

360 ADVICE GUIDE: FIVE PROGRESSIVE WAYS TO USE 360 QUESTIONNAIRES

Maintain and develop good talent
within organisations



Introduction

How to maintain and develop good talent within organisations is seen as increasingly important to enhancing performance and financial gain.¹ Added to this challenge is how to engage and develop employees within an increasingly VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) world.

How are you managing these current, pressing challenges in an environment where there is competition for talent? In an age where an increasing proportion of employees have grown up in the social media world, where instant and continual feedback is the norm and expected, are you able to fulfil their expectations?

Many organisations utilise 360 feedback questionnaires to feed into annual reviews or development programmes. However, 360 questionnaires are often overlooked regarding the range of ways they can be effectively incorporated into other organisational processes, and their role in helping to address the challenges described above.

Here, we explore progressive ways in which you can utilise this arguably under-valued, powerful and efficient tool: the 360 feedback questionnaire.

¹ <https://www.gartner.com/en/human-resources/role/human-resources-leaders>

1 Coaching

There is an increasing recognition within the business and HR/Talent community that the VUCA world in which we live and work requires vertical development to progress the creative capacity in leaders, so they can continually transform and navigate within the rapidly changing market conditions.² This has been coined the 'New Leadership Imperative'. An increasingly common L&D response to enable this vertical development is coaching.

A challenge of coaching (and in fact arguably workshops, e-Learning and most learning interventions) is to capture the return on investment (ROI) or perhaps more appropriately return on expectations (ROE). A bespoke, quick, pulse 360 questionnaire which could be used once when the coaching goals have been established and then at regular intervals thereafter (e.g. three months, six months, etc.) is a powerful way to:

- Help first identify the areas for the coaching to focus on
- Track if the desired behaviour change is progressing, or if the coachee needs to re-evaluate
- Keep the coaching commitments front of mind for the coachee.

//

How to maintain and develop good talent within organisations is seen as increasingly important to enhancing performance and financial gain.

//



² <https://hbr.org/2018/05/managers-cant-be-great-coaches-all-by-themselves>

2 Follow-up from development centres

While development centres act as a great way to provide employees with a sharpened awareness of their strengths and potential development areas, tracking learning and behavioural change following a development centre is often something that is not well executed. Three-month, six-month and nine-month '360 check-ins' are an effective way to do this following a development centre.

Once development interventions have been put in place to help the employee fill in the identified skills and behavioural gaps, this series of 360 questionnaires could be used to track progress. Furthermore, it is a less expensive way of measuring development progress in comparison to running a second development centre to review progress.

If running development centres with colleagues and teams, having the development centre participants act as raters on one another's 360 questionnaire feedback is also a good way of re-emphasising the core behaviours/skills which form part of this development initiative, and gives the opportunity to reflect on these areas more deeply periodically throughout the year.



3 How do you track and keep alive high-potential and leadership programmes?

High-potential and leadership programmes are a great way to retain, develop and increase the visibility of your key talent. Once they have completed their six or 12-month programme, how do you keep their development alive and track whether the time-intensive and financial intervention had any impact?

A bespoke 360 questionnaire, aligned to your leadership competencies is a great, efficient way to track developmental progress against what you have identified as key behaviours from your leaders, and to measure the impact of the programme in order to help course correct against any aspects of the programme materials. The outcome can also provide rich, supportive career development data, for example, aligning a high-potential's strength to a different area of the business, encouraging them to do an assignment there, to increase their breadth and knowledge before taking an upwards step in the organisation.

4 Performance meetings

For over three years a large debate has been alive, within the worlds of HR, leadership and management, business psychology and neuroscience, in relation to performance management systems. This centred around the concerns that employee's performance is not enhanced by performance management processes, in fact: 'in the context of neuroscience research, most PM practices turn out to damage the performance they are intended to improve'.³

The response to this revelation was that many companies started to remove their annual formal performance ratings, opting for more fluid processes focused on continuous and ongoing feedback. This is necessary to provide the employee with an indication of how their behaviour and skill is aligned to organisational requirements.

Whether you decide to ditch your annual performance ratings or keep them, sustainably increasing performance requires effective performance conversations. How can an employee make helpful changes to their behaviours or skills if they don't know whether what they are doing is effective or even necessary?

5 Culture change

Behaviour change is hard for people and often the very behaviour that leaders want to see from their employees is the behaviour that they themselves are not modelling. Sometimes this is a blind spot for them that they are not consciously aware of, or indeed that other people did not perceive them as demonstrating it and 'walking the talk'.

When undergoing an organisational change, it is critical that those who may be impacted can provide their insights on progress and suggestions for improvement. A 360 questionnaire can help quickly gain the perspective of employees (and perhaps external stakeholders) to understand where some improvements are needed or where more focus needs to be spent. For example, gender pay gap reporting is a big concern for companies from a branding perspective and because it is recognised that, as well as morally being the right thing to do, diversity is correlated to increased performance.⁵ Displaying behaviours that are needed to help increase diversity is one such area where targeted '360 pulse check questionnaires' can be beneficial.

70% of transformation
change projects fail.⁴

³ [https://www.strategy-business.com/article/00275?Kill your performance ratings](https://www.strategy-business.com/article/00275?Kill%20your%20performance%20ratings) Rock, Davis and Jones, August 2014.

⁴ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2017/07/25/1-reason-why-most-change-management-efforts-fail/?sh=6a21b800546b>

⁵ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/still-looking-for-room-at-the-top-ten-years-of-research-on-women-in-the-workplace>

The last four-to-five years have seen an increase in companies ditching their annual and mid-year performance ratings in favour of encouraging their managers to have meaningful, continuous development feedback conversations with their employees.⁶ 360 questionnaires can be easily leveraged to feed into these continuous feedback processes.

An easy to use, quick to complete 360 questionnaire would be a helpful way for managers to gather useful evidence to share within their ongoing feedback discussions. This could be accompanied by training on how to have effective feedback conversations and why they are a necessary investment in a manager's time.

Summary

To recap, where ongoing and regular feedback is crucial for the success of a process, 360 questionnaires can be an extremely useful tool to support a range of situations. 360s can add value to processes such as coaching and development centres, through to supporting change implementation in organisations.

Gaining input and insight from multiple sources can be invaluable for individuals, teams and organisations to help identify areas for development and to also highlight and reinforce strengths. Flexible 360 tools can lend themselves to the growing need for regular, ongoing feedback by allowing the design and delivery of quick, focused and easy to complete questionnaires which can provide insightful feedback which is aligned to the specific goals of many organisational processes.



⁶ <https://hbr.org/2015/09/why-more-and-more-companies-are-ditching-performance-ratings>

