



## Selling the Value of Bespoke 360 Degree Feedback to Key Stakeholders

### A practical guide for learning professionals and consultants

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#### Benefits of 360 Degree Feedback

The British Psychological Society summarises the broad benefits of 360 Degree Feedback (i) as follows:

- Increased understanding of the behaviours required to improve both individual and organisational effectiveness
- More focused development activities, built around the skills and competencies required for successful organisational performance
- Increased involvement of people at all levels of the organisation
- Increased individual ownership for self-development and learning
- Increased familiarity with the implications of cultural or strategic change

#### 1. How can 360 Degree Feedback add value to my organization's training, development and coaching programmes?

Most professionals think of 360 Degree Feedback as a tool to help with individual coaching, training and development. In this context, the 360 helps learners to become aware of how they are seen by their work colleagues, and pinpoints areas of strength, as well behaviours they should modify. A good 360 can be a springboard for improving individual learning, skills and behaviours. It is, therefore, a very important starting point for creating a development plan for individual learners that is tailored around their personal activities and behaviours.

As a consultant, 360 Degree Feedback gives you a toolkit to support the development and performance of individual learners in your organization.

... EXPERT COMMENT ...

Clive Bradley, Managing Director, The Development Matrix

"I can count on one hand the amount of times that an organization has said, '...and we'd like to use the 360 Degree Feedback.' Clients talk about how they'd like do some development, and improve the individual learner, but in general, it's me as the consultant that suggests we start with a benchmark. That benchmark is created by a 360 tool. There may be other tools and development items the organization suggests, but the most consistent thing for me is the 360 tool. Other things come and go around it, but it's the 360 that I put first and foremost into the conversation.

Now if we utilize the 360 correctly, it will give the individual complete feedback on their current skills, including the good, the

bad and the indifferent, from their peers, their subordinates, and manager. This then gives us a good basis to start the dialogue

around what their starting position looks like, and where they want to go."

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## 2. [How can 360 Degree Feedback benefit my clients in a strategic way?](#)

Whilst organisations benefit from individual improvements, 360 can offer additional value as a strategic development and performance tool. Structured individual development plans can lead the way into identifying common training needs within groups or teams. Group 360 reports can be brilliant for team facilitation and performance planning, and the 360 can provide valuable data for identifying, tracking and developing learners on talent programmes.

Moreover, 360s that are specifically designed for the organisation, that is, bespoke 360s, can form the basis for defining the outcomes of a behaviour change programme, and then for measuring the success of those outcomes on an ongoing basis. In fact, the very process of creating a bespoke 360 Degree Feedback tool can really help to put words and actions around the objectives of the change programme.

... EXPERT COMMENTS ...

Sue Oliver, Business and Coaching Psychologist, Business Psychology for Leaders

“What I love about 360 Degree Feedback is that it's not just ‘let’s run some one-to-one sessions and look at individual

development’, although it is that too.

It's actually part of the more strategic application of a management development programme. In this case, 360 can be linked to the training and development strategy for the organisation. So we could have a group of 50 managers and from the 360, we can see that they are a strong team. But we can also see that there appears to be a delegation problem in the overall team. The 360

feedback will allow us as an organisation to then look at the results and ask ourselves ‘Are we providing the right environment and

support to let these managers delegate? Maybe not.”

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Clive Bradley, Managing Director, The Development Matrix

“In my experience, what learners tend to do when they get their 360 Degree Feedback report is to go to page 4 and page 9 (or

the equivalent). Page 4 is the summary of scores and page 9 is the individual comments that respondents have

made about them. For the learner, it's initially ‘let's cut to the chase’; this means that they may miss the subtleties. But it's the subtleties that really matter, and allow them either to buy in and accept the feedback messages, or to challenge those messages with a bit of rigour.

Quite often, in my experience with senior teams, learners will say, ‘I've heard all this before. We don't need to go through this process. We are all old, wise and experienced enough to be able to have these conversations with one another without the need for hiding behind the 360 process.’ Of course, I will then say, ‘I think you've missed the point! If you already know these things, why haven't you done them differently up to now?!’

The 360 Degree Feedback gives you so much more ability to change the organisation, because an individual's actions and behaviours at the board level may well influence the behaviours and actions of their subordinates and their teams. This then has a direct correlation to the performance of the organisation, the results they get, and the culture within which they operate.

When you explain it from that point of view, as a bigger picture, the board and senior management will say, ‘Okay, I get it.’

"360 degree feedback valued by Sunday Times Top 100 Best Places to Work"

### 3. In what specific situations can 360 Degree Feedback add value?

The one-word answer to this question is ‘change’. People working in organisations most need structured feedback in times of change, whether that is in individual terms, such as changing roles or getting promoted, when they need to manage and motivate others, or when they are being called upon to change the organisation and use new behaviours are needed to achieve that change.

At these critical change points, an awareness of one's skills, behaviours and capabilities, measured against the requirements of the new role, is the first step in the learner understanding what they will need to do to progress – or indeed, what strengths they already have to do so.

Surprisingly, a survey published in 2009 (ii) showed that only one quarter of the companies surveyed were judged to be 'good' (as opposed to fair or poor) at helping people transition from 'individual contributor' status to manager roles.

. . . EXPERT COMMENTS . . .

Clive Bradley, Managing Director, The Development Matrix

“For any organisation, there's no point in promising the world to your customers, stakeholder and employees, talking about stretch targets and strategic intents, if you have no idea whether you have the resources to achieve them. If your strategy is not aligned with the resources that you've got available, then it's going to fail. A good analogy is: I'm driving a car and decide I want to drive at 140 mph, but I have a problem if I have no idea whether the car can actually do that speed!

So for the organization organisation, 360 Degree Feedback can be a means of understanding the resources available to them, so they can then make an informed decision about their people performance and development strategy. The way I explain it to my clients is that we need to get a benchmark in place, and one of the key things for creating that benchmark is decent dialogue around the 360 Degree Feedback and how to use it to best effect.”

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Sue Thompson, Project Coordinator, Eliesha Training

“Clients need to have a look at where their people are before they start a major training or development programme, because what learners think of as being their own developmental needs are not always the case, or the issue the organisation needs to deal with. It's one thing sitting down in the annual appraisal with employees and saying to them, 'Okay, what do you think you need to do in the next year?' But if you haven't got any hard evidence around that, it makes it that conversation much more difficult. This is true particularly in the environment that we're in now, where resources are limited and budgets for learning and development just aren't there anymore. So it's vital to get right to the heart of what each individual employee needs to learn and improve.

Therefore, the organisation will clearly benefit by using its competency and behavioural framework, which can then be tracked by the 360 Degree Feedback, and so relate the feedback exactly to what the employee needs in order to be able to do their job more successfully.

Peter Honey, Occupational Psychologist, Author & Management Trainer

“Senior managers are very good examples of people who are often deprived of information; either they are fed with heavily laundered information or no information reaches them at all, which I think is how they can so easily get out of touch. In fact, it's impossible for senior managers to really know what's going on. It's very likely that they're going to be lacking feedback, which creates a serious problem.”

#### 4. What's the difference between an off-the-shelf and a bespoke 360 Degree Feedback tool, and which is better?

There are many off-the-shelf 360 Degree Feedback questionnaires on the market; many of these are excellent. These types of tools are based on a particular model of leadership, management or role. The same set of competencies and statements (or questions) is used with a large number of learners.

These off-the-shelf tools are great for individual coaching and career development where the coach and the learner are focused on the learner's own development journey, without specific reference to their organisational goals. So the choice of an off-the-shelf questionnaire will depend on the preference of the coach, the role and aspirations of the learner, and the overall context of the coaching activity (e.g. management, leadership, EQ).

Bespoke 360 Degree Feedback is an altogether different animal. A bespoke 360 Degree Feedback can be built around the

organisation's own competencies, key capabilities, leadership frameworks and values. It adds value by being able to define the behaviours and the skills that people need specifically in the organisation, and then to measure these.

For example, a consultant may be asked to create a development programme for leaders or partners in a law firm. That development programme is based very specifically on what that law firm wants to achieve – what its goals are – and therefore the behaviours it wants to define for its people. Therefore, a bespoke 360 would be a very powerful tool for creating a common understanding of what leadership means, and looks like, in their firm – and what is expected of their people

... EXPERT COMMENT ...

Jane Beirne, Learning and Development Director, Jane Beirne Learning Solutions Limited

"I think that the bespoke 360 Degree Feedback is really useful in looking at cultural fit to make sure that the language and the values of the organisation are reflected in the questions. To me, the 360 reflects the values at work within that organisation and therefore, what's important to that organisation might be quite different to another.

Therefore, how people are being assessed will be in the context of that organisation. That's really where you get the benefit

of the bespoke 360 - working closely within the parameters of that organisation."

#### CASE STUDY

A Strategic 360 for a New Merged Group of Companies

We recently had a call from a organization whose organisation has been acquiring smaller businesses in its sector, where it has a long history of success and a trusted brand. As part of the integration process, a set of leadership skills and values had been developed for the new, larger organisation, and all managers were to participate in a programme to develop those skills and embed those values. However the provider of the development programme was only able to offer the organization an off-the-shelf 360 Degree Feedback to support the programme.

For the organization, a bespoke 360 that stated the leadership behaviours and the shared values, in a common language, was critical to the success of the integration programme. We are now working

with them to develop a 360 which will then be used all around the organization's organisation to develop a common corporate and a set of shared values and behaviours.

Additionally the online questionnaires and reports will be branded to match the integrated organisation's branding, even down to the font size and the colours in the report!

. . . EXPERT COMMENT . . .

Sue Oliver, Business and Coaching Psychologist, Business Psychology for Leaders

"In a situation where I haven't done 360 Degree Feedback with the organization before, I have to think quite carefully about what will work for them. A good example would be a small manufacturing firm, with only 100 staff, that doesn't do

performance appraisals that well, but actually wants to change. In that case, I would ideally love to help them find some proper

competencies and do 360 based around those, but I know that's not going to work for them at this point.

So in that kind of situation, the off-the-shelf 360 would work really well, not just for budget reasons, but also because you sometimes need to do this kind of work in baby steps. This is the consultant's dilemma: you don't want to sell the organization a Rolls Royce when all they need is a Ford. You might scare them off, so it's important not to oversell.

So as long as I don't go against my ethics and my values, what I would suggest to the organization in this situation is, 'How about if we just think about three or four key competencies of managers in general. Here is what the research has shown us...' (it could be managing self, managing others, managing communication, managing the business, for example).

That's when I think an off-the-shelf is perfect. The organization doesn't need anything more complicated. They're not used to behavioural language or observation. They don't know what getting feedback is, so you've got to make it simple, but at the same time, professional and effective."

## 5. How can a bespoke 360 Degree Feedback work as an effective organisational change tool for my clients?

A bespoke 360 Degree Feedback (as described in 4 above) can be a remarkably flexible and strategic tool when it is designed

to align with the organisation's competencies, key capabilities, values and performance metrics.

We have worked with clients using 360 Degree Feedback to support a wide variety of HR and Training and Development activities, including:

- Assessing current management and leadership skills
- Evaluating potential for management and leadership
- Talent identification and tracking
- Strategic capability assessment and tracking
- Development planning for performance appraisal
- Total Quality Management and Lean (iii) programmes

- Investors In People (iv): defining and tracking current and future progress

... IN THE NEWS ...

Google methodologies for business success

“We measure people every 90 days. We get 360 degree feedback on people every 180 days and that feedback is published to the whole company. People want reality. Ninety per cent of the rewards end up going to ten percent of the people.” - John Herlihy, Google VP of Global Ad Operations

Cadbury introduces ‘720-degree’ feedback

“Not content with 360-degree feedback for her new leadership development programme, Sarah Smith, head of the L&D centre of excellence for Cadbury UK&I, went a step further – “720-degree” feedback includes input from a leader’s

family and friends, as well as business colleagues and direct reports.”

... EXPERT COMMENT ...

Jane Beirne, Learning and Development Director, Jane Beirne Learning Solutions Limited

“Although for me, 360 Degree Feedback is still a very personal process, it can also be a strategic organisational change tool. If a member of a senior team, or any group of people in the organisation, is going through the 360 Degree Feedback process, one of the by-products is that they now have a platform to discuss their development and their needs

in a more open forum. It encourages more open and frank conversation and an environment that actually supports development, by pulling teams through high levels of challenge and high levels of support.

For example, if it were a line manager who had already been through the 360 Degree Feedback process, then he or she would be far more proactive in their support and challenge of their reports, and also of their peer groups. So while 360 works as an individual tool, where everyone in a group has modelled and demonstrated the 360 behaviours, and has been facilitated and encouraged to talk about their learnings as a result, it becomes integrated into the cultural piece. Therefore, the benefit is that you get a much more open and frank exchange.”

## 6. How can 360 Degree Feedback be strategic for me as learning professional or consultant?

As we have discussed, a bespoke 360 can be a brilliant tool for defining the outcomes, behaviours and skills that an organisation wants to develop in its people. The 360 is particularly useful for defining hard-to-measure, behavioural outcomes in management or leadership programmes.

By building a strategic 360 Degree Feedback for the organization, that aligns with your training or development programme, and that measures the changes you will deliver, you can prove the return on your programme and the value of what you provide to your organization.

The 360 can also give you great data that you can take to your organization, prompting further discussions and analysis, identifying further training needs, highlighting themes and predicting future requirements – overall, giving you a good reason to keep talking and working with your organization – and demonstrating your value and expertise.

Using the right tools that give you a high level of flexibility in design and reporting, 360 Degree Feedback can provide lots more opportunities to introduce new concepts, training, development and talent programmes based on that 360. The group aggregated 360 results, for example, may highlight some additional coaching or training needs that you can then provide to your organization. It's a great tool for opening up new opportunities hence it can be very strategic for your consulting business.

Interestingly, only two-fifths of organisations surveyed in the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) 2013 survey said that they used 360 Degree Feedback to evaluate management and leadership skills of their employees (v). There is therefore a wide area of opportunity for consultants to help organisations use 360 as a strategic development tool

. . . EXPERT COMMENTS . . .

Jane Beirne, Learning and Development Director, Jane Beirne Learning Solutions Limited

"360 Degree Feedback has been a great tool to use with my clients. It opens dialogue and it gives a different focus from just a one-to-one coaching session. It certainly brings a different dynamic. The professional 360 Degree Feedback reports that each

learner receives are very useful. The feedback can be correlated with other tools that you might have used as part of your service.

From the credibility and professional point of view, it supports the services and offers that I can provide to my clients."

Julian Hammond, Director, TIPS for Good Management

"On some occasions, the 360 Degree Feedback results gave us more opportunity for one-to-one coaching of our clients' learners.

☑For example, on one particular management development programme, we had created and agreed on eight

management competencies with the organization. Each individual wouldn't necessarily need to work on all the competencies, so we used the 360 Degree Feedback interviews to 'cherry pick' the things each learner really needed from the course. In that way, each learner came in to the course with their own personal plan. In practice, this meant that for one person, the session on time management might be of particular importance, for somebody else it might be leading people, developing teams or process improvement. In this, way we were able to provide a tailored programme for each learner, which is much more effective than

everyone having to learn things they don't need.

I've also seen it happen where, following the post course, one-to-one 360 Degree Feedback debriefing with a learner, further development opportunities become apparent. An example would be leadership, which had only been at an introductory level on the management development programme. However several learners wanted to know more about the subject as a result of their 360 Degree Feedback. This then gave rise to further discussions with the organization about follow-up programmes or coaching support in the business."



## 7. Can I use 360 Degree Feedback to evaluate the quality of our organization development programmes?

It's typically difficult to run effective training evaluations at the Kirkpatrick Levels 3 and 4 (transfer of behaviour change to the workplace and results for the business, respectively). That's because those levels are about observation and measurement on behaviours in the workplace. For this reason, 360 Degree Feedback is one of the few tools that can assess the effect of training at those levels, by using it as a 'before-and-after' measurement for organization interactions, leadership, teamwork, talent and other behavioural change activities.

Sue Thompson, Project Coordinator, Eliesha Training

"Ultimately, it's being able to show the benefit of what we do and the return on investment, which really matters. That's why when a major organization in the public sector embarked upon a two-year development programme, the learners first completed the 360 Degree Feedback exercise, creating metrics to inform the programme. At the end of two years, we ran another 360 to see how far they had progressed.

That's one of the reasons we've kept on winning this work – we have had this organization's business now for about six years, and

that's because we do offer them something that is different to the other providers.

Our experience is that this approach works, and we use this as an example when we speak to new clients."

Julian Hammond, Director, TIPS for Good Management

"An example of being able to measure ROI (return on investment) of 360 Degree Feedback occurred with a organization who had a number of issues with what they initially described as 'poor time management'.

Each month they would have literally hundreds of meetings throughout the organisation. So we presented some techniques and methods to sharpen up their meeting practice, knowing they would get some real tangible benefit in the business and be able to measure it. Before the training commenced, we ran a bespoke 360 feedback which identified their behaviours and included a method of rating their effectiveness. Approximately three months after the training, we interviewed the learners again using exactly the same questions and repeated the 360 rating exercise.

The results clearly demonstrated the difference before and after the training intervention and, for the vast majority of learners, had improved by the second round of 360 Degree Feedback. This improvement could be expressed in terms of financial value to the business."

## CASE STUDY

### Measuring the Impact of a Global Management Development Programme

PLAN is one of the largest international development agencies in the world, focused on helping children in developing countries. The organisation is growing by 20% yearly and has nearly 8000

employees and 60,000 volunteers, most of whom are in the field making a difference to the lives of more than 1.5 million children and their families.

As part of a global management training strategy, a comprehensive Global Training Needs Analysis was initiated which evaluated staff in 37 countries. The Learning and Development team analysed 30 urgent development needs and prioritised them in 4 key disciplines:

- Developing as a Leader: e.g. 'Strategic Thinking' and 'Giving Direction'
- Working with People: e.g. 'Nurturing and Developing Others'
- Communication Skills: e.g. 'Negotiating and Influencing'
- Business Skills: e.g. 'Building Partnerships', 'Resource Mobilisation', and 'Participation Skills'

A major design project ensued, resulting in a partnership including PLAN and a number of specialist training design and delivery providers. A key element of the programme was a bespoke 360 Degree Feedback programme that measured the programme participants before and after their learning activities.

The programme was extremely successful, and the 360 Degree Feedback demonstrated this – a sample graph from the Towards Maturity Case Study (vi) is shown below.

## 8. How can I link or combine 360 Degree Feedback data with other data to create new insights for our clients?

With the ability to access and report data in different ways, another exciting opportunity for offering insights to your organization is in combining the 360 with other data, helping the organization to make better informed decisions.

Data that can be combined creatively include basic human resources data such as absence, sickness, qualifications, etc. (which abound in most organisations), data produced by processes such as performance review and 360 Degree Feedback, satisfaction and engagement data, exit data and performance analytics. (vii)

When the 360 Degree Feedback is run using online data capture, your 360 system should be able to help you to combine the results with other data and create new insights for your clients.

### CASE STUDY

#### Identifying Leadership Potential and Succession

An organisation in the professional services sector was looking for insights on leadership potential and whether they had the people with the right leadership skills to be able to take on critical roles in the upcoming years. This was a strategic imperative and critical in a highly competitive and fast-changing professional services sector.

By combining 360 feedback data, development centre ratings and other data, the organization was able to rate each candidate on a scale of readiness for a leadership role.

They were then able to identify candidates who were ready for a leadership role, those who needed more development, and critically, people who would not be put forward for future development at this high level. The information helped the organisation to target its efforts in the most strategic and cost-effective way.

For more examples of the kinds of data that can be combined in this way, see the 'Turn Talent into Real Information' article in Harvard Business Review Blog Network. (viii)

### 9. What if a organization wants to do 360 Degree Feedback, but doesn't know what culture they are trying to enhance or create? Can a bespoke 360 help them answer that question?

The actual task of designing a 360 really forces the organisation to think about what they want people to do differently, beyond

the 'headline' behaviours and value statements.

The creation or change of organisation's culture is a complex project, but one of the keys to creating change is making the changes relevant to how individuals, teams and managers do their job every day. By doing this, general aspirational statements are then broken down into observable, measurable actions, through the bespoke 360 design.

The consultant can help the organisation to state and test the changes it wants to see: what they look like, who sees them, and when.

. . . EXPERT COMMENT . . .

Sue Mills, Principal Organization Relationship Manager, Eliesha Training

"What we try to do is to fit the 360 Degree Feedback into other interventions, making sure that what we're delivering is right for

the organization. It's really important that we work with the organization to help them consider what they want their outcomes to be before they embark on 360 Degree Feedback.

Often organisations can think, 'We've used 360 in appraisal and development - that's a great way to get people motivated,' but they don't know what they want learners to get out of it and they don't understand how best to (make it) work for them."

### 10. Are there certain types of business or sectors in particular that benefit from 360 Degree Feedback?

You can run 360 Degree Feedback in every sector, especially since it's now possible to use technology to contact people and complete 360s over the internet, on mobile phones and tablets – so you can include everyone in the process, no matter where they are in the world.

Traditionally, professional services like banking and accountancy were early adopters of 360 Degree Feedback. Now banking and financial sector companies in particular are seeing the importance of developing a consistent culture and values that are measurable and assessable at an individual level. What makes 360 ideal for regulated industries is that it can include bespoke organisational elements, together with industry standards or regulatory items, hence providing both an internal measure for behaviours and an external measure for compliance.

However, other sectors are also starting to think about the benefits of the 360 model. For example, we have designed and run 360s for law firms, which traditionally did not use this technique. But

because of the challenges they are now facing (with increased competition and changes in the business rules), many firms are now picking up on using 360 to assess and build non- technical skills, and thereby increase their competitive advantage.

Another sector that is now embracing 360 is retail. It may come as a surprise but we now work with some very large UK retail clients, which are looking to compete on the quality of their people and working relationships, as well as their customer service.

Other sectors that have increased their use of 360 include:

- Law
- Accounting
- Finance
- Insurance
- Retail
- Healthcare
- Housing associations
- Manufacturing

#### 11. At what level does 360 Degree Feedback work best: junior, middle or senior?

Although 360 Degree Feedback is most often used with senior executives, it works equally well to support the development of both junior employees and middle-ranking managers. Provided the objectives for the 360 are clear, and the questions have been designed based on the correct skill and competency level for the learner group, the benefits of the 360 feedback can be significant, whatever the age or experience of the learners.

Where the differences lie are in the positioning of the 360, how it is communicated and how the feedback is debriefed, as different learner group will have different levels of experience and preferences in dealing with the feedback they receive.

... EXPERT COMMENT ...

Clive Bradley, Managing Director, The Development Matrix

“Graduates are much more accepting of 360 Degree Feedback. Senior people are sometimes initially dismissive of it, not necessarily because of what the tool could do for them, but more around their understanding of its benefits. Their initial view might be, ‘I’ve done that before, I’ve seen it before, it’s not going to do anything more for me.’ However, if you can couple the 360 Degree Feedback with their objectives, and within the coaching relationship, they start to get it.

Graduates don’t necessarily go through the same thought process. They are excited, they are accepting of feedback and they are thrilled when they get to open it and read it; it’s like a present!

However, graduates, in my experience, fall a lot harder if they get some unexpected critical feedback. This is because they tend to ‘personalise’ the comments, and take them more to heart. More senior people don’t personalise the feedback so much; they take the feedback with a pinch of salt because they have the experience and the confidence to admit, for example, ‘...not everybody likes my style.’

Graduates can be more easily hurt and say 'This person thinks I'm no good' or 'This person thinks I'm failing'. You then have to coach them through this carefully, saying, 'They're not saying you're no good, it's just that they are saying you need to learn to deal with ambiguity better,' or whatever the feedback said. You have to explain it and position it differently for them."

## 12. What other development tools can work well with 360 Degree Feedback?

There are many tools that consultants use as part of their training, development coaching and facilitation. Psychometric tools are often used alongside 360 Degree Feedback to give a further level of insight to the learner.

360 Degree Feedback is often likened to psychometric assessments and in some ways, they are similar. However, the key differences between 360 and psychometric tools are:

Psychometric tools tend to focus on personality traits and preferences, whilst 360s are generally based on observable actions.

Psychometric tools are based on the perceptions or judgments of the individual learner only, whilst 360 combines the view of many colleagues who can offer diverse observations.

In general, people do not change much in their personality or ways of looking at the world (as measured by psychometric instruments). Specific behaviours, measured in the 360 tool, can be more readily changed, where the learner is willing to change and is supported to do so.

. . . EXPERT COMMENT . . .

Jane Beirne, Learning and Development Director, Jane Beirne Learning Solutions Limited

"I use Myers-Briggs (Type Indicator) quite extensively to give people an insight into themselves. I also use 360 Degree Feedback to give them a starting point.

So with the MBTI, the learners will have looked at their preferred communication style, and considered that in relation to how they interact with other people. This is then followed up by presenting the conceptions of other people through the 360, and linking this with the messages from the MBTI.

So it's useful to work in tandem in that way, as a benchmarking process. Because I've probably used 360 Degree Feedback with learners initially, we might look to revisit that in 6-12 months' time, again depending on where they are in their development."

Another tool which is often used alongside 360 Degree Feedback is the Johari Window, which most consultants will be familiar with. It helps the learner to think about their unknown strengths, as well as blind spots, and to understand that the 360 information is there to help them fill in those blind spots.

## CASE STUDY

A Consultant's Story (as told by Barry Sampson, Co-Founder and Director, Onlignment)

"One thing that I do have filed away is an appraisal of mine from 1997. My career up to that point was entirely in retail. I had been a retail manager for a petrol company, running various different sites

in the south of London. I then worked for an off-licence chain where I ran a couple of community-type off-licenses and then a big wine store. I then went to work for a newsagents', as a store manager and relief manager, trouble-shooting issues in difficult stores. With the newsagents, I moved up to Scotland and ran one of the biggest stores in the country. With that experience you'd think I would have been confident that I knew what I was doing.

Then I got a job with a supermarket. So I went from what was the biggest store in Scotland for the newsagents, to what was a fairly low turnover supermarket, but I couldn't get it right. I successfully completed my induction, then they let me loose in the store, but I couldn't achieve the results; sales were dropping, shrinkage figures were going up, I just couldn't get it right.

It was after my appraisal at six months that my manager said in his written summary, 'Barry is a good person but if he carries on the way he is, he'll end up leaving.' He said, 'I'm not threatening you, and I'm not going to sack you, but you know that it's not working and I think if you carry on, you're just going to leave.' I went away and I thought, 'he's right, something's not working,' and really, that was the choice - am I going to try and do what it is I need to change or am I going to leave?

I went to some other store managers who were known as good performers and said, 'Can you come and have a look? Come and spend some time with me.' In a short time (it was only about 3 or 4 weeks), it suddenly became very obvious what it was I was doing wrong. I was trying to run what was a very complex business with the same mind-set I used to run something that was bigger, but much simpler. There was a difference between running a business where most of what we sold were cards, books, stationery, newspapers and magazines, to selling very low margin foodstuffs which had an equally short shelf life.

It worked well enough that by the end of that year I was running two stores and they were both twice the size of the store I previously run. I got that opportunity because I learned how to do things the right way, but that was only because there was a feedback process and someone was willing to be tough.

The supermarket was also the first place that 360 became part of my life. They had gone through a massive culture change. The board had realised that things were not going well and recognised that they needed help. They brought in consultants who told them that 'the problem is you haven't got a clue what your customers want and you haven't got a clue what your staff want'.

So, they had a choice, do nothing or change. They opted for radical change, and I joined the organisation just after this process had started. They were very focused on the customer, and very focused on employees. 360 Degree Feedback was key to achieving the latter.

As a store manager, my bonus had four parts to it, equally staked at 25%. One part was sales, one was profit, and together they contributed up to 50% of the bonus. The other half of the bonus was equally split between customer satisfaction scores and the staff element of your 360 feedback.

I think the 360 was really useful for me because it helped me, as a manager, to understand what the needs of my people were, because they had a really simple way of telling me when things weren't going right. People want accountability, people want clear objectives. When I first went in, I was 'being a manager'. I was managing staff, I was making decisions, and I was trying to figure out what to do. What 360 helped me do was rely on my team. By the time I was running the two stores, I rarely had to make operational decisions, as that was done by the department supervisors.

360 Degree Feedback is key to helping you understand what's going well and what's not going so well."

For more information on how you can use the Track 360 online platform to design and deliver your bespoke 360 Degree Feedback programme, contact me at [jo.ayoubi@tracksurveys.com](mailto:jo.ayoubi@tracksurveys.com). I'll be happy to share our experience in 360 design and delivery, and to show you the Track 360 platform.

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