

A Simple 360^o Evaluation

Although there are numerous, more complex assessments that can provide valuable feedback for leaders and managers, this is the simple instrument used by Dr. DeBowes in his staff feedback process (see EVT, July 2010, page 1). It is simple, straightforward, and provides your team with a conduit to express what is working and what could be improved in your management or leadership style.

This type of evaluation should only be undertaken if anonymity can be assured. This should be done by having a neutral, outside party receive, read and compile the various comments by the team members into one, typed document. Ideally, this person could be a business coach, consultant, or counselor in your area, but any trusted, objective individual can fulfill the role. Employees should be directed to submit their completed forms directly to this person, after introductions are made.

A 360° type of evaluation should only be attempted if the practice leader has the trust of his/her employees. Those with more complex or difficult work relationships would be advised to attempt such a review only with the assistance of a trained consultant.

To Get the Most from Your 360° Evaluation

For the team:

1. Have your team read Dr. DeBowes' column as a way to set the stage for their 360° evaluation of your leadership style.
2. Urge your employees to provide you with concrete feedback that can be acted upon, and continued or changed as needed.
3. Assure them that you want this to be an honest and thorough assessment. Do this with them in person, preferably at a staff meeting, as you introduce the concept.
4. Introduce the neutral 360 compilation person at this meeting and have him/her explain how confidentiality will be ensured.
5. Insist upon and ensure confidentiality and anonymity throughout the entire process.
6. Present the exercise as the team's opportunity to assist you in making the practice the best that it can be.

For you:

1. Recognize this for the courageous and difficult step that it is and prepare yourself mentally for the feedback. Do this by doing your own reflection and self assessment, using the same question prompts. Most of us have some idea of what we need to do to improve and it is helpful to do some self evaluation prior to reading what others perceive.
2. Realize you cannot, and will not, please all of the people all of the time. No matter how hard you've worked to improve your leadership ability, you will most likely never be perfect. Your employees *will* present ideas for your improvement. Since everyone has his or her own perspective, what you are looking for in your evaluations is *consistent patterns or themes* that are mentioned by two or more team members. These are most likely, the issues you need to address, or most value in yourself.
3. *Do not* take these evaluations as criticisms but as constructive feedback. The information is to help you improve and develop more effectively as a leader and a practice. Although difficult to hear, we cannot improve if we don't realize how others perceive us.
4. Resist the inclination to defend or refute the themes or patterns you discover in your evaluation. Sharing them with a trusted friend is a helpful way to process them. Remember that this is not an evaluation of what you *intend* to portray or convey, but how you are perceived. The gap between these two perspectives is your arena for improvement.

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The 360° Assessment



This brief assessment provides you with an opportunity to assess my leadership style and how it impacts our practice (business). I value your input and hope to better understand my strengths and those areas you'd like to see me improve. I am undertaking this evaluation to ensure our team and our business becomes the best that it can be. Please be assured that I want your candid and honest comments and that your assessment will be presented anonymously, in conjunction with all others, after compilation.

- 1 What one attribute or strength do I bring to the practice (business) that, in your opinion, greatly contributes to our success as a team?
- 2 What one issue or attribute do I exhibit, that if changed or altered, would improve my ability or outcome as a leader?
- 3 Please share one element or attribute of our team or our practice that demonstrates excellence.
- 4 Please name one element or attribute of our team, which if improved, would contribute to furthering our success as a team or a practice?