360 Feedback Basics

What is 360 feedback?

Finding out how a leader's performance is perceived at each level in the organization is the first step in leadership development – 360 feedback identifies the specific leadership skills and behaviours that need development. The 360 process collects performance feedback from a particular leader and everyone who works closely with that leader, then compares the results to identify development needs. When used properly, 360 feedback is a very effective leadership development tool, and under the right circumstances, be used to inform decisions (e.g., staffing, appraisal, potential, etc.).

How is a 360 Survey Different from an Employee Opinion Survey?

Unlike employee opinion surveys that gather feedback from employees about the organization, 360 surveys ask people who work closely with a particular leader (like a boss, peers, direct reports, sometimes clients, etc) to provide feedback about that person's leadership skills and behaviours. The leader is also asked those same questions about their own performance.

360 feedback reports reveal the "differences in perception" between the leader's self-perceptions and those who work with him/her. The perceptual gaps are often what help participants identify where to focus first and which changes are most important.

BEFORE YOU LAUNCH --

Give People a Heads up

Whether by live announcement, a meeting agenda item, or internal email, it's important to let feedback providers know ahead of time, that soon they will be receiving an email invitation to participate in an upcoming 360 feedback process. A heads-up communication prior to survey launch, can set expectations with the entire organization, and give you a chance to:

- Express senior leadership commitment and the purpose of the 360 process
- Explain why participation is important and how the results will be used
- Outline what respondents need to do – i.e. include the tips below

Clarify Anonymity

Except for the person's manager, individual raters' scores will be combined with others' scores and displayed as averages. Likewise, comments are grouped with others' comments to preserve anonymity.

Tips for Raters

Here are some suggestions for providing beneficial 360 feedback.

Be Honest	To promote change
Be Constructive	To see improvement
Be Accurate	To increase feedback credibility.
Be Thoughtful	To provide meaningful feedback.
Be Responsive	To submit on time.

The feedback you provide will be a valuable resource to your colleagues to inform their personal development plans, encourage accountability and support sustainable change.