

## Understanding 360 Degree Evaluation and Feedback

Greg Whateley

December 2025



*A 360-degree evaluation and feedback process is a popular performance appraisal method used in organisations to gather comprehensive feedback about an employee (or manager) from multiple sources. This approach contrasts with traditional performance reviews, which typically involve feedback from just one manager or supervisor – and often from the top down*

*. Instead, the 360-degree method collects input from a range of stakeholders, providing a well-rounded view of an individual's performance, behaviours, and impact within the workplace.*

### What is a 360 Degree Evaluation?

A 360-degree evaluation, also known as 360-feedback, involves gathering feedback from an employee's (or manager's) direct reports, peers, and sometimes even - clients. The employee (or manager) also completes a *self-assessment*. This holistic approach aims to provide a more balanced, objective, and actionable insight into an individual's strengths and areas for improvement. *In the higher education context – a most useful tool for a CEO or Executive Dean.*

### Who is involved in the process?

The process attempts to be **holistic** and usually includes **a self-assessment** reflecting on own performance and behaviours; **Peer feedback** is sought from colleagues who work alongside the individual offering insights into teamwork, collaboration, and interpersonal skills; **Direct Reports** are able to provide feedback on leadership, communication, and management style (applicable for those in leadership roles and often best achieved through an anonymous/independent survey); and even **Clients** may be invited to share their perspectives, particularly for client-facing roles.

## **What are the benefits**

The benefits are considerable. The process is comprehensive; it improves self-awareness which in turn enhances professional growth and skill development; it enhances team dynamics and communication; and (if managed appropriately and transparently) ultimately supports organisational goals. The key – enhancing the benefits noted – is to publish the outcomes so that all team members can see. In other words – *no secrets* (this also enhances overall communication within the organisation).

## **How the 360 Degree Feedback Process Works**

The process is best viewed in the following terms (steps) –

- Select participants – that is Identify relevant stakeholders to provide feedback.
- Distribute the survey/s - the best approach being anonymous questionnaires/surveys are distributed to all participants, usually covering areas such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, strategic thinking and job-specific competencies.
- Collect and analyse the data – often best done by an independent source who collects the data and provides a short report – often in table form for simplicity. If there are qualitative elements – have these included.
- Share the results and encourage feedback – including areas for further development/action planning.

## **There are challenges**

While 360-degree feedback offers many advantages, there are also challenges that need to be taken into account. The potential for biased or unconstructive feedback; the risk of overwhelming participants with too much information; and the need for organisational support and follow-through are some of these challenges.

Proper planning, clear communication, and ongoing support are essential ingredients to maximising the benefits of this approach.

*360-degree evaluation (and feedback) are valuable tools for personal and professional development. By gathering insights from a variety of perspectives, individuals and organisations can foster a genuine culture of continuous improvement, enhance self-awareness, and drive better performance outcomes. For many – this will require a degree of courage (especially for leaders) – but the benefits outweigh the challenges.*

**Emeritus Professor Greg Whateley** is currently *Executive Dean* at the Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce (SISTC) Sydney and Melbourne.