



How to achieve a successful 360-Degree Appraisal

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**Specialists in Employee Engagement Solutions incorporating 360
degree feedback**

<http://www.communicationchallenge.co.uk>

How to achieve a successful 360-Degree Appraisal

Using 360 degree appraisals is a very effective means of improving management and team performance. To succeed, they have to be carefully planned and well executed.

The keys to a successful 360 Appraisal

- Choose a supplier with 'proven' expertise who can manage the entire process for you
- Have clear objectives for the appraisals
- Gain commitment from Senior Management
- Choose the right time and the right people
- Ensure you prepare adequately and brief everyone involved
- Have a plan in place once you have the results
- Ensure the system you choose offers:
 - Flexibility in grouping participants eg. by relationship, function, location, management level
 - Flexibility to add or remove respondents
 - Clear instructions for accessing and completing the questionnaire
 - Simple, practical questions that are easy to understand by everyone
 - On-line access to a quick and easy process that is confidential and anonymous
 - Responsive 'help' facility
 - Ability to send reminders to participants to ensure high response rate
 - Output that is easy to understand and interpret
 - Output that automatically identifies strengths and development needs, differences in perceptions between groups, and priority areas for action
 - An effective process for feedback, action planning and learning
 - A system that makes it easy to identify and measure progress over time

Planning your approach

Firstly, you need to understand how the proposed 360-degree appraisal process fits with your current performance appraisal and people management processes. This will help you select the most appropriate questionnaire and process, and ensure that it produces real performance improvements.

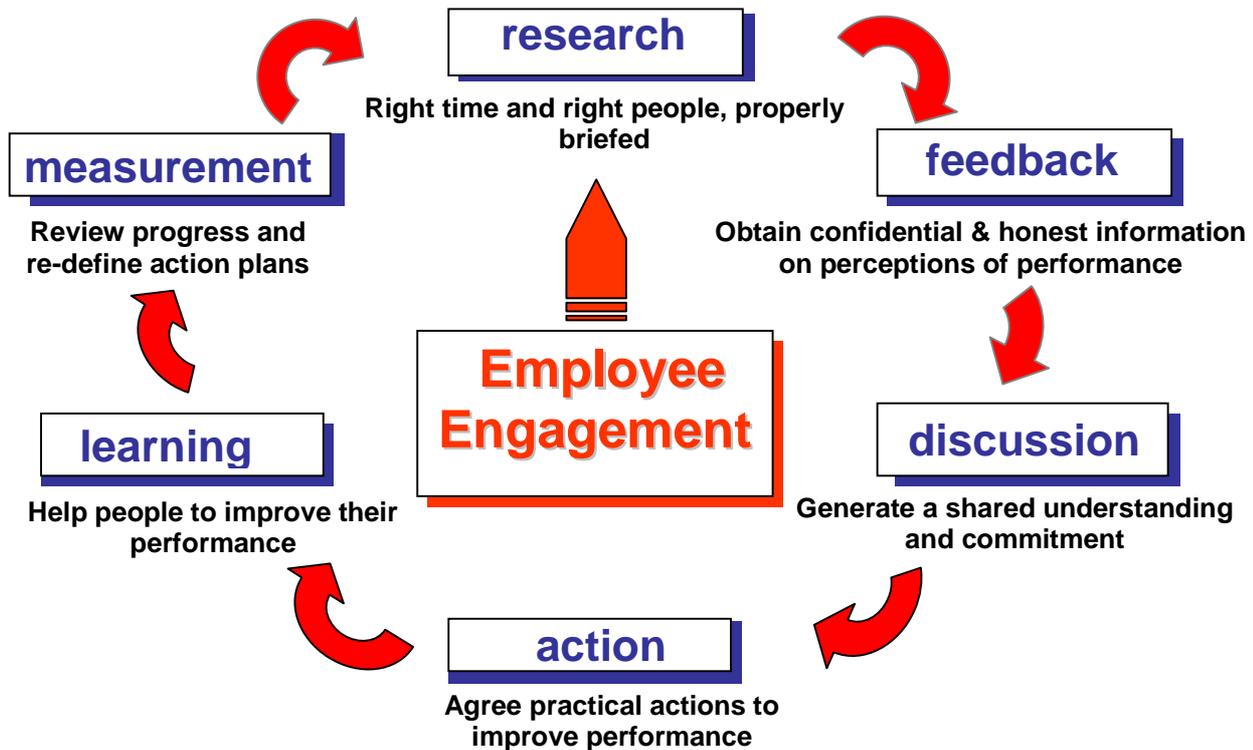
The level of investment in time and money that you make at the start of this process will pay dividends in the long-term. The first time you use a 360-degree process, you need to enlist the help of an expert so that you achieve the best possible outcomes. This will set the standard for future success and ensure that tangible performance improvements are achieved and maintained.

Long-term performance improvement can only succeed if you have an accurate picture of where to start and the majority of employees believe that it is in their best interests to work together to improve.

Executing your plan

The Engagement Cycle below illustrates the proven engagement process.

The Engagement Cycle



Research

Make sure that:

- Your chosen supplier has a full understanding of your needs and organisational culture
- You choose the right time to undertake the exercise
- Participants are properly briefed on the importance of their role in the success of the appraisals
- There is a plan to act on the results of the appraisals and this plan is communicated to your participants

Feedback

First you need to obtain an accurate picture of individuals 'perceptions' of the current situation. This must be:

- Obtained in a confidential and practical way which will not take up too much of their time
- Tangible and reliable to ensure that you gain an accurate picture key strengths and development needs

The best way to do this is to use a straightforward on-line questionnaire which can either be 'generic' or 'bespoke'. The benefit of using a 'generic' questionnaire is that it is 'tried and tested' and you will be able to compare against the other organisations that have used it. Don't try and re-invent the wheel' – most individuals face the same challenges whatever organisation or sector they work in and a properly constructed generic questionnaire will bring out all the important and relevant issues.

Questionnaires - Key Features you should look for:

Here is an example of an on-line index360 questionnaire that we provide for our clients.

coachingindex360
The Questionnaire
AN Other, Test Dept,
TestCo Ltd

Bottom Top 01. Enthusiastically spends significant time coaching
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 02. Makes time to prepare for each coaching session
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 03. Agrees roles and learning 'contract' with the coachee
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 04. Adapts influencing style to each coachee
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 05. Asks high quality questions, which help the coachee to 'self-discover' and think more widely
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 06. Provides balanced, constructive feedback
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 07. Demonstrates sincere interest in developing the coachee
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 08. Is aware of each coachee's performance and potential
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

Bottom Top 09. Ensures coaching session leaves the coachee feeling motivated and confident
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

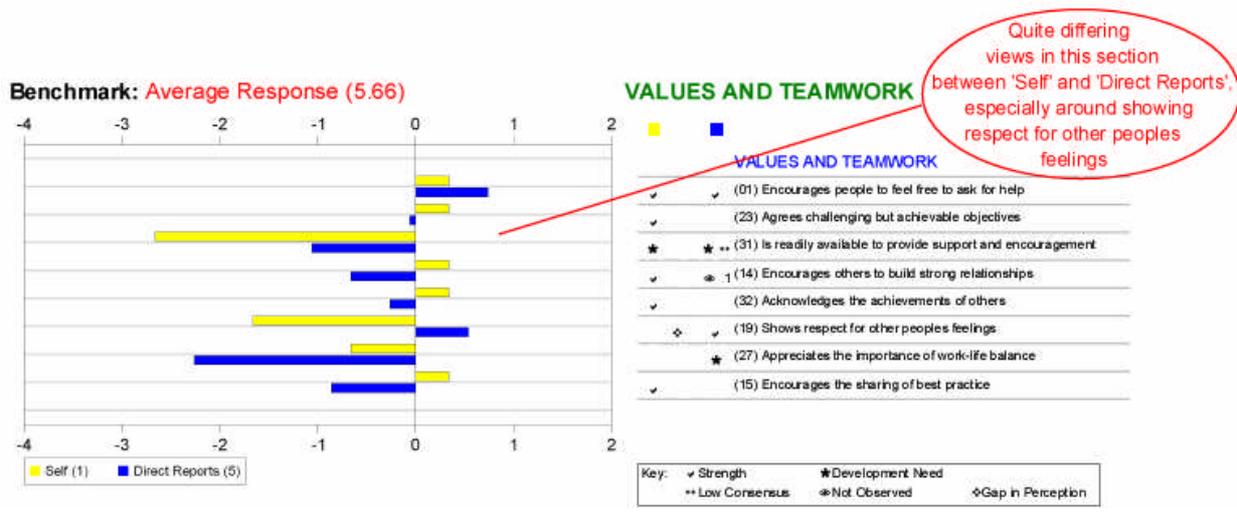
Bottom Top 10. Encourages discussion of options; does not just take the first suggestion
Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree Not Observed

- On-line, password protected - easy to access
- All positive statements (between 32 – 85) - easy to complete
- No jargon, short and unambiguous - easy to understand whatever level/role in the organisation
- Rating scale 1 to 7 (1 = disagree, 7 = agree) - each response is thought through
- Should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete
- Optional 'Comments' section - adding value
- Totally anonymous - honest and reliable feedback is obtained
- Based on an individual's 'perception' – which is their 'reality' – it is not a psychometric test
- 'Save' facility – if you run out of time you can 'save' and return to later to complete
- Easy page navigation – saves time
- Full 'Help' functionality – easy to understand
- 'Contact Us' facility – guaranteed response within 24 hours.

Output - Key Requirements

The format of the output from the questionnaires is crucial to the success of the process. The use of bar charts around a 'benchmark' makes it much easier for the participants to understand.

Below is an example of output from index360 that we provide for our clients.



Quite differing views in this section between 'Self' and 'Direct Reports', especially around showing respect for other peoples feelings

- no complicated statistics and graphs - making it easy to engage individuals
- uncluttered pages - making it easy to understand and work with the data
- key strengths/development needs highlighted - to quickly see the priorities
- gaps in perception measured between individuals and groups - to allow you to open up discussion and prioritise
- measurement of trends and change over time - to review progress and maintain commitment
- individual and group profiles and comparisons - to highlight the priority areas and 'blue-print' best practice

Discussion

Gathering feedback is only the start. The information obtained from a 360 appraisal does not provide the solution – it acts as a 'catalyst' to open up discussion with the very people who provided the feedback in order to find out why they are feeling this way. By involving them in an independently facilitated discussion of the results, you can generate a shared understanding and commitment to work together to improve, by building on strengths and developing areas of weakness.

The ability to compare feedback different individuals also enables the 'blue-printing' of best practice across the organisation.

There are various options for delivering feedback, facilitating discussion and generating action plans depending on individuals' needs and circumstances.

Developmental Workshops are particularly valuable when working with several individuals to build on the information obtained from 360 appraisals.

Action

The 'facilitated' discussion process leads to practical actions agreed by each individual on how they are going to work to improve performance. These actions need to be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

Learning

Ongoing support to achieve your action plan is essential. This support is likely to involve a combination of independent facilitation, training and coaching depending on what needs to be achieved. Encouraging individuals to 'buddy-up' with a colleague whose strengths compliment their development needs and vice versa helps to maintain commitment and enthusiasm, in addition to fostering a more supportive and open culture.

Measurement

How do you know things are improving and how do you ensure that the momentum is maintained?

Regular progress reviews are critical to sustain enthusiasm and commitment. Ideally you should repeat the process on a regular basis, preferably every nine to twelve months, to monitor and review progress and re-define your action plans, based on the results.

Benchmarking

In our experience internal benchmarking is the most useful as all organisations are different, and by undertaking internal benchmarking you are comparing 'like with like'. This may involve benchmarking progress over time, as set out above, and can include comparing different parts or levels of an organisation at the same time.

About the Author

Valerie Heritage has been providing Employee Engagement Solutions to a wide range of organisations, in both public and private sectors, for the past twenty years.

Using index360©, a proven on-line feedback solution, she provides organisations with a practical and reliable way to engage people in working together to improve performance.

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