data is powerful, the results are often disregarded because it takes too much effort to isolate the key insights and conclusions.
- **Circle back with the raters** – when asked for feedback, the raters want to know that their input was valued and will be considered. The participant should be encouraged to thank participants for their time and input, and provide a high-level summary of themes

or findings. This drives credibility for the 360 process, and social commitment for improvement.

- **Dive deeper when necessary** – often 360 assessments create as many questions and answers for the participant. They should be encouraged to ask trusted colleagues for more clarification when feedback is not clear or fully understood – of course sharing themes, and always with a positive open mind and maintaining confidentiality.
- **Provide support for interpretation and assimilation of the results** – the natural inclination of many participants will be to review the results once, then put it “in the drawer” and not fully integrate the feedback. It’s also difficult to look at oneself objectively, people need help identifying the key nuggets and relevant development activities. It is very helpful for an outside consultant or HR support person to review the data and help form a targeted development plan.

When these seven practices are in place, we have seen 360 assessment impact performance at the individual, team and organization levels. If you have interest in leveraging 360 for high impact, please contact us to discuss.

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