



How to Get Short-term Buy-in and Long-term Support for 360-degree Feedback Surveys!

Many organizations use 360-degree feedback surveys to assess an employee's performance and potential talent as viewed by their colleagues, direct reports and manager. Executive coaches and consultants also use 360 surveys, in addition to many other tools, to help clients gain self-awareness and broader perspective on areas for development and current strengths.

A 360 survey can offer valuable insight into an employee's talents and contributions, yet some organizations are reluctant to introduce it. A poorly designed and executed 360 survey can create a negative impression with staff that could last for years. So, it is important to take the time to do it right, right from the beginning. If you implement the following **best practices**, you will gain short term buy-in and long-term support for this effective assessment tool. And experience **less stress** as a result!

Key elements of a successful 360 survey initiative:

1. A culture of trust exists in the organization – a prerequisite before introducing 360 surveys.
2. 360 surveys are first introduced for development purposes. Once employees endorse the tool, 360's can then be used for assessing performance.
3. Management explains the context for using this assessment and how the program aligns with the organization's talent strategies.

4. There is clear, open and regular communication with participants of a 360 survey especially with regard to sharing of results and next steps.
5. The survey is customized and the questions are clear, unambiguous and align with the individual's role and responsibilities.
6. The survey questions are reviewed by a cross-section of management and staff to test for any ambiguity or bias.
7. Raters of the survey participants have worked with or for the individual for at least 4 months, preferably 6 months or longer.
8. Raters are given sufficient time to complete the surveys (consider that some raters may have multiple surveys to complete).
9. A password protected, online survey system ensures anonymity – an experienced third party consultant also provides an added level of objectivity.
10. Survey subjects are given assistance to interpret their results and implement changes into their work practices. External consultants and coaches can be contracted to debrief results and provide ongoing support.

When 360 surveys are carried out in a professional, systematic manner from start to finish, they yield valuable insight for the individual and a significant return on investment for the organization.

If, previously, you were skeptical about introducing 360-degree feedback surveys into your organization, I hope this article has changed your mind 180 degrees!

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