

What is Multi-Rater (360°) Feedback?

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The purpose of any performance management system should be to guide the individual employee and groups toward desired outcomes, provide reinforcement and supply corrective feedback for making adjustments.

The 360° feedback report gives participants a fair and well-rounded impression of how others view their work. When the person who is rated agrees to share the results of this multi-rater assessment with management, the supervisor gets an overall perspective about the individual's skills/abilities in order to facilitate process improvement, remove barriers to success and acquire needed resources. Feedback is provided from multiple sources (raters) including self, boss, peers, direct reports, and, in some cases, customers and suppliers.

Why use Multi-Rater assessments in Executive Coaching?

1. Allows **the person being coached** to gain perspectives from others in an objective, non-threatening, confidential manner.
2. Provides the individual with data for self-reflection and self-awareness.
3. Assists in identifying individual development needs and action items.
4. Helps surface patterns of behavior, especially when used in conjunction with other during the coaching process.
5. Provides a platform for dialogue between the **outside coach** and the executive.

Tips When Selecting a Multi-Rater Instrument

1. Research validity, design and intended use/audience of assessment.
2. Determine additional development tools and complimentary assessments available through assessment tool vendors. **Note:** It is not recommended to start out with a 360° assessment in the self-awareness process. Before taking the 360° feedback assessment, allow the person being rated to get a feel for their strengths and behavioral tendencies using one or more other self-assessment tools.
3. Understand the cost of the instrument (often there is a processing charge per report and/or number of raters).
4. Review layout and ease of understanding 360 ° feedback reports.
5. Check to see if a certification process is required to interpret report to the person being rated.

Tips for Ensuring Success When Utilizing a Multi-Rater Process

1. Fully understand the dimensions the 360° feedback is measuring and how to interpret the meaning of the results to the person being rated.
2. Allow the person being rated to select the 'raters' with guidance from the coach or the corporate HR representative. **Selected raters should be individuals who:**

- a) Have observed the performance of the person being rated on a regular basis.
 - b) Have first-hand knowledge of the person being rated's work behaviors.
 - c) Have worked/interacted with the person being rated for a minimum of 6-months.
 - d) Are open to providing honest and accurate feedback – both positive and developmental.
3. In order to protect the anonymity of individuals and maintain the credibility of the instrument, a minimum of three raters should be used for each category except boss/supervisor.
 4. Make sure a process has been established to protect the confidentiality of the process.
 5. **Incorporate results of the 360° feedback** with other assessments used as part of a development/action plan.

Proper Implementation of Multi-Rater Assessments is Critical to Success

When the person being reviewed knows that the 360° feedback results are meant solely for his or her personal development (and will not be shared with others within the company without his or her permission), he or she will carefully compare their self-ratings with all the other respondent ratings. When there is a significant gap between the self and respondent ratings, the rated employee will usually swallow that bitter pill and almost immediately develop a personal strategy to get back on track.

However, if the person being rated is not ready to accept this powerful 360° feedback and/or learns that his or her results have been shared with others without permission, trust in management will be lost and negative performance or even employee-driven legal action can result.

With proper implementation policies and procedures, the 360° feedback from multiple work associates can be highly motivating. Used as a springboard for professional growth, the multi-rater assessments can make a powerful impact on an individual's career by focusing work effort on company goals. Applying this valuable 360° feedback information, participants can continuously improve their **leadership** and **management** effectiveness.