

Microsoft Viva Glint

360 feedback



Why 360s?

360s provide feedback that offers a more comprehensive and valid representation of an individual's performance at work compared to single-source feedback. Employees who participate in a 360 are typically evaluated against a set of expectations (competencies, behaviors, values, etc.) that are important to the organization and their role. Participants provide their own self-perceptions, which are compared against the perceptions of at least two additional groups of people who have experience working with them, like their manager, direct reports, co-workers, and customers.

Many organizations use 360-degree feedback (a.k.a. multi-rater feedback, multi-source feedback, 360s, or multi-source assessment) as a way to provide their people with insight into their strengths and opportunities from a variety of viewpoints. Rather than relying solely on the perspective of an employee's immediate supervisor, organizations can use the 360 process to capture inputs from the person being reviewed as well as their direct reports, colleagues, customers, and additional sources. This approach provides a more robust and accurate view of the employee's strengths and opportunities.

When collected and applied in the right way, 360s can provide employees with tremendous value, like increased self-awareness, enhanced performance, opportunities to learn and grow, and help organizations achieve their business and people goals.

Even as 360s remain a popular practice, some researchers, organizations, and employees have criticized them due to their potential to cause anxiety, loss of confidence, and even departure of key personnel. There are several steps you can take to set up 360s for success in your organization, like careful planning, thoughtful implementation, and strong communication around the purpose. Yet, even when organizations do all these activities well, personal growth and change hinges on a recipient's willingness to accept and apply the feedback. If your organization doesn't have an environment conducive to 360s, or if your employees aren't open to them, you may have spent time and money implementing a process that doesn't add value.

So, are 360s worth it? The answer is "yes." But it's time to rethink the way we do them.

The usefulness of 360s is based on a few assumptions:

- People can use feedback to grow capabilities and improve in their role.
- Multiple viewpoints from a variety of sources can provide a more accurate view of a person's strengths and opportunities than a single perspective.
- People will likely gain self-awareness simply by comparing their own perceptions to other people's perceptions.
- People can be motivated to shift behaviors when they receive helpful feedback.

While it's possible to turn these assumptions into reality, it takes proper forethought and follow-through. Empirical research provides evidence that, under the right circumstances, 360s can drive outcomes that are beneficial to both individuals and organizations (Nowack & Mashih, 2012).

For example, studies have shown 360s can lead to short-term benefits for the individual, such as greater self-awareness, as well as long-term benefits, such as positive change in behaviors critical to success in their role and promotion (Atwater & Brett, 2006; Fleenor, Taylor, & Chappelow, 2008; Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider, 1993; Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopoulos, 1996; Smither, London & Reilly, 2005). But impact is not just limited to the individual, 360s are shown to be valuable to the broader organization, with studies finding the use of 360s leading to increases in organizational capability, knowledge sharing, workforce productivity, employee engagement, and retention (Atwater & Brett, 2006; Kim, Atwater, Patel, & Smither, 2016; Luthans & Peterson, 2003).

Because of these reported benefits, 360s have become a standard tool for HR teams. According to Forbes, over 85% of Fortune 500 companies use 360s as the foundation of their leadership-development programs (Zenger, 2016). Indeed, with thoughtful preparation and rollout, the payoffs for 360 in your organization can be significant.

So, what do successful 360s look like in action?



360s in practice

Organizations use 360s for a variety of purposes. Best practice dictates that 360s be used for individual development instead of performance evaluation. Ensuring 360s are developmentally focused helps increase candor and reduce bias from colleagues trying to influence the outcomes of the feedback in favor of or against the participant.

When 360s are used for performance evaluation, some may try to “game the system” in their favor by providing overly negative feedback about a coworker up for the same promotion opportunity. Worse yet, 360s should not be used as a punitive tool to weed out low performers from organizations.

Here are three recommended use cases:

- High-potential or high-impact development: 360s can help grow and retain high-potential and high-impact talent. Whether focused on an individual or a group of leaders, organizations often embed 360s into executive or emerging-leader programs.
- Point-in-time development: Organizations can collect 360s annually for a broader subset of employees, like mid-level leaders. The feedback would focus on the competencies or behaviors that drive performance and development.
- Event-based development: It’s becoming increasingly popular to use 360s to provide developmental feedback after a specific event or experience, such as the completion of a large-scale project.

All these use cases for 360s require you to execute them well to be successful (Smither et al., 2005). With careful planning and implementation, we can help you get it right.



How can we ensure 360s are successful

On its face, the 360s process would appear simple enough to execute. Yet the way we've traditionally administered 360s has often failed to achieve the desired results. To ensure success, the 360s process should be:

Intentional

Clearly define the purpose of the 360 so everyone is aware of the intent and how the outputs will be used. Directly align the process to actual business needs, key organizational behaviors, and/or cultural values. Simply measuring a laundry list of competencies and behaviors won't drive what is truly important. If the 360 is connected to the organization's strategy and day-to-day work, the output becomes directly actionable.

Relevant

Both in content and in timing, the process needs to be relevant to the employee. Topics covered should be directly applicable to the employee's job and aligned to their development journey.

Supportive

Be prepared to provide support to both the raters and the participant. For 360s to be useful, the right raters need to be selected and guided on providing effective feedback. Guidance for 360 participants is also recommended to ensure they are clear on the purpose of the 360, understand how to read their report, and are aligned with expectations for application and follow-through.

Research tells us that outcomes are enhanced for participants when there is a concerted follow-up with a trained coach, HR partner, or the individual's manager (Thach, 2002). In the absence of a formal coach, a manager and even a well-designed technology solution can play a significant role in keeping development top of mind through ongoing conversations. A supportive environment ultimately contributes to behavior change among 360s participants and helps organizations realize their true value.

Ongoing

Lack of participant follow-through is often cited as one of the biggest barriers to 360 success (Bracken, Rose, & Church, 2016). To combat that and instead encourage accountability, integrate developmental goals into other organizational practices, such as quarterly goal discussions. To help focus the participant on the importance of follow-through, ensure their manager and senior leaders actively support their development.

Even with these conditions in place, we often find that those running the 360 program don't have the time or resources needed to ensure success. They typically spend the bulk of time setting up 360s, chasing down response rates, and ensuring confidentiality thresholds are met.

These activities, while important, distract from those that help drive true success. Rest assured, success of your 360 program is possible.



Simplifying 360s: Viva Glint approach

We think it's time for a different approach to 360s, one that yields better results for employees and organizations. Viva Glint approach combines easy-to-use technology, user-friendly design, and in-platform developmental guidance founded in behavioral science. This set-up feels easier and more focused, and it allows for an enhanced experience for HR professionals, raters, and participants. It also drives conversations about strengths and opportunities, leading to individual growth and development and better business outcomes. We believe that 360-feedback should be:

Easy

Viva Glint requires less administrative work. Through automation of key processes such as set-up, communication, response tracking, follow-up, and report generation, we relieve the administrative burden HR teams typically face. This creates more time to focus on strategic priorities needed to ensure success, such as enabling a culture of feedback. Additionally, raters are prompted through thought-starters and in-line guidance designed to reduce bias and the need for extensive training. Finally, Viva Glint interactive reporting uses in-platform coaching to help the participant interpret their feedback, quickly identify strengths and opportunities, and easily create development goals.

Accessible

Feedback is a gift that can be valued by all and not just reserved for an organization's top tiers. Viva Glint takes the per-report fee and extensive administrative burden out of the equation.

HR teams

Ensuring that 360s can be accessible to all levels of the organization and integrated into broader employee-development processes. For the participant, the report feels simple and forward-looking, with its focus on learning and development. The platform's ease allows participants and HR professionals to dive deeper into the data to better glean insights from the feedback.

Targeted

Instead of measuring a laundry list of competencies and behaviors, Viva Glint encourages a shorter, more conversational approach. Participants can quickly focus on the few essential behaviors that are important to the organization and known to lead to successful outcomes. When the feedback feels relevant, timely, and easy-to-absorb, participants are more likely to use it to improve and grow.

Connected

Development, performance, and engagement all have a unified purpose and help drive employee happiness and success at work. When organizations integrate 360s into developmental goals, they enhance a participant's likelihood of acting based on input and effectiveness in their role, thereby increasing the likelihood of improved growth, performance, and engagement.

With Viva Glint, 360 results can be directly translated into a developmental goal, allowing for a connected experience that embeds development into regular conversations that help individuals and the organization realize success.



How to get started

Get the most value from your 360 program by following these steps:

1. Set your objectives

Setting objectives is all about identifying your desired outcomes before you begin the 360 process. Define the purpose of your 360 and align it to a specific organizational strategy or goal. Be sure to explicitly state how the data will (and will not) be used and highlight how you will hold participants accountable for taking sustained action based on the 360 input.

2. Define your audience and what you're measuring

Identify the employees within your organization who will benefit the most from 360 feedback and whose development will truly help you achieve your defined objectives. Then determine the specific behaviors this population needs to master to be successful. Avoid the urge to measure everything and stick to those behaviors that will drive desired outcomes.

3. Get buy-in from stakeholders

The support of senior leaders and other key stakeholders is an important step in the process. Explain the value of 360s, share your implementation plan, and connect the process directly to business objectives. Ask for active support throughout the 360 process (e.g., request they join a kick-off or debrief meeting with participants to demonstrate commitment), and highlight the importance of feedback and development to building leadership and organizational capabilities.

4. Enable admins, participants, and raters

Viva Glint technology makes it easy to launch a 360, enabling HR professionals to deliver an impactful experience instead of performing administrative tasks. The focus shifts to ensuring that raters are prepared to provide high-quality feedback, and that participants are ready to receive and act on feedback. Viva Glint provides in-line coaching and guides to support best-practice feedback and development. Many organizations choose to supplement these resources with internal training and communication.

5. Leverage technology and follow up

Viva Glint empowers participants to “own” their results and take independent action. The interactive reporting with in-platform guidance helps participants interpret feedback, and it highlights strengths and opportunities. Participants are equipped to create action plans based on the feedback they receive, either alleviating the need for a coach altogether or preserving valuable coaching hours to discuss ways to address the input, instead of interpreting a report. Regardless of whether you provide participants with a coach, it is crucial to follow up and hold them accountable for their development.



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