

The 360° Review

**How to get it
Right**



Organisation Development Institute
Developing leaders, improving organisations



360° reviews are in wide use as a tool to identify the strengths and development opportunities for an individual against a set of competencies and behaviours that are important in their role at work.

The decision to use a 360° review process should be taken carefully and first and foremost should be for the purpose of development for **performance improvement**, and linked to an appropriate development programme, ie coaching or leadership development programme. They should not be used for **performance management**; the two are incompatible.

360° reviews measure the perceptions of each reviewer about the reviewee's level of capability of relevant competencies and behaviours, typically by both ratings against a scale and by text comments. Feedback is gathered from the reviewee and all those who 'surround' him/her at work; their manager, their direct reports, and 4-5 selected peers. The purpose of collecting these perceptions from a group of people (typically 8-12) is to develop a balanced aggregate view.





Getting it Right

1. Start by being very clear about the purpose of the 360° review for your organisation and ensure senior leaders are on board and committed to it.
2. Make a decision about the tool and the supplier you will use. There are several tools and suppliers in the market; you need to ensure you choose a tool that can be customised to your competency framework if you have one, and a supplier based on their reputation, expertise in psychometric testing, and the level of integrity they display in terms of the processes they use (and expect of you).

Don't fall into the trap of developing your own survey in house (unless you have in-house psychometric expertise) or using an IT specialist who has no psychometric testing experience. This is where 360° reviews can go badly wrong.

3. Before embarking on the review, it is important that the reviewee understands its purpose; that it is part of a development process and therefore should be viewed as a positive step. They should know who they can expect to be reviewers, and what they might expect as an outcome, ie articulation of goals and participation in a leadership development or coaching programme.
4. It is also helpful for reviewers to be prepared in a similar way, ie the purpose of the review, that their responses will be anonymous, that their ratings should be fair and that their comments are thoughtful and will be helpful to the reviewee - 360° surveys are not the time to 'settle old scores'.
5. Your supplier should then fully manage the online process and provide a help desk if reviewers have any difficulties along the way. They should monitor the responses to ensure there are no inappropriate or harmful comments, and then generate individual (and potentially an aggregate report) reports to be sent to reviewees.



6. Within a few days of sending the reports, reviewees should have their report debriefed by a trained and experienced coach. This is important as a specialist can ensure the psychological safety of the reviewee by helping them to interpret their results, to focus on existing strengths, and to put into perspective any negative or surprising feedback.

Based on this information, the coach can help the reviewee to articulate developmental goals – no more than three, and preferably based on existing strengths.

7. Ideally the reviewee will then agree their goals with their line manager. Their goals and their 360° report will be important reference points for their development programme and their on-going leadership development.

ODI has years of experience of managing 360° reviews for a number of organisations and using various online tools. We adhere to the process outlined above, which ensures a positive, safe and future-focussed experience for reviewees, and good outcomes for the organisation.

Other references:

[What Makes a 360 Degree Review Effective?](#), Zenger-Folkman

[Getting 360 Degree Reviews Right](#), Harvard Business Review

[360 Degree Feedback: All You Need to Know](#), TruScore

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If you'd like to talk with us about working with you to manage a 360° review within your organisation, contact Kyran or Nicky on info@odi.org.nz or 03 943 2373.