



Guide to 360 Feedback

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Robert Ferry

Director

Introduction

Do you have the right leaders on board and how would you know if you did? Gut feel or maybe that in conjunction with performance management? There is a better way. Using tools that have a proven track record like psychometric testing and 360 feedback can enhance leadership skills and so bottom line delivery. Its important to note that this process is not designed to function as a performance review but can form part of a performance review. Typically, they're used to:

1. Identifying a starting point for development of new skills.
2. Measuring progress as the subject works on skills over time.
3. Identifying the personal blind spots of behavior

If development is seen to be needed than executive coaching in conjunction with 360-degree feedback is effective in identifying the before and after picture to measure ROI.

So, what is 360-degree feedback? It's been around for many years and today approximately 85% of Fortune 500 companies use it in one way or another. D. Bracken et al define 360-degree feedback as

".. a process for collecting, quantifying, and reporting coworker observations about an individual (i.e., a ratee) that facilitates/enables three specific data-driven/based outcomes: (a) the collection of rater perceptions of the degree to which specific behaviors are exhibited; (b) the analysis of meaningful comparisons of rater perceptions across multiple ratees, between specific groups of raters for an individual rate, and for ratee changes over time; and (c) the creation of sustainable individual, group, and/or organizational changes in behaviors valued by the organization." (Bracken et al, 2016)

360-Degree Feedback Process

Roles and responsibilities.

Administrator

This is the person or persons charged with setting up a 360 programme, creating or at least adding the desired questionnaire and then assigning access to the chosen participants. This could be a HR manager or external advisor .

Participant

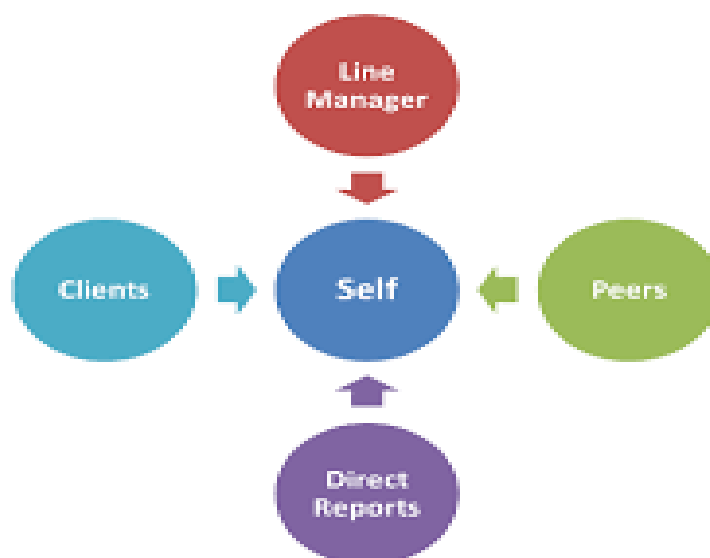
The participant or subject is sometimes also referred to as the feedback receiver or 'ratee'. As part of the 360 process, they will need to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire. Doing so enables them to see how their own perceptions of themselves compare with the views of their chosen raters. This can highlight important, and often eye-opening, hidden strengths and perception gaps.

Rater

Also referred to as a feedback provider or rater, they are invited to provide feedback on the participant by completing a questionnaire. A participant will usually invite anywhere between five and 10 raters. They are typically made up of peers working at a similar level, subordinate employees, managers and even clients.

Manager

Almost always the participant's manager will be among his or her chosen raters. In addition to their role in providing feedback, they'll often also be involved afterwards in helping the participant to assess the feedback and prioritise developmental actions.



Process Steps

1. Choose an approach
360-degree feedback can be gathered in two ways. Firstly, and most widely used format is through automated online surveys. The second method is through one on one interviews, these can be conducted through face to face, video conferences or telephone interviews.
2. Decide on the competencies to assess. This will be informed by the level of the role and the cultural context. Some online tools give set competencies while most allow the competencies to be chosen by the tool administrator.
3. Who will participate
As one of the main objectives of the 360 is to assist in developing self-awareness it important to identify who will need to participate in providing the feedback. This again is left to the administrator and should include those that are familiar with the work of the leader and so able to provide useful observations. It is important to keep in mind that the list of feedback providers should be inclusive as opposed to exclusive and may include direct reports, line managers, peers, suppliers and customers.
4. Design out bias.
It is also important to ensure that those giving feedback have a balanced perspective and free from bias. Sometimes certain employees are favoured over others, they may share certain hobbies or can just have a positive view of an employee. This is a very common bias known as the halo effect. A managers judgement can be clouded if they have a positive perception of an employee and they may not be able to see where an employee can improve. This can affect the objectivity of the performance review and as a result 360 feedback assessment tools are hugely important in carrying out fair performance reviews. These tools allow a number of different sources such as such as colleagues and managers, to assess employee's performance.
5. Deciding who will see the feedback reports should also be done before the interviews are conducted so that all participants know how and with whom their feedback will be shared.
6. Allow reflection time.
Once the questions are decided upon, the feedback providers should get a copy of them in advance. This is a benefit as it gives people time to really think about their answers in advance and it also reassures those involved that everyone will in fact be asked the same questions.

Online V's Structured Interview

Online 360 tools are the most widely use format mainly because they are cheaper and more convenient. However, structured interviews may actually be a better medium of gathering information as if they are correctly formulated, they can provide additional information and context. Where practicable executive coaches will use both methods in order to get the best information.

To view a sample questions see appendix 1.

If an online 360 is being used it can be incredibly helpful to include context-specific questions as well as open ended questions in or to collect more relevant information for the coachee. Some open-ended questions which could be used as a starting point are as follows:

- How would you describe John's leadership and management style?
- How would you describe John's communication and collaboration style?
- What are John's strengths?
- What are John's areas for development?
- If you could give John one piece of advice, what would it be?
- If you could make one request to John, what would it be?

Pros' and Cons

Overall "among researchers and coaches, there is little disagreement that under the right conditions and applying evidence-based "best practices" that 360-degree feedback can increase self-awareness and increase individual and team effectiveness" (Nowack & Mashih, 2012

Pros

There are many pros to 360 feedback but it's important for you to remember that it's all part of a larger feedback process which includes employee surveys, one-on-ones, annual reviews, etc.

1. More Complete Assessment

Because you're collecting feedback from so many different sources, you have a broader (and potentially more accurate) assessment. You'll likely notice recurring themes and patterns that you should be focusing on.

Also, it's likely that colleagues or customers have feedback that your direct manager might not have, so you'll get a more complete picture of your strengths and weaknesses.

2. Better Teamwork

In theory, if everyone identifies their strengths, weaknesses, and behaviours that they need to work on, they'll end up becoming better coworkers and the team will be happier and more productive.

3. See How Others See you

It's great to see how others perceive you. The 360 review gives colleagues a chance to anonymously express how they feel about their coworkers, something that doesn't regularly happen at work.

If you're able to handle feedback and not get too upset about it, you'll want to know how others see you. The key to handling feedback is to develop a growth mindset and look at it as an opportunity to grow.

4. More Feedback

One of the biggest issues that employees face in their workplace is a lack of frequent feedback. Employees like feedback and the 360 review gives them a chance to get more of it from more people.

Employees will likely also perceive the feedback as more fair since it's coming from multiple sources.

Cons

360 feedback isn't perfect, and unfortunately many teams will implement it for the wrong reasons. You need to be very careful when doing this. If your culture already has an issue of trust or the team isn't getting along well, this might only worsen the problem.

1. It Can Create a Negative Culture

If the feedback received is negative, it can create a lot of resentment on the team, where the receiver is angry at their colleagues or customers, inducing emotions like fear and anger.

2. It May Not Be Accurate

The feedback that's received might not be 100% accurate. Your colleagues might want to be nicer than what they really feel, or maybe due to internal politics they're dishonest to be mean.

If you're on a small team and everyone's friends with each other, can we really be that critical of each other?

On the flipside, if you're on a very large team, do the people reviewing you really know you well enough to give you an accurate assessment?

The point is, be careful with the data you're collecting.

3. May Focus on Weakness

The review can focus too much on an employee's weaknesses and not enough on strengths which can be pretty demotivating.

It's okay to highlight areas for improvement, but remember to focus on strengths and how those strengths can be leveraged more on the team.

360 Reviews Require Skill

The ability to administer 360 reviews takes time and experience to do them well, and plenty of feedback.

If you are conducting your first 360 review as an administrator, expect to make a few mistakes.

You might consider engaging RFC Executive before diving into the deep end yourself. Learn by observing others and going through the process a few times yourself.

Appendix 1

Sample Questions

Accountability	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
1. Acts like an owner when they make decisions					
2. Can be counted on to do what they say they are going to do					
3. Remains knowledgeable of Company performance					
4. Defines roles, rights, and responsibilities of employees					
5. Tackles issues head on and finds solutions					
6. Takes responsibility for results					
7. Takes ownership of mistakes and learns from them					
8. Is someone you can trust					
9. Is someone who is there when you need them					
10. Encourages employees to take on greater responsibilities					
11. Informs supervisor of progress without having to be asked about it					
12. Is aware of problems or issues that may affect the organization					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain.

Communication Skills	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
13. Accurately attends to/understands ideas which are exchanged					
14. An effective listener who is responsive to information needs					
15. Checks for understanding throughout conversations or group presentations/discussions					
16. Communicates the vision of the organization to all employees					
17. Conducts regular performance feedback discussions with individuals and teams					
18. Considers the audience in how the communication is presented					
19. Conveys ideas confidently and succinctly					
20. Conveys priorities with right sense of urgency and importance					
21. Deal with difficult situations calmly and confidently					
22. Delivers difficult messages to co-workers in n appropriate manner					
23. Informs others about changes or developments in plans and goals					
24. Explains reasons behind decisions and actions					
25. Has the confidence to communicate effectively to all levels (from CEO down) of the organization, external customers, suppliers, as well as the senior counsel of other companies.					
26. Inspires others to take action based on his/her communications					
27. Listens actively & speaks clearly and directly.					
28. Reviews any "action steps" resulting from meetings or conversations before concluding to					

ensure clarity and that plans will be executed					
29. Takes time to listen to you					
30. Is visible and approachable					
31. Presents issues, ideas, and strategy concisely and clearly					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain.

Feedback	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
32. Accepts the views of others					
33. Actively seeks feedback from others					
34. Asks others for their ideas and opinions					
35. Is easy to approach with ideas and opinions					
36. Looks to others for input					
37. Seeks and utilizes data from several sources					
38. Seeks feedback to enhance performance					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain.

Leadership	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
39. Maximizes the efforts of all team members					
40. Uses persuasion and influence instead of micromanaging employees					
41. Able to influence others					
42. Able to align manpower, design work, and allocate tasks to achieve goals					
43. Able to organize the work of others					
44. Acts decisively in implementing decisions					
45. Coaches core team to document and hold co-workers accountable for assignments and commitments					
46. Critiques own performance as a means of self-improvement and initiates self-development activities					
47. Demonstrates empathy for the impact of change on people and processes					
48. Empowers others to achieve results and holds them accountable for actions					
49. Encourages and is receptive to working out problems and challenges --- no reluctance from team members to come forward with concerns/issues					
50. Empowers others to succeed within their jobs					
51. Implements decision and evaluates results					
52. Inspires a shared vision of being the best					
53. Looks for opportunities to enhance contributions to the bottom line					

54. Motivates others to reach and exceed organizational goals and objectives					
55. Performs effectively, even under frustrating or challenging work conditions					
56. Projects a "can-do" attitude when interfacing with peers, subordinates and customers(especially during difficult and challenging times)					
57. Supports Company sponsored training and development initiatives					
58. Takes ownership and accountability for results					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain.

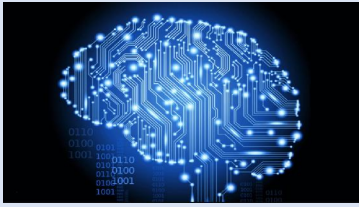
Problem Solving	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
59. Ability to solve problems at root cause rather than at symptom level					
60. Able to develop innovative solutions to problems					
61. Analyzes alternatives and selects a course of action					
62. Assumes new and difficult challenges and manages them as opportunities					
63. Collects relevant information and data					
64. Identifies fresh approaches and shows a willingness to question traditional assumptions					
65. Implements solutions and evaluates results					
66. Makes judgments based upon relevant information					
67. Open to the suggestions of others when working on a problem					
68. Analyzes systems and processes for opportunities to gain efficiency					
69. Selects operating indicators to track organizational performance over time and communicates current status to the organization					
70. Willingness and comfort level in handling multiple and often times conflicting priorities					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain.

Teamwork	Needs Improvement	Could Benefit from Development	Performs as Expected	Excels; Above Average	Is a Role Model for Others
71. Creates a culture that fosters and values collaboration					
72. Comes across as a reliable, committed team member					
73. Contributes to and supports team decision-making process					
74. Creates and implements team reward and recognition programs					
75. Creates opportunities to learn with other team members					
76. Demonstrates compassion and respect for others through actions; is concerned about their work and non-work issues					
77. Encourages Open Communication					
78. Ensures that the right people are on the team in the appropriate roles, including who should be team leader for a particular project/situation.					
79. Facilitates conflict resolution discussions between individuals in different teams					
80. Facilitates team discussions and problem-solving					
81. Fosters teamwork rather than individual competition					
82. Helps other managers in need of assistance, such as providing needed resources (co-workers, supplies, etc.)					
83. Is open to new ideas that may change own goals for benefit of the team					
84. Partners with people from other work units to improve overall performance					
85. Promotes open participation and communication within department and throughout the organization.					

86. Relates to all kinds of people tactfully, from shop floor to executives					
87. Creates a climate that encourages team participation					

Do you have any additional comments about this individual's job performance for this area? If so, please explain



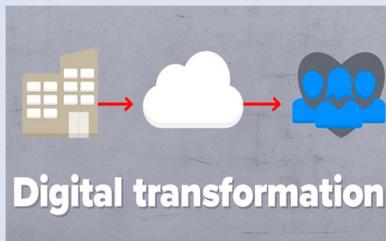
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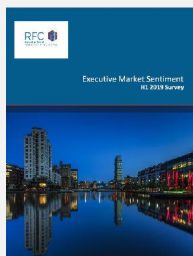
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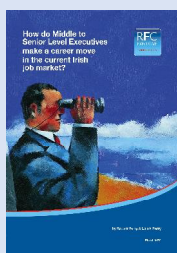
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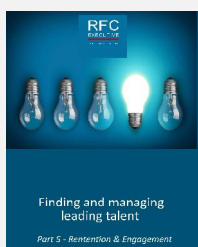
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Robert Ferry Profile



Robert has over 20 years experience in talent acquisition and management acting as a trusted advisor to a wide range of Irish and multinational clients. He holds a B.A. in HR and is a member of the chartered institute of personnel and development and is currently completing an MSc in Coaching.

Many organisations use his expertise when they need to review or improve leadership talent for their organisations. Robert has the depth of experience to understand how to identify, attract, select and retain the right leaders with the requisite skills, motivational and cultural fit to deliver.

Current role:

Robert is the founding director of RFC Executive, which was established in 1998. He is responsible for leading the team in delivering solutions for middle to senior level executives through to Board Directors. He also represents the firm as the Irish branch of CFR Global Executive Search.

Earlier Career:

Robert began his career in NCB Stockbrokers as a private client advisor. He then moved to join a leading specialist firm, Professional Placement Group, as a recruitment consultant covering accounting and financial services professionals. He progressed to director level leading the technical team which specialised in engineering and supply chain supply chain professionals and managers, a role he held for over six years until 1998.



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