

# How Dominant Are 360 Degree Appraisal Processes Nowadays?

*In Australia and beyond, big brands are flaunting their ecological credentials, but **360 degree appraisal processes** organisations are insisting on a move beyond agenda-less hyperbole.*

Negative responses from 360 degree feedback sessions are natural and normal and you are best being prepared for them. They are on the safe bank of “upset”. The recommendation is to have a strategy to minimise the likelihood of such responses and also tactics to deal with them should they emerge. 360 feedback isn’t perfect, and unfortunately many teams will implement it for the wrong reasons. You need to be very careful when doing this. If your culture already has an issue of trust or the team isn’t getting along well, this might only worsen the problem. There are several considerations that you should not overlook when implementing a multi-rater feedback survey, such as the 360 degree review, in your organization. For starters, it is essential to engage all relevant stakeholders when implementing a multi-rater assessment in your company. It ensures ongoing support and active participation throughout the process. Also, there are three important parameters to consider as part of your multi-rater best practices. When you collect 360 feedback from team members, you need to make sure that the questions are all standardized. Even a slight change of the wording in a question can mean a completely different response. While this may offer you more information, it does make it harder to compare answers. A survey has a standard set of questions that mean it is only the interpretation of the respondent and not your way of asking that can affect the outcome. Providing feedback on the perceived importance of the skills and capacities represented by items and scales in a 360 degree report can provide a powerful way of prioritizing which parts of the feedback may need the greatest attention, especially when the manager and the boss agree on the level of importance of different behaviors. When the manager and the boss do not agree, importance data can provide a relatively nonthreatening way to begin a conversation about what skills and behaviors need attention, given the characteristics of a manager's job and organization. Let the employee know about their successes and achievements. This will help the employee to understand you value their contributions and will help to reinforce their positive behaviors. Focus on specific behaviors and not on personality or your feelings about them. Be specific about their contributions to the department/organization.



360 degree feedback is a way to get honest, constructive evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of your employees. It involves soliciting feedback on one individual from those who work around him: managers, coworkers, subordinates. The benefits of the 360 degree review process go way beyond simple development and cross over into increased confidence, communication, awareness of hidden strengths and blind spots, increased accountability and all-around in productivity in a holistic company culture. Some organizations use 360-degree feedback as a strategy to communicate to employees that a new skill set will be needed for an anticipated organizational or culture change in work methods, work content, work flow, or work demand. Just as 360-degree feedback may be used to communicate a key skill set, organizational strategy, or a business need, so may the monitoring of change using 360-degree feedback maintain the focus of the organization's members on where they stand relative to those goals, and on the very fact that the organization is making these changes. The participant or subject in a 360 degree instrument is sometimes also referred to as the feedback receiver or 'ratee'. As part of the 360 process, they will need to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire. Doing so enables them to see how their own perceptions of themselves compare with the views of their chosen raters. T People need to feel in control of their destiny - that is why a clear understanding of [360 degree feedback](#) is important to any forward thinking organisation.

## Competency Headings

People will be looking at what is going to change after a 360 degree project and will be waiting to have new conversations which may or may not arise. You cannot control what they do with this and how it goes, much as you might like to. Such situations still need performance management. Drawbacks of 360-degree feedback include time and cost, the fact that giving feedback is difficult, the lack of alignment between the focus of the feedback and the organizational strategy, and a lack of follow-up, meaning that there's no consequence for poor performance. The confidentiality of all participants in the 360 degree process should be respected and the feedback should be summarised and delivered to the recipient by individuals trained in feedback techniques. Appraisees should always be offered support to act on feedback. Once the 360 degree data has been processed there is this key step of "being OK with all of this". If the data is generally positive this may not be hard (although sometimes the data is so much more positive than fits the self-identity that this is not guaranteed), but if there are negative bits then this can feel impossible. Of course you do not like key others not being impressed, how could you!? If you are planning a 360 degree feedback project, you should now have a wealth of information to guide your thinking and heaps to consider. A key point to remember is that it helps to play big and it also helps to start small, and at the same time to be confident enough to co-create the process and the tool with your key audience. Evaluating [360 feedback software](#) can uncover issues that may be affecting employee performance.

Recognition and rewards will have more motivational power because employees will understand that performance, not politics, drives rewards. Accurate measures of

success factors will help employees become more effective on those competencies that propel their own success on the job and the organization's productivity. Possibly most important, fair and accurate performance measures mean raises and promotions can go to those who most deserve them. Many companies use 360-degree feedback to formally assess how employees are performing. The approach is sometimes even used to decide whether or not to award bonuses. A survey is circulated in advance of the employee's annual appraisal. Staff across the company who have worked alongside the employee answer the questions. It is typical for the person's line manager to send out the questions and receive the responses. The line manager collates and anonymises the answers before giving the feedback to the employee during their appraisal. For 360 degree feedback to be effective, it needs to be helpful and given in a manner that allows an employee to understand if his or her performance is having the intended effect. Acknowledge the employee's contributions and good work. Give specific examples of what they did well. Let them know the positive impact their contributions had on the department (organization) so they understand the results. There's no denying that having other people evaluate how you work and offer their views on you can be an uncomfortable experience. However, it can also be a richly rewarding and enlightening one too. A 360 degree feedback process that has participants go to their primitive protection response will only get good results if participants somehow get through and over this response. Only then will the exploration, recalibration and learning occur. Keeping up with the latest developments regarding [360 appraisal](#) is a pre-cursor to increased employee motivation and building the link between performance and rewards.

## Common Pitfalls

Organizations can build their next generation of leaders by using 360 degree feedback programs. Also, as leaders and employees rise through the ranks of their organizations, they tend to receive less feedback about themselves and their performance. This dynamic occurs as colleagues and associates are often afraid of displeasing those in positions above them. In a traditional way, the appraisal was the responsibility of human resource management only, but now the objective of 360-degree performance appraisal is to collect anonymous feedback about the employee from their superiors, colleagues, and peers also from the customer. This holistic approach helps to evaluate the performance and well-being of employee who is working for the organization. There may be a strong sense that there is something wrong with a participant's data in a 360 degree feedback session and therefore with them and/or their work or life. They may wish to be better or different in some way. This can occur when there is an inclination towards perfectionism for instance and/or when there is a strong identity to want to be seen as "nice" and liked by others – when any lesser data challenges a deep-rooted survival requirement for these individuals. 360-degree feedback isn't necessarily limited to an internal process within the organization. Customer scores rating their experience on a scale from poor to great can help business leaders analyse employee performance in a wider context. The 360 degree feedback process will serve as a linking pin for fairer and more accurate employee and organization

decisions. For example, cultural change will be driven by targeted organization competencies, communicated, and assessed using the 360 degree feedback system. The core competencies or success factors for future leadership will be reflected in the 360 degree feedback surveys and will spur the development and continuing growth of employees and their leaders. Nonetheless, a keen understanding of [360 degree feedback system](#) can be seen to be a multifaceted challenge in any workplace.

When giving 360 degree feedback, be careful not to base positive feedback exclusively on results. Sometimes even if an employee puts forth their best effort, a project could fall through due to some external reasons. The recipient of the 360 data needs to want something for themselves or for something they are committed to. It may be a promotion or a pay rise, it may be a new career path, or it may be as simple as a less stressful experience at work or an improved relationship with the boss. There is always something somewhere they want – even if it is that you go away. There may be different opinions among the reviewers in 360 feedback. In fact, there usually are discrepancies in ratings from different categories of reviewers. This again is where 360 degree feedback gets interesting. In smaller companies with less beefed up HR departments 360 degree feedback is less common. It can be run internally by the HR department but is better left to an external HR consultant who provides experience in asking the right questions, providing guidance interpreting the results, coaching the subsequent growth and last but not least, the external specialist will provide privacy guarantees. As with traditional feedback, 360-degree feedback is an ever-evolving process that business leaders should constantly seek to improve. Not only does this process help improve the development and performance of the individual, it also serves to foster a sense of organizational justice. Researching [what is 360 degree feedback](#) is known to be the best first step in determining your requirements and brushing up on your understanding in this area.

## **The 360 Degree Feedback Process**

Data does not have any meaning or significance in itself. Facts and/or figures are just that – facts and figures. A specific figure, eg 4 out of 5 on a 5-point rating scale where 4 is defined as “good”, might reasonably be considered to mean that this person is rated as “good” on this criteria. Well yes, and no! And what does “good” mean anyhow? If a reviewer tended to rate rather generously and generally give 5s and just a few 4s, then their “4” may not mean they are all that impressed. Why would someone use the rating scale like that? It is important is that you are finding a way to build data and feedback into your leadership culture. Otherwise, it will be challenging to get an accurate picture of where strengths and gaps are. 360 degree feedback can be an emotional ride for participants. For some it will be no big deal, they will take it in their stride, be interested in their data, process it and emerge clear about where they need to go in terms of moving things forward. These individuals are likely to be ambitious and/or have a growth mindset. You can find extra particulars on the topic of 360 degree appraisal processes at this [NHS](#) page.

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