Chapter- II

Survey of Literature and Methodology
The chapter on Survey of literature contains annotations of fifty-six works. They were obtained from a search of the literature by using key terms such as feedback, assessment, appraisal, evaluation, multi-rater, multisource, and 360 degrees. Annotations are listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author. (The indexes at the end of this report provide complete listings of authors and titles.) (Fleenor and Prince 1997).


Antonioni discusses twelve factors important to the design of a successful (that is, effective) 360-degree-feedback process: (1) Raters prefer the use of 360-degree feedback for developmental purposes as opposed to using feedback for compensation purposes. Such use of 360-degree feedback could produce negative reactions from participants. (2) Written and descriptor 360-degree feedback may be more helpful than rating-scale information. (3) Managers prefer accountability for ratings by the rater. Raters, however, prefer their ratings be anonymous. (4) Direct report raters (subordinates) who were held accountable for upward feedback (their names were associated with the feedback) gave their managers in higher ratings. Anonymous raters gave lower ratings. (5) Managers indicated the following about the nature of the feedback they received: 25% was expected positive feedback, 30% were unexpected positive feedback, 20 to 30% was expected negative feedback, and 15 to 20% were unexpected negative feedback. (6) Raters estimated that 19% of managers would be surprised by low ratings in the feedback. (7) Only half of the raters reported that managers had shared summary results of the upward appraisals. (8) Managers who score high on achievement motivation (that is, want to succeed) and who value feedback are more likely to discuss the results with their raters. (9) Managers are not likely to develop specific goals or action plans based on 360-degree feedback. (10) Improvement of low performance ratings is left to the rate. (11) Seventy-two percent of rates reported that supervisors did not follow up on action plans related to 360-degree feedback. (12) Eighty-seven percent of rates fell raters had not recognized their improvement efforts (Antonioni April 1996).

According to the authors, self-other rating agreement is the degree to which self-perceptions are congruent with the perceptions of others. These perceptions are usually captured with 360-degree-feedback instruments. Atwater and Yammarino present a model of self-other rating agreement based on a review and integration of the existing literature in this area. The authors offer forty propositions that link demographic (for example, gender and age) and personality characteristics, cognitive processes, job experience, and contextual factors to differences between self- and others’ ratings. They also propose a scheme for categorizing self-raters based on the amount of agreement with others’ ratings. Twenty-four propositions related to relationships between self-other rating agreement and individual and organizational outcomes are presented. For example, in general, very positive individual and organizational outcomes are expected for individuals whose self-ratings are in agreement with others that their performance is good (Atwater and Yammarino 1997).


This article describes a study of three groups of supervisors in a large federal agency on the subordinate feedback aspects of performance appraisal. The participants were first-line supervisors in an organization that was interested in finding alternatives to traditional, top-down appraisals. Questionnaires were completed that would provide feedback to supervisors and evaluate their attitudes toward appraisal. Group 1 received feedback from both managers and subordinates. Group 2 received feedback only from their managers. Group 3 received feedback from subordinates only.
The focus on attitudes toward upward appraisal, along with previous research, led to four hypotheses: (1) Group 1 will find the feedback more useful for improving performance than the groups who receive feedback from only one source. (2) Attitudes of Group 1 will be more positive (regarding the appraisal process) than attitudes of those receiving only their manager’s feedback. (3) Group 3 will be more concerned about the use and impact of subordinate feedback than those receiving feedback from both subordinates and managers. (4) Attitudes of those receiving subordinate appraisal will be more positive than supervisors who do not receive subordinate appraisal. Overall, the results supported the incorporation of subordinate appraisal into the appraisal process. The data also support a more comprehensive, 360-degree approach, but authors assert that cautionary actions should be taken to ensure the positive aspects of this method of assessment. A comprehensive, 360-degree approach provides the opportunity to identify critical behaviors and the opportunity to determine qualified sources of feedback who can provide valid and useful data (Bernardin, Dahmus et al. Summer/Fall 1993).


Bracken discusses factors that contribute to the success or failure of multi-rater feedback systems. Along with the increasing use of multi-rater feedback for development, there is an increased use of feedback for appraisal and decision making for pay and promotion. The author offers a definition of a successful multi-rater process: (1) It is reliable and provides consistent ratings. (2) It is valid because it provides job-related feedback. (3) It is easy to use, understandable, and relevant. (4) It creates positive change on an individual and organizational level. Success or failure in implementing a system can occur at any stage of the process. Bracken’s system for a successful multi-rater process includes: process design and planning, instrument development, instrument design, administration, feedback processing and reporting, and action-planning. He discusses in detail each of these stages and addresses key issues.
Bracken concludes that if multi-rater feedback is to be used for personnel decision making, it is imperative that the data be used consistently and accurately. A possible approach is to use multi-rater feedback to create a developmental action plan and record the plan in the appraisal process. The manager could then be evaluated on progress toward the development plan. Bracken advises careful consideration of relevant questions and issues prior to the implementation of a multi-rater feedback system (Bracken September 1994).

Stéphane Brutus, John Fleenor, and Manuel London.

Elements of effective 360-degree feedback

In W. Tornow & M. London (Eds.), Maximizing the Value of 360-degree Feedback: A Process for Successful Individual and Organizational Development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, in press. According to the authors, developmental activities using 360-degree feedback have become one of the most popular methods for developing managers in organizations. More and more organizations are using this process to help improve the effectiveness of their managers. Many Fortune 500 companies are either using 360-degree feedback or are considering its use in the near future.

In this chapter, the contribution of 360-degree feedback to individual development is described. Because the practice of 360-degree feedback is generally ahead of research, there are not a lot of studies that focus specifically on this process. This chapter, therefore, attempts to connect research findings and theoretical arguments from different areas of the behavioral sciences to build a case for the value of 360-degree feedback for individual development.

The authors state that 360-degree feedback possesses the same basic four elements as any control system: (1) a set of standards or goals, (2) an information processor, (3) the collection of information relative to the standards, and (4) the use of this information to meet the standards. They argue that the outcomes of 360-degree feedback are contingent on the quality of the entire system. The feedback process must be based on appropriate performance standards. Feedback, once provided, will enable individuals to develop along these standards. Performance standards not only
are essential for individual development, but they represent the link to organizational strategy.

This chapter also highlights the importance of measurement in the 360-degree feedback process. Each rater possesses a unique and valid perspective from which the performance of the focal manager can be assessed. When valid performance ratings from multiple perspectives are linked to developmental planning, goal-setting, and organizational support, the 360-degree feedback process can lead to positive outcomes for the focal manager as well as the organization as a whole (Brutus, Fleenor et al.).


This article describes 360-degree feedback as an increasingly used option for performance appraisal and discusses its use in various organizations. The trend toward using 360-degree feedback (as opposed to exclusively using top-down, supervisory ratings) allows employees to have control over evaluations. For organizations shifting to the use of 360-degree performance appraisals, a key factor is how timing affects employee trust in the process. Although managers may desire a new approach to traditional appraisals, they are often wary and insecure about receiving feedback from peers and subordinates. Although training can allay some fears, trust occurs only with time and organizational support for using 360-degree appraisal. The authors discuss various issues related to this method of appraisal: training, impact, managers’ sensitivity to receiving upward feedback, and format of the feedback assessment.

The use of 360-degree feedback in a team setting is examined by using two examples of organizations. First, in a Quaker Oats plant in Topeka, Kansas, it was found that when the feedback-and-appraisal system was not a priority and when it was not reviewed, the ratings lost their impact both in decision making and to develop. Second, at W.L. Gore in Newark, Delaware, team members recognized the importance of confidentiality of ratings. Managers from both companies asserted that the appraisal system and the feedback assessment must fit within the organizational culture.
The authors also discuss fairness issues involved with using 360-degree feedback for decision making. Many companies use it for development purposes only, because of questions about the fairness of peer and subordinate ratings linked to pay and promotion. Additionally, users of 360-degree feedback discussed the necessity of including customers’ perspectives on the feedback assessment.

Whatever the specifics of the assessment, as organizations become less hierarchical in structure, top-down performance appraisal will need to be reconsidered. Patience and planning will allow the use of 360-degree feedback to be a key process in this reform (Budman and Rice February 1994).

Carey presents various approaches to the use of 360-degree feedback, as well as generalizations regarding the successful implementation of 360-degree systems. He asserts that 360-degree feedback can create productive relationships between managers and employees. To minimize risks involved with its use, Carey makes these suggestions: (1) All parties should understand what the feedback can really accomplish; it is the beginning of a larger change process. (2) Consider enlisting the help of a third party, such as a management consulting or a human resources development firm. (3) Do not make 360-degree feedback the primary determinant of salary, promotions, or termination. (4) Guarantee that feedback will be anonymous. (5) Leaders of the organization must support the process.

Carey also describes three organizational approaches to 360-degree feedback at AT&T, Trompeter Electronics, and Xerox. Finally, the issue of how feedback is used is addressed. There are two main perspectives: Some believe that 360-degree feedback should only be used for developmental purposes, whereas some feel it can be effectively used for performance appraisal and decision making. Ray Calvin, of Trompeter Electronics, describes his company’s use of feedback for development and as part of appraisals. All conclude that implementation of 360-degree-feedback systems requires “ample planning and precaution” (Carey March 1995).

The author discusses his seven suggestions for preventing 360-feedback assessments from losing impact and effectiveness: (1) Learn the technology before investing in it. (2) Make sure the organization is prepared for the 360-degree process. (3) Use well-researched and well-constructed survey items. (4) Protect the confidentiality of raters. (5) Use skilled facilitators to implement the process. (6) Follow up with developmental activities. (7) Separate developmental feedback from personnel and compensation decisions.

Coates bases these suggestions on seven years of research and development of 360-degree-feedback instruments. Each suggestion is followed by information that will allow users to resolve issues, evaluate options, prepare well, and increase the probability of success. The author asserts that experience has shown that 360-degree feedback can be a powerful tool, but it must be used wisely. He predicts that 360-degree-feedback technology will continue to increase its versatility and accessibility. Careful preparation will allow users to implement a 360-degree system that will meet organizational needs (Coates 1996).


This article discusses 360-degree assessments and their impact on healthcare employees and organizations. The growth of 360-degree assessment can be attributed to various marketplace realities (such as downsizing and mergers) and organizational transformations that require a new focus on leadership and effectiveness. In the healthcare field, 360-degree assessments can assist career planning, leadership development, cooperation and communication between individuals and departments, as well as foster preferred leadership styles. It also provides executives with an understanding of the difference between performance and expectations.

Crystal describes current methods of 360-degree assessment and offers four guidelines for choosing an assessment process. (1) The process should have been developed by experts trained in leadership assessment. (2) It should assess leadership
effectiveness and not be used to pay or promotion decisions. (3) It should include one-on-one counseling and prepare a personalized action plan for continual leadership development. (4) It should provide comprehensive evaluation of performance. This feedback should include interpersonal skills, communication skills, administrative skills, and other aspects of leadership effectiveness. Essentially, the 360-degree process should elicit confidential data to be interpreted by the facilitators, who can then relate the results to the rate. The process is designed to help executives understand the steps needed to develop leadership effectiveness. Crystal includes quotes from experts in health care and in leadership development fields (Crystal November/ December 1994).


This paper discusses the use of multi-rater feedback for developmental purposes versus appraisal purposes. One major distinction between these uses is ownership of information. When multi-rater feedback is used for development, the data are private or owned by the rate. When used for appraisals, the feedback data are not private. Dalton argues that using multi-rater feedback for appraisal violates basic counseling principles about learning, growth, and change. The first step in eliciting individual change is to set the conditions so that individuals will understand that their behavior is not being perceived as they intend it to be. Hearing personal information that is different from one’s own perception can be difficult and painful. Using feedback for development ensures that the data are private, providing the recipient with the psychological safety necessary for acceptance. Dalton also asserts that if data are not more private (that is, used for the appraisal) than the ratings themselves are often affected. Evidence shows that raters tend to be lenient when their ratings will affect a co-worker’s employment status.

Dalton identifies two motives for organizations wanting to use multi-rater feedback for appraisal: It opens new markets for vendors, and HR professionals assume that the information on the employee will be “more fair.” She also gives three main reasons why this second assumption might not be realistic: (1) The work of Herb Meyer and others at General Electric in 1965 [H. H. Meyer, E. Kay, and J. P. R.
French, Jr. Split roles in performance appraisal. Harvard Business Review 43:1, 1965, pp. 123-129] showed that public and quantitative appraisals rarely produce change, regardless of who appraises. (2) Public use of feedback data leads to rater leniency and, therefore, it is not valid or useful. (3) Subordinates may fear reprisal, thus a lack of confidentiality can hinder the process. Dalton concludes that multi-rater feedback used for appraisal will not produce change any more than any other quantitative appraisal, and it may damage the credibility of the process. More research is required on how ratings are affected in development (private) versus appraisal (public) feedback conditions.


Denton, a human resources vice-president at Limited Credit Services (LCS) in Columbus, Ohio, describes 360-degree-feedback instruments, their benefits, and the development of a 360-degree system at LCS. The author states that the current rate of change in the world makes individual development necessary to maintain an “edge.” Gathering valid and honest information, especially at the executive and managerial levels, is difficult. Thus, it is necessary to have leadership skills assessed in order to find skills and behaviors that need improvement. Denton states that 360-degree-feedback instruments are the most effective type of leadership assessment available by providing a complete picture of performance and effectiveness. The benefits are especially effective in organizations that are trying to focus development efforts for managers. The instruments decrease bias and provide candid data to channel managers into appropriate training programs or interventions. Some instruments also provide participants with insight on the values and skills that are necessary for a particular position or organization.

At LCS, an evaluation was needed that rated individuals against strategic issues that the organization valued in its leaders. A 360-degree-feedback instrument was used, showing managers their strengths and weaknesses. The feedback was followed up with the creation of a development plan, involving the manager, his boss, and the assessment facilitator. Re-administering the instrument every eighteen to twenty-four
months lets LCS managers benchmark progress, and allows for continuing development of leadership effectiveness.


This article reviews several articles found in the 1993 Human Resource Management special issue on 360-degree feedback. Dunnette summarizes the main points of these articles and addresses the lack of cohesion that exists in this area of research. He also elaborates on the impact of 360-degree feedback as an emerging human-resource management tool. In addition to its relevance to organizational practices such as appraisal and development initiatives, 360-degree feedback has many psychological aspects: person perception, impression formation, individuals’ conceptions of self, impression management, and behavioral change.

The articles discussed represent themes, issues, and trends that focus on accuracy, content, methodological hazards, and the organization or individual change. Dunnette provides a brief description of five 360-degree-feedback instruments that were investigated by the authors in this special issue. These instruments include Benchmarks®, Campbell Leadership Index™, Executive Success Profile, Management Skills Profile, and Insight-Out. These instruments are designed to provide feedback on managerial strengths and weaknesses.


Edwards discusses the emergence of 360-degree feedback as a tool for facilitating personal development. He cautions potential users about the composition of the questions on an assessment survey. Questions should not prompt answers and should focus on removing preconceptions regarding the person being evaluated. He also discusses the feedback received from a 360-degree assessment, which can be surprising and insightful. It can focus on talents, ethics, leadership, personality, habits, and both strengths and weaknesses. The most hurtful criticisms, however, tend to be
those regarding interpersonal skills. The information that is uncovered from co-workers can illustrate how limited a person’s self-understanding can be.

Edwards also asserts that the impact of feedback is affected by the person’s attitude prior to receiving feedback. A person who possesses a positive outlook on development and the feedback process will maximize 360-degree feedback’s benefits. Users should also be aware of the ability of the process to harm those that are unable to accept the feedback; restoring such an employee’s self-esteem can be a difficult task. In addition, Edwards suggests that 360-degree feedback should only be used for developmental purposes, rather than for pay and performance decision making. He asserts that the use of 360-degree feedback for these purposes could produce invalid results.


This book deals with the complexities and sensitive issues surrounding the use of 360-degree feedback for performance appraisal rather than strictly for development. Chapter 1 defines 360-degree feedback and outlines a brief history of its benefits in relation to the changing nature of organizations. Although accepted approaches to 360-degree feedback are varied, the authors describe their technique for implementing and evaluating the process. Chapters 2 and 3 provide background, various approaches, and applications for 360-degree systems.

The next section (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) deals with implementation of a 360-degree system. Chapter 7 discusses common mistakes in the feedback process and how to avoid them. Issues such as technology, confidentiality, safeguards, training, and norm comparisons are addressed. Chapter 8 discusses common criticisms of 360-degree feedback. According to Edwards and Ewen, anticipation of and reaction to criticism is necessary to maximize the possible benefits of 360-degree feedback.

Chapter 9 discusses the impact of 360-degree feedback. It has shown some promise in terms of positive, measurable impact. The authors list the following outcomes: improved employee satisfaction with the work environment, significant
behavior changes aligned with the organization’s objectives, and better individual and team performance that extends to external customers. The authors describe various ways of measuring impact on performance and development, as well as reaction to feedback. Chapter 10 closes with an outlook for the future of 360-degree feedback.


This article discusses how to build a multi-rater feedback process that will support organizational goals by facilitating employee development that is aligned with corporate strategy. Many 360-degree systems fall short of their potential because they are used merely for individual development and do not support organizational change. There are several phases to implementing multi-rater assessment that will support organizational goals. First, the organization must decide what the assessment is to accomplish by clarifying the company’s goals and strategies; defining the scope of the process; and planning the process in terms of who will participate, how the instrument will be designed, and how often it will be used. Second, the system must be linked to a competency model that defines the skills and behaviors needed by employees in order to achieve the company’s goals. Third, planning administration of the instrument involves educating those involved with the process and then determining the strategy for interpreting results. The steps of implementation from this point are sequential: (1) Hold “kickoff” meetings. (2) Roll out the process. (3) Focus on using the feedback for development, rather than for making personnel decisions. (4) Evaluate the process to determine its impact and effectiveness.


This article discusses the purpose of feedback for executives, barriers to its implementation, and three techniques for providing useful feedback. Individuals within an executive’s circle of influence are often reluctant to give feedback openly for fear of reproach. As a result, many top executives do not receive the feedback
necessary to change and improve their performance. Also, many executives, having enjoyed success in the past, do not perceive a need to change and may feel a fear of change. The benefits of feedback and development opportunities for executives affect both individuals and organizations, making the assessment a worthwhile pursuit. Three techniques for assessment are offered here: psychological testing, multisource assessment, and individual competence assessments.

Guinn brief discusses what multisource assessment involves and how its use has grown. Despite the great impact of feedback from multiple sources, some are concerned about the subjectivity of the process. She contends that subjectivity can be decreased by the questionnaire design and certain precautions can ensure the collection of reliable and valid data. Although multisource assessment can be time consuming, the payoff is “rich” and likely to be accepted by executives. Regardless of how it is collected, feedback should provide information about appropriate behaviors that can be recognized and changed. This can involve the use of a competence model, which describes the appropriate skills for the executive. Guinn includes four case studies of assessment systems as they relate to evaluation and feedback issues. Executive assessments provide valuable feedback that can be applied to various initiatives within an organization and can affect an organization and its employees by facilitating development (Guinn 1996).


This article discusses the use of 360-degree feedback for performance-appraisal purposes. Performance appraisals tend to be regarded negatively on the business environment. Harvey attributes this to four common aspects of performance appraisal: (1) Needs cannot be entirely met by one performance evaluation. (2) Appraisals from a single, supervisory source are inherently problematic. (3) The effect of the appraisal and feedback on employee development can be lost or overlooked. (4) Many managers are not capable of providing appropriate evaluations.

Harvey then asserts that there are ways to improve the effectiveness of employee evaluation and performance assessment. He offers three ideas: (1) Supervisory and
single-source assessments should be replaced with multi-rater, or 360 degrees, feedback collected from various sources. (2) Pay and promotion decisions should be separate from the feedback collected for development only. (3) The improvements that result from performance appraisal should be received as positive changes within the organization (Harvey March/April 1994).


The purpose of this study is to better understand 360-degree feedback as a management-development intervention. It addresses some key questions, including: How do managers’ skills develop after feedback? How do initial feedback, development efforts, and environmental support relate to skills development? Which developmental activities are most effective? What affects the level of effort managers put into their development? At a large Midwestern utility company, 198 managers completed the Management Skills Profile (MSP), a 360-degree-feedback instrument. Two years later, the same managers were given the chance to retake the MSP and, in addition, the Management Development Questionnaire (MDQ). The MDQ is designed to measure effort, change, developmental activities, and support for development. Of the 198 managers, 48 took the MSP twice and also received the follow-up MDQ.

Based on previous research, the authors formulated the following hypotheses:

1a: As a group, skills will improve from the initial assessment (Time 1) to the follow-up (Time 2), as measured by self- and others’ ratings.

1b: The agreement between self- and others’ ratings will increase from Time 1 to Time 2.

2: Managers whose skills are rated higher (at Time 1) will receive larger pay increases and will be more likely to receive promotions between Times 1 and 2.

3a: Managers who put more effort into skill development will be more likely to improve management skills.

3b: Activities that require follow-through will be more effective than those
that focus on understanding the results and formulating intentions.

3c: Managers who receive more support from superiors will be more likely to improve their skills.

3d: Managers who receive more organizational support will be more likely to improve their skills.

4a: Managers receiving more favorable ratings at Time 1 will be more likely to complete developmental activities.

4b: Managers whose feedback from others are closer to self-ratings will be more likely to complete developmental activities.

The major finding is that receiving 360-degree feedback was generally helpful, but follow-through on development was the most critical factor in improving skills. These results have implications for (1) how managers can develop their own skills, (2) how supervisors can support others’ development, and (3) how the organization can facilitate development. The absence of a comparison group in this study, however, makes determination of the actual effects of 360-degree feedback on skill improvement difficult.


This article is a case study of a 360-degree assessment implemented in one of the operating divisions of Tenneco. The company developed a 360-degree assessment to measure nine leadership competencies thought to be necessary to the organization’s culture. Heisler uses Tenneco’s approach to support the belief that the 360-degree feedback process must be implemented slowly; it must be seen as more than a data collection system. Heisler suggests that 360-degree assessments be designed to measure behaviors and characteristics that relate to an organization’s strategy. The feedback process must also be supported with tools for the analysis and interpretation of data. Finally, he says that the process should be followed by developmental planning for the participants. The purpose of 360-degree systems is not only assessment but also to provide feedback to stimulate improvement and to promote an organization’s strategic business objectives (Heisler 1996).
Hirsch provides a description of various aspects of 360-degree-feedback programs, planning, and impact, using information gathered from professionals in the field. She states that dissatisfaction with traditional performance appraisal has increased; in 1992, 68% of companies cited better performance management as a priority.

George Hollenbeck, an organizational psychologist, gives two reasons for the need for better evaluation. First, smaller organizations need to maximize individual effectiveness. Second, employees in downsized organizations need better feedback to alleviate insecurity and stress. Organizations are increasingly using 360-degree feedback to provide a more accurate evaluation and effective communication. After 360-degree evaluations are completed, many organizations, with the help of either a human resources professional or an outside consultant, encourage development initiatives. Stride Rite, for example, assists managers with an individual development plan. Hirsch also discusses preparation for the implementation of a 360-degree-feedback program. Cost varies with program size, degree of customization, and amount of outside consulting involved. Comparison of costs between standardized instruments (for example, Benchmarks® from the Center for Creative Leadership) and customized programs show customization to be fairly costly.

Whether using a customized program or a standardized instrument, veteran users stress the need for planning. The following five steps are recommended: (1) Establish the program’s goals. Linda Kane, of Stride Rite, discusses the importance of disconnecting 360-degree evaluation from pay decisions. She suggests that 360-degree feedback be used for management development and coaching initiatives, while other techniques be used for performance appraisal. (2) Decide who will be evaluated. Options range from comprehensive implementation of all managers to a targeted implementation. Targeting high-potential or low-performing employees can be effective.

Implementing feedback assessment across the company can reinforce preferred behaviors. (3) Decide on a standardized program or a customized one. Statistical
reliability and validity are strong arguments for standardized instruments, whereas customized instruments are more specific to the needs of the organization. (4) Decide how many evaluations to collect from peers, subordinates, supervisors, and customers. The suggested range is from three to four. The average instrument uses five to ten. (5) Communicate the rules regarding anonymity and use of the feedback. Anonymity and developmental use of feedback will ensure honest evaluations, according to organizational psychologist and consultant Lynn Summers (Hirsch August 1994).

Robert Hoffman. Ten reasons you should be using 360-degree feedback. HR Magazine, April 1995, pp. 82-85.

Hoffman describes the increased use of 360-degree feedback in organizations. The technique can be used for development purposes only, but it is increasingly being used for performance appraisal. It enables companies to “align employee performance with the organization’s needs and overall strategy [which] leads to the development of a more involved, less hierarchical work force.” Hoffman offers these ten observations about what 360-degree feedback can do: (1) define corporate competencies; (2) increase the focus on customer service; (3) support team initiatives; (4) create a high-involvement workplace; (5) decrease hierarchies and promote streamlining; (6) detect barriers to success; (7) assess developmental needs; (8) lessen discrimination and bias; (9) identify performance thresholds; and (10) be easy to implement.

Hoffman also considers issues that must be addressed to maximize the benefits of 360-degree feedback: (1) How will the process be communicated to the organization? (2) Will the process be combined with other appraisal systems? (3) What training will be provided to the participants? (4) Should outside consultants be used? (5) Should an off-the-shelf program or a customized program be implemented? (6) Is a computer-based evaluation or a paper- and-pencil form best for the organization? Full consideration of these issues should allow for a smooth implementation of 360-degree feedback (Hoffman April 1995).

This study investigates the impact of individual differences, feedback characteristics, instrument characteristics, and organizational support on managers’ developmental responses to 360-degree feedback. The authors define these individual differences: (1) feedback-seeking behavior: a manager’s propensity to actively seek feedback related to organizational and personal goals, (2) learning orientation: an individual’s belief regarding whether behavior can be learned and modified, and (3) self-confidence: the belief in one’s own competence to handle a variety of situations.

Three hypotheses are formed relating to the impact of these individual differences: (1) There is a positive relationship between feedback-seeking orientation and developmental response to 360-degree feedback. (2) There is a positive relationship between learning orientation and developmental response. (3) Self-confidence is positively related to developmental response.

Two hypotheses are formed relating to feedback characteristics such as confidentiality, sign (Is the feedback positive or negative?), accuracy, timing, quantity, and specificity: (4) There will be a positive relationship between the number of people who see the feedback and developmental response. (5) There will be a negative relationship between perceived feedback sign and developmental response (that is, negative feedback will elicit more response than positive).

The next two hypotheses related to the characteristics of the feedback system: (6) Managers required to participate in development planning discussion will have more response than those not required to plan development. (7) There will be a positive relationship between the completion of the manager’s development plan and developmental response.

The final hypotheses relate to the organizational conditions for development: (8) Organizational support for development will positively relate to managers’ response to feedback. (9) Total Quality Management (TQM) will be positively related to managers’ developmental response.
A sample of 236 managers from 25 organizations completed the Management Skills Development Profile (a 360-degree instrument from Personnel Decisions, Inc.) two different times. The results were as follows: Characteristics of the feedback and feedback system as well as TQM philosophy were more strongly related to developmental responses than individual differences (self-confidence, learning orientation, feedback-seeking orientation). In fact, individual differences did not affect the impact of the 360-degree feedback (contrary to hypotheses 1 to 3). Contrary to hypothesis 4, characteristics of feedback itself (that is, “publicness”) was not positively related to response.

The sign of the feedback (hypothesis 5) was not related to developmental response. Hypotheses 6 and 7 were partially supported. Hypotheses 8 and 9 received only limited support; organizational support did not affect the developmental impact of the feedback. The authors suggest that organizations should encourage managers to take initiative in self-development and consider mandating extensive development-planning sessions for 360-degree-feedback programs. The study showed these two factors to have a great deal of impact on the developmental response to the feedback (Katherine Holt and Cavanaugh 1996).


Jones and Bearley begin by discussing the three major shifts in organizations that make the use of multi-rater feedback necessary. First, focus has shifted from management skills to leadership skills. Second, there has been a shift from dependency to self-responsibility in career planning. Third, there has been a shift from traditional hierarchy and structure to organizational culture. Organizations are best served when they provide employees with the information necessary for their own leadership development, and this can best be achieved with multi-rater feedback.

This book is also a how-to manual that describes steps to take and pitfalls to avoid in implementing multi-rater feedback. The authors explore the several common uses for multi-rater feedback: (1) system intervention, (2) team building, (3)
components of training or development courses, (4) assessment of training needs, (5) embedding upward feedback into employee surveys, (6) assessment of training outcomes, (7) return-on-investment analyses regarding development schemes, and (8) linking feedback to performance appraisal.

The authors conclude with chapters that outline the creation and implementation of multi-rater feedback programs, as well as ways of dealing with reliability of programs in general. They assert that no instrument is inherently valid or invalid: “Validity is always situated-specific; it does not reside in the questionnaire or its items.” They also suggest that the results of the assessment be compared to normative data (descriptive statistics on a known group).

According to Jones and Bearley, the most important goal of multi-rater feedback is “to inform and motivate feedback recipients to engage in self-directed action-planning for improvement. It is the feedback process, not the measurement process, that generates the real payoffs.” They describe various developmental follow-up strategies that will maximize the payoffs of multi-rater feedback. It is best used to facilitate employee development; however, many organizations are experimenting with multi-rater feedback for performance appraisals.

These two uses differ in one important respect: Performance appraisal is used in retrospect to evaluate what employees have done, whereas multi-rater feedback used for development evaluates how the employees do their jobs. The authors contend that the integration of 360-degree feedback and performance appraisal will require experimentation. Finally, they say that the ideas behind such feedback are not a fad, and that 360-degree feedback is necessary in the shifting climate of organizational paradigms and structure (Jones and Bearley 1996).


This report discusses the use of what the authors refer to as enhanced 360-degree feedback. This differs from traditional 360-degree feedback in that it is used for senior-level executives and generally provides them with a “richer feedback experience.” The authors give two main reasons why senior executives need this
enhanced feedback experience. First, they face a broader range of challenges than other managers. Second, enhanced feedback is more appropriate for the psychological makeup of senior executives, rather than focusing on behavior alone.

Enhanced feedback goes beyond the standard 360-degree feedback in both amount and type of data collected. Several types of information are collected with enhanced 360-degree feedback in addition to the data collected by standard 360-degree processes. These are: (1) numerical ratings plus verbatim comments, (2) data from the workplace, plus data from personal life, (3) behavioral information plus information on motivation, and (4) data on the present plus information on the early history. Not all of these additional sources need to be used, and sources should be chosen carefully. The more data that are collected, the greater the impact, both positive and negative. This amount of feedback can be overwhelming to its recipients. The risk involved with enhanced feedback can be great, and it is necessary to evaluate all aspects of its use.

The authors lay out a plan for its effective implementation. First, the right feedback-provider staff must be selected. The staff that provides the assessment and feedback should be: competent in management development, proficient in personal development, effectively with senior managers, and mature. Second, the right participants must be selected. The authors discuss three ways of selecting participants: (1) the organization nominates a candidate, (2) the candidate volunteers, and (3) the service provider selects the candidate. It is important to note that participation must be voluntary, regard- less of who chooses potential participants. One human resources executive observed, “Allowing them to say no is important.”

Finally, to safely use an enhanced 360-degree feedback, both the service provider and the organization must assist the executive throughout the entire process. This means focusing on these suggestions: (1) The facilitators must prepare the participant. (2) The facilitators should stress the positive aspects of the feedback. (3) The service provider should never “attack” or coerce the participant. (4) The service provider should stay in touch after the feedback session. (5) The service provider should help the executive get “closure.” (6) The facilitators should challenge the executive to use the feedback to make real progress. (7) The service provider should build a strong relation- ship with the client.

According to the authors, “The key to minimizing the risk of using enhanced feedback is to reduce uncertainty.” If enhanced feedback is used safely, then the
executive gains a unique awareness of his or her impact. Enhanced 360-degree feedback stimulates natural development processes by focusing attention on issues that “might later come to a head on their own” (Kaplan and Palus 1994).


This article focuses on the use and design of multi-rater programs to gain a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is defined as “providing a product or service perceived by its customers as adding value and doing so in a way that is unique and difficult for a competitor to readily duplicate.”

The authors begin by addressing various considerations for 360-degree practice. They assert that the process of developing effective multi-rater feedback involves five steps: (1) establishing and communicating the purpose of the effort, (2) developing the content and format of the assessment, (3) establishing a report format and procedures for distributing results, (4) facilitating the use of the results by managers, and (5) following up to assess progress and improvement. It may also involve training raters to use the process, and training leaders or facilitators to interpret and utilize results for development.

The authors then compare the use of multi-rate instruments for development and for performance appraisal. The primary difference is that performance appraisal requires the measurement of results: what is done. Develop applications require measurement of behaviors and competencies: how the job is done. Performance appraisal is performed primarily for “evaluation and organizational consequences, such as pay treatment” or promotion; it is rarely geared toward individual or organizational development. The remainder of this section focuses mainly on similarities and differences between developmental and evaluative use of multi-rater feedback. The risks and rewards of using multi-rater feedback are also addressed.

The rewards can include the improvement of two-way communication, increased formal and informal communication, building effective work relationships, increased employee involvement, and the demonstration of respect for employee opinions. The authors then discuss the process of designing multi-rater feedback
systems that reduce risk and maximize reward, thus augmenting competitive advantage. This process focuses on (1) content, (2) involvement of employees in program design, (3) item types and format, (4) item relevance, (5) implementation, (6) frequency, (7) uses for the feedback, (8) self-assessment, and (9) report format. The article concludes with the authors’ call for continued research and development of multi-rater feedback and assessment. The areas in need of research include the types of multi-rater feedback processes, the differential outcomes of use for development or evaluation, criteria of feedback success, and, most importantly, the use of multi-rater feedback and assessment to gain competitive advantage (London and Beatty Summer/Fall 1993).


This paper explores how 360-degree feedback can go beyond traditional performance appraisal by providing information that can be used for behavior change and employee development. The authors present a model and seven associated propositions specifying how differences in perceptions of performance between the focal individual and his or her co-workers can affect factors such as self-image, goal-setting, behavior, and performance. Components in their model include personal variables, such as feedback-seeking behavior, self-monitoring, and impression management. Situational factors in the model include how the feedback process is implemented and organizational performance standards. According to the authors, the literature on multi-rater feedback has not devoted much attention to these issues.

The authors also discuss two basic assumptions often made about multisource feedback: (1) multi-rater feedback helps the focal individual develop a more accurate self-concept, and (2) multisource feedback provides information that is valuable for development and performance improvement.

The first assumption suggests that others’ ratings are always accurate compared to self-ratings; however, research has shown that these others often do not agree among themselves. Additionally, there is little direct evidence concerning the effects of
multi-rater feedback on performance. There is some evidence that respondents modify their ratings when the purpose of the assessment is performance appraisal, which may result in an inaccurate rating from others.

London and Smither argue that ratings from various sources (for example, bosses, peers, and direct reports) should not be combined into a composite “other” rating. These sources often have different perspectives of the focal individual’s behavior, and may not agree on that person’s level of performance. So, a manager’s self-ratings may be in agreement with the ratings of peers but not agree with the ratings of direct reports. When these ratings are combined for feedback, the focal individual cannot determine if his or her self-ratings agree or disagree with the ratings from the various sources. This can have a negative impact on the usefulness of these ratings for developmental purposes. The authors conclude by summarizing research issues and methods that can be used to improve the understanding and effectiveness of multisource feedback (London and Smither 1995).


This article describes the impact of 360-degree assessment in view of its recent increased use, particularly the impact of upward feedback (that is, from subordinates upward). The author states that AT&T recently implemented an upward feedback (alone or as a 360-degree program) with over 68,000 managers in a year. Paul Jones, a performance-improvement manager at Dow Chemical Company, asserts that ensuring proper leadership is essential for organizations to keep a competitive edge. Proponents of 360-degree assessments contend that feedback from multiple levels is effective because it provides valuable insights to manage performance.

One of the criticisms of upward feedback is the problem with collecting accurate ratings. It is also difficult for some managers to accept feedback, especially from their subordinates. Both of these factors can diminish the impact and effectiveness of 360-degree feedback. Many companies support the use of 360-degree feedback for development and training but avoid its use for pay decisions. Many professionals feel that using upward feedback for pay decisions can affect the acceptance and impact of
the feedback. The article ends with an anecdote from Allied Signal Inc. that illustrates how fear of retribution can affect the accuracy of upward feedback in 360-degree systems (Lublin. October 4, 1994).


This article describes the necessity for and the process of gathering feedback for senior-level executives who, Ludeman contends, do not receive adequate feedback from peers and subordinates. Thus, they work in what she calls a feedback void, which results in unexpected consequences resulting from unknown performance deficiencies. The feedback void is created when managers move up in organizations, become less effective, and no longer recognize their impact on the organization. Ludeman presents a three-part process for obtaining feedback, which includes: (1) a 360-degree-assessment instrument, customized to measure specific problem areas, (2) the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®), and (3) the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (a personality measure designed to be administered by psychologists). This process leads to employee openness, problem confrontation, and upward communication. Enriched performance by top executives will have a positive effect on an organization that relates directly to the bottom line. Honest and effective feedback can prevent surprises and costly misunderstandings on the executive level (Ludeman August 1995).


The authors describe 360-degree feedback, how it works, and some drawbacks to its increasing use. Traditional appraisals often set performance goals and encourage employees to develop on their own. However, 360-degree feedback offers a broader perspective of performance and assists managers who, because of management downsizing, no longer supervise more subordinates. It utilizes evaluations from supervisors,
peers, subordinates, and the self, which are collected through anonymous questionnaires. Responses are then interpreted by the facilitators of the assessment. The authors state that 360-degree feedback can be very influential, and the process offers these additional advantages: (1) It reinforces the belief in a customer-driven approach to success, (2) it empowers the workforce by making every opinion count, and (3) it provides a more accurate view of performance.

The drawbacks of 360-degree assessment discussed here include issues that affect the impact of the feedback, such as not all participants will accurately fill out questionnaires in a timely manner. Some may consider the assessment to be a distraction. Also, in order to elicit change, an employee must be open to the feedback and be seeking development. More time is required for 360-degree systems than for traditional appraisals, and the design of the system can affect its developmental impact. Finally, using 360-degree assessments for pay and promotion decisions often adds bias to the responses. In addition, the quality of the questionnaire, the purpose of the system, and organizational culture and support can affect the impact of the feedback. Despite its drawbacks, 360-degree feedback is becoming an increasingly popular method of assessment and is used by companies such as UPS, AT&T, Amoco, General Mills, and Procter & Gamble (Marchese and McGowan December 1995).


The article begins with a quote from Karen Stoneman of Watson Wyatt Company’s organizational effectiveness division. She says that strictly upward feedback is being replaced by 360-degree feedback, and that most companies aspire to use the 360-degree-feedback process. Most companies, however, are not truly using 360-degree feedback, but are using 180-degree feedback instead.

David Gartenburg, a staff consultant at Rohm and Haas, a chemical specialty company, is in the process of developing a guide for effective multi-rater feedback programs. In his research, he concluded that performance management was a top concern with employees, followed by concern for rewards and recognition. The time
consumed by the feedback process was also a concern. In response, Gartenburg asserts that “if people took the time to talk about performance right after an event occurred, these programs wouldn’t be necessary” (Martinez. June 1995).


This paper examines the impact of 360-degree feedback as part of a larger development process. The authors summarize three conclusions about self-awareness and development based on their research on management development and on their work with managers: (1) People can learn, grow, and change to become better leaders and managers, (2) self-awareness is the cornerstone of development, and (3) development is an ongoing process intricately related to work.

McCauley and Moxley assert that the role of 360-degree feedback is to allow managers to compare their self-views with the views of others. It encourages the manager to align self-views with others’ views and demonstrates others’ recognition of a manager’s weaknesses. This enhancement of self-awareness can lead to an “unfreezing” process, whereby a manager is motivated to rethink his or her behavior and its impact on others. Receiving feedback is only one step of the development process. Its impact serves as one factor in unfreezing the self-view and subsequent efforts to improve or change behavior. The development process involves: (1) unfreezing the self-view by providing a manager with good data from multiple perspectives and encouraging openness to the feedback, (2) maximizing subsequent efforts to improve by creating a development plan that is acted on, and (3) ensuring organizational support for development. The authors also discuss the issues involved with 360-degree feedback (validity, rater confidentiality, the design of the feedback process, goals and development planning) as each affects the stages of development. Unlike feedback assessments for decision-making purposes, 360-degree feedback used for development is a part of an ongoing process. It should not replace the seeking of informal feedback in the workplace, nor should it be a one-time event. The impact of 360-degree feedback will be diminished if the feedback is not handled in a
way that is accepted by the manager (McCauley and Moxley 1996).

Robert McGarvey and Scott Smith. When workers rate the boss. Training, March 1993, pp. 31-34.

The authors discuss the growth in popularity of upward feedback and discuss various aspects of its implementation in an organization. They state that upward feedback is powerful because it provides a unique perspective for managers; subordinates are often in the best position to evaluate a manager’s performance. To truly experience the benefits of upward feedback, encouraging informal feedback is not enough. The process must be instrumented and facilitated to maximize benefits with the “least amount of pain.” Fear of reprisal for negative ratings is a concern of many subordinates. Whether using an off-the-shelf or custom-designed instrument, confidentiality is a necessity. Even when confidentiality is ensured, McGarvey and Smith contend, the fear of reprisal can remain a problem until organizations become more experienced with using upward feedback. Additionally, the managers being rated often have fears about subordinate feedback for the following reasons: (1) Employees may not be sensitive to the pressures of managerial positions and may have biases, and (2) employees may be influenced by recent events—a problem known as regency—and fail to consider the entire period of time being evaluated. To alleviate fears from both raters and rates, the authors suggest training. H. John Bernardin, professor of management at Florida Atlantic University, states that, with training, it is possible for employees give an unbiased rating. Also with 360-degree feedback, individual basis may be balanced out by other raters in the group.

There are many different options in the implementation of upward feedback. The authors suggest that this feedback be used for developmental purposes only to help managers recognize their weaknesses. They also address instruments that compare feedback results to norms or to other managers’ results, discussing the Center for Creative Leadership’s SkillScope® and Benchmarks®, as well as Personnel Decisions’ Profilor instruments. These instruments use upward feedback as part of a multi-rater assessment. Help with interpreting the feedback can be a major factor in a manager’s reaction to and acceptance of what can be surprising results. The use of outside
consultants is compared to the use of in-house human-resources professionals to interpret data.

The authors also discuss how to choose a 360-degree-feedback instrument. For example, there are four main considerations in choosing an off-the-shelf product: (1) content, (2) length, (3) research, and (4) cost. They conclude with ideas on the frequency and timing of using 360-degree feedback (McGarvey and Smith March 1993).


Melymuka describes 360-degree feedback, why it is effective, and discusses various issues involved with implementing 360-degree assessments. One purpose of implementing a 360-degree system, she states, is to evaluate self-managed teams and to support the use of team feedback. Depending on corporate culture and commitment, 360-degree feedback can provide effective and honest feedback that affects participants. Two impediments to success of a 360-degree system exist, one emotional and one administrative. Emotionally, feedback that is honest can be unsettling. Administratively, organizations must decide on the details of implementation.

There are certain issues that must be resolved before a 360-degree system can be successfully implemented: (1) confidentiality of raters, (2) purpose of the feedback (pay and job security or development only), and (3) time and cost involved with the process. Melymuka also gives testimony from various professionals and users of 360-degree systems on its overall effectiveness (Melymuka November 7, 1994).


The authors provide a brief summary of the use of 360-degree assessment and
feedback for performance appraisal. Rater groups are divided into two categories: internal and external customers. Internal customers are those who work with the rate in their organization. External customers can include clients, suppliers, consultants, and community officials. The authors conclude that, in general, 360-degree appraisals provide a broader view of performance, and they give specific reasons that this is beneficial.

The authors also mention issues that an organization must resolve in order to use 360-degree appraisal effectively. These include the number of raters and their relationship with the ratee, criteria by which employees should be judged, and the number of items on the appraisal form. Other considerations are confident of raters and summarizing of data.

There are also disadvantages inherent in the use of 360-degree feedback. These disadvantages are identified and solutions and implications are offered. Even when used for appraisal, the authors conclude that 360-degree assessments provide only a “means to an end,” and fail to provide a “final judgment.” It is necessary for organizations to develop a plan and change process to implement 360-degree appraisals. Employees should also receive training related to the evaluation process and instruments. The discussion is supported with examples of appraisal processes used at Johnson & Johnson, Advanced Behavioral Technology, Digital Equipment Corporation, and Hamilton Standard Commercial Aircraft (Milliman, Zawacki et al. November 1994).


The two chapters in this book that address multi-rater appraisals discuss how to determine who appraises performance (Chapter 4) and legal considerations of appraisals (Chapters 7 and 8).

In Chapter 4, the authors state that choosing the right people to appraise an employee’s performance will help the accuracy of an appraisal. In choosing appraisers, one factor to consider is the context of the appraisal. There are both organizational-design issues (functional design, team design, or matrix design) and
management-style issues (controlling or empowering). The authors also consider each possible source of appraisal (supervisor, peer, subordinate, customer, and self) and describe the particular perspective that each provides. Each appraiser tends to focus on particular performance aspects, which is useful for specific appraisal purposes, and the authors discuss the effectiveness of each possible appraiser in various organizational settings. This discussion evaluates the conditions and purposes for which certain appraisers are more relevant than others.

Chapter 7 deals primarily with legal considerations in the use of appraisal systems for pay, promotion, and rewards. There are two main considerations in designing and implementing performance appraisals: (1) what is being measured, and (2) the process by which measurements are made. To eliminate discrimination, appraisals must measure appropriate and work-oriented performance. The process must be monitored and audited for any content that is not related to performance. Data collected by the process should be valid, job-oriented, and objective. Choosing appropriate appraisers and training will help to obtain valid data. Also, the appraisal system should be an open process that allows employees to react to the data and to appeal, if necessary.

Chapter 8 discusses application considerations for the use of performance feedback for pay and promotion. The decision to tie pay and promotion to performance appraisals is complicated. The potential negative effects are as great as the potential benefits (that is, fairness and organizational impact), depending on the development and implementation of the process. Essentially, the authors assert that the use of feedback for pay decisions can potentially affect the data collected by the process. The overall validity of the data is key to system effectiveness, and it affects the organizational and developmental impact of the feedback (Mohrman, Jr. et al. 1990).


This article discusses possible limitations of 360-degree-feedback instruments. The authors assert that these limitations are the result of: (1) reliance on generalized traits, (2) limited or nonexistent frame of reference for ratings, (3) a memory-based,
often incomplete description of past performance, (4) the inability of observers to interpret behavior, and (5) the reliance on the instrument’s designer for interpretation of data.

The key to the limitations of these instruments is their lack of situation based context. Most instruments rely on Other People’s Observations (OPOs) as the basis for the assessment. Using observation-based judgments leaves the rater free to establish the context for the rating. Observers, to preserve accuracy, need a situational context on which to base their judgments. The authors, therefore, differentiate the measurement of OPOs from the measurement of Other People’s Expectations (OPEs). Using OPEs as the basis for judgment leads to the measurement of how a person will behave in a specific situation. The authors assert that OPEs, because they are situation specific, will provide the raters and rate with a more accurate frame of reference. They discuss the development of their instrument (Insight-Out), which was designed to measure OPEs.

Many people are not aware of the expectations others hold for them. Awareness of OPEs allows for more constructive suggestions for change. The authors believe that OPE feedback information allows individuals to manage the expectations of others. The quality and usefulness of 360-degree feedback will improve with increased attention to situation specificity (Moses, Hollenbeck et al. Summer/Fall 1993).

George P. Nicholas. Upward trend continues in the appraisal process. HR Focus, September 1992, p. 17.

Nicholas discusses two reasons for the increasing popularity of upward feedback. First, more managers are seeking upward appraisal as a way of obtaining candid, usable information. Even if the information is not used to pay or promotion decisions, it can still motivate managers to change. Also, subordinate comments may reveal managerial talents and strengths that might otherwise be unrecognized. Upward appraisal is also gaining attention because it supports the shifting emphasis on the manager’s role as a coach. Janina Latack, associate professor of management at The Ohio State University, asserts that a coach must have an accurate assessment of how he or she is perceived by the people who are being coached.

Nicholas discusses a coaching/mentoring process called Helping Others Succeed,
developed by Blessing-White, a New Jersey-based human-resources consulting firm. In this process, managers first complete a self-assessment, then they participate in a workshop where ways to improve their coaching skills are discussed, using the feedback. This initial discussion is followed by subsequent progress evaluations, which feature face-to-face subordinate feedback addressing specific coaching skills. Latack suggests that face-to-face feedback be incorporated under two conditions. First, the employees must trust the organization in general. Second, the employees must feel that the managers they are appraising are credible and interested in their development (Nicholas September 1992).


This article discusses the nature of self-observer rating differences as they occur in 360-degree feedback. Research has generally focused on situational factors of self-assessment accuracy. Although situations do affect one’s motivation to accurately report self-perceptions, the authors focus on whether some individuals’ self-ratings are more accurate than others regard—less of the context.

The authors conducted a test-retest reliability study to answer two questions: (1) Is self-observer rating discrepancy a stable individual difference or merely a “fleeting phenomenon”? (2) Is the tendency to overrate, underrate, or accurately rate one’s self stable over time and does it generalize across dimensions?

The first part of the study determined the stability of self-observer rating discrepancies. The Campbell Leadership Index™, a multi-rater assessment instrument, was completed by thirty-one female managers. One month later, the managers completed the instrument again, as did the same raters from the initial assessment. The results were that the discrepancy between self- and observer ratings appeared to be stable.

The second part of the study looked at whether self-observer discrepancies generalize across dimensions. High-level executives and low- to mid- level managers were rated by the Executive Skills Profile and the Management Skills Profile, respectively. In general, this study showed that individuals who over-, under-, or
accurately rate themselves in one area are likely to do so in another area. Also, the study suggested that such discrepancies in personality assessments are related to discrepancies in skill assessments.

The authors concluded that: (1) The stability of self-observer rating discrepancies suggests that they can provide useful information. (2) Accuracy in self-perception is a stable individual difference. (3) Knowledgeable observers’ ratings are more valid and accurate than self-ratings. (4) Accurate self-raters are better able to improve performance than inaccurate self-raters. (5) Personality assessments might be more valid using observer ratings rather than self-ratings (Nilsen and Campbell Summer/Fall 1993).


In this study, the congruence between self-assessments and the assessments of others (supervisors, peers, direct reports) was investigated. Ratings for 335 managers were used to compare self-ratings to others’ ratings on several management dimensions. The results indicated that the amount of agreement between self and others was relatively low, with self-ratings being significantly higher than the ratings of others. According to Nowack, many managers tend to be more aware of their strengths and less cognizant of their developmental needs. This inflated self-view may actually interfere with their development as managers because they may not recognize the need for improvement.

Nowack argues that managerial behavior change is a function of: (1) awareness of individual strengths and developmental needs, (2) the motivation to change, and (3) the capability to change specific behaviors. One of the strengths of 360-degree feedback is that it exposes differences between the managers’ self-perceptions and the perceptions of others, which may motivate them to pursue developmental activities. When differences exist between self- and others’ ratings, the differences should be explored, possibly leading to positive behavior and performance improvement (Nowack Summer 1992).

Nowack discusses key issues related to the selection and development of a 360-degree-feedback instrument. He gives five reasons for the increased use of 360-degree systems for feedback: (1) the need for a cost-effective alternative to assessment centers, (2) increasing availability of assessment software, (3) the need for continuous measurement in continuous improvement efforts, (4) the need for feedback for career-platitude employees, and (5) the need to maximize employees’ potential.

Before deciding to purchase a feedback instrument or to develop one, an organization must first decide what is to be measured. Off-the-shelf instruments are designed on five basic models: (1) job analysis: measures knowledge, skills, and abilities based on a traditional analysis of the position of interest (for example, managerial); (2) competency-based: measures behaviors as compared to high performers and low performers; (3) strategic planning: measures knowledge, skills, and abilities based on an organization’s strategic plans; (4) developmental theory: measures knowledge, skills, and abilities based on theoretical and conceptual models of employee growth and development; and (5) personality theory: measures knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with personality factors. An organization must also decide on issues such as scoring, confidentiality and anonymity, ownership of results, and instrument validity. Nowack discusses each of these issues and provides examples of various applications (Nowack January 1993).

Brian O’Reilly. 360-degree feedback can change your life. Fortune, October 17, 1994, pp. 93-100.

This article provides an overview of current practices and thinking related to 360-degree feedback, as well as examples of its impact. The author first asserts that 360-degree feedback, as it is now applied, should be used only for development purposes and is not effective as an appraisal tool. When used for performance appraisal, rating biases can influence the outcome. The author addresses the fact that, even when the feedback is not used for an appraisal, it can still be surprising and sometimes difficult
for managers to accept. He concludes that expected feedback creates the most potential for learning.

O’Reilly gives various examples of managers’ experiences that support this conclusion. This powerful feedback is also being used for cultural change associated with the shift to teamwork and employee empowerment. Often, to elicit change, managers need massive “doses” of feedback, such as those offered in weeklong programs provided by the Center for Creative Leadership.

The author also notes the different ways people rate themselves and describes three types of raters: high self-raters, low self-raters, and accurate self-raters. Finally, he summarizes the conditions that are necessary for feedback to be effective. First, the participant has to want to change. Next, recipients of feedback should discuss the results with everyone who provided ratings. Finally, the focus of development should be on only a few shortcomings, and concrete remedies should be chosen. The author closes with two examples of feedback programs designed by executives to promote their company’s “vision” to their employees (O’Reilly October 17, 1994).


Parker-Gore is the head of employee development at Mercury One 2 One Corporation, and presents a case study of their process for identifying managerial skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary for effective performance. The first step involved focus groups of managers to determine what skills were necessary in various roles and how behaviors were critical to the company goals. This led to defining a behavioral model for managers called Personal Success Factors. The next step was to implement a 360-degree appraisal designed to measure these factors. Essentially, the organization assessed managerial competencies and used development plans to address the “shortfalls in relation to business goals and targets.” In exploring the results of this process, managers have become aware of competence models and how specific behaviors and skills relate to business success, as well as the positive use of 360-degree feedback.

The author asserts that competencies can be used for both organizational
development and individual performance management. One 2 One uses data collected from 360-degree assessments to review performance and to facilitate development. Ratings are sought from appropriate sources, and the feedback is compared to a success profile (competence model), which is thought to be critical for success and development in a changing business environment. Finally, for an effective tool to reach its potential, it must be a process owned by the participants. This will facilitate the shift to an interactive and interdependent culture that maximizes team performance and produces a flexible, learning organization (Parker-Gore 1996).


In this article, Peters describes a program utilized at National Semiconductor, a microchip manufacturing company, to enhance management and leadership skills. The program was designed as a two-phase plan to facilitate corporate transformation. Phase one consisted of making the company viable, and employed downsizing, manufacturing consolidation, and product-pruning strategies. Phase two began with executives and managers establishing a leadership model, against which their own competencies would be assessed.

The assessment of these leadership and management skills involved extensive use of multi-rater feedback. The feedback was used to help develop employees being paired into peer-coaching partnerships. These partnerships used the multi-rater feedback as a basis for identifying development goals.

The author then describes a five-step process for using multi-rater feedback with peer-coaching partnerships: (1) The Contract: Individuals commit to the partnership and coaching roles are assigned. Individuals are responsible for performance and must provide their own motivation to change. (2) The Discussion: Partners analyze the multi-rater feedback they have received and extract key themes. (3) The Plan: Partners distill the themes from the feedback and determine specific behavioral and performance goals. (4) Ongoing Sessions: Partners agree on times, generally once a month, to meet formally. The purpose of these meetings is to review progress and create necessary action plans. (5) The Follow-up/Reassessment: Partners formally review all of the progress made toward established goals, six to eight months after
initial goals are set (Peters March 1996).


Romano discusses some of the following issues regarding 360-degree feedback and then provides four case studies. She asserts that as the traditional, top-down performance appraisal technique is becoming less effective, the use of upward feedback is gaining recognition. The nature of supervisor-subordinate relationships is changing as organizations flatten and emphasize teamwork. Training and development are the most common use of 360-degree feedback; however, as the value of such feedback is recognized and the process becomes familiar, managers increasingly want to link 360-degree feedback to appraise for pay and promotions.

Also, many managers are threatened by upward feedback if it is used for decision making, thus the information can be ineffective. Brian Davis, of Personnel Decisions, Inc., suggests using 360-degree feedback for development until the process becomes familiar. He also recommends an “Olympic” rating system, where the highest and lowest scores are disregarded.

Romano concludes that the use of 360-degree programs will help managers eliminate the fear of feedback. She includes four case studies of 360-degree systems used at AT&T, MassMutual Insurance, Amoco Corporation, and Deloitte & Touche (Romano December 1993).


The author discusses various pitfalls and benefits of using a multi-rate system. First he talks about the four ways to implement multi-rater feedback systems: Buy an off-the-shelf instrument, hire outside consultants, build an internal system, or use a combination of any of these. Regardless of the type of feedback system used, it must be reliable and consistent, valid, easy to use, and should create positive change.

Second, Shaver says that because 360-degree feedback is a relatively new and
subtle technique (that can be potentially harmful), it is important to understand the process of setting up a system for using it. He provides these five steps: (1) Design and plan the process. Key factors are deciding who will rate and be rated, ensuring fairness, utilizing timing, and ensuring confidentiality. (2) Design and develop the instrument. Focusing the instrument on the organization’s vision can ensure that it is relevant to the future of the organization. (3) Administer the instrument. The format of the feedback system (for example, questionnaire design) affects the overall success of the assessment. (4) Process and report the feedback. Shaver cautions against problems of inaccurate transcription, editing, and slow processing. (5) Plan responses to the feedback. Receiving the data is only the first step in a manager’s development process. Creating and adhering to an action plan is where the improvement actually occurs. In this regard, there are three sources of help for managers using feedback for development: one-on-one facilitators, group discussions or workshops, and workbooks.

The use of 360-degree feedback invariably raises some concerns. Shaver asserts that relatively little is known about the impact of 360-degree feedback. Also, many professionals are inexperienced with 360-degree feedback; therefore, training is essential to implementing a system. Finally, the author discusses the use of external customers as sources of feedback and the use of feedback for performance appraisal and pay (Warren Shaver August 1995).


This article describes a study of the effects of upward feedback on changes in managerial performance over time. The effects of (1) receiving feedback, (2) completing self-ratings, (3) the manager’s initial level of performance, and (4) the subordinate’s familiarity with the manager were investigated by using goal-setting, control, and social-cognition theory.

There are two main hypotheses: (1) Managers whose initial level of performance is low will be motivated to improve their performance, and (2) managers whose initial performance level is low will improve when their self-evaluations are higher than
subordinate ratings. However, managers whose initial self and subordinate ratings are low will not be motivated to change (that is, have a low aspiration level). The study also examined factors affecting the observation of managerial behavior.

In the study, an upward-feedback program was administered to 238 managers. The program was then used six months later, and the results were compared to measure performance change. Respondents rated performance in areas such as commitment to quality, communications, support of subordinates, and fairness. The results were that managers whose initial performance was low or moderate improved after the feedback. However, managers with high initial performance did not improve. Finally, opportunities to observe behavior apparently increased after the initial assessment. Further implications and questions raised by the study are discussed (Smither, Manuel London et al. 1995).


This report discusses the uses and implementation of 360-degree feedback and examines three sample instruments. Sweet asserts that 360-degree assessment is an important method in the search for reliable, fair, and valid evaluation. According to the 1994 Performance Management Survey performed by Hewitt Associates, only 6% of 437 companies surveyed used formal 360-degree programs. It is primarily used to assess developmental needs, but it is being used more frequently for performance appraisal to determine promotions and pay.

Multi-rater feedback is also being used for team-building purposes—how a company uses the feedback will depend on its objectives. The report gives various experts’ opinions on implementation. They primarily advise that 360-degree feedback be used for individual development, rather than for performance decisions. Additionally, 360-degree feedback offers the organization an opportunity to reinforce business goals and values.

There are generally ten steps to arranging and implementing 360-degree feedback: (1) Set objectives. (2) Decide if participation is mandatory or voluntary. (3) Decide who will be assessed. (4) Select the competencies, behaviors, and values to be assessed. (5) Write the questions. (6) Test the questions. (7) Decide the response
format. (8) Determine the method of administration. (9) Set a schedule. (10) Arrange training or developmental activities. Training is important for preparing both raters and those who will be assessed. Confidentiality should be emphasized and insured for participants. If the data are not private, then the ratings can be biased and ineffective.

The report gives examples of two types of 360-degree-feedback instruments, Benchmarks® and SkillScope®, and TEAMS, Inc., showing how their impact is the creation of workable action or developmental plans. Various approaches are presented for the interpretation of the feedback and the design of the development plan, as well as pitfalls to avoid. The report suggests using various safeguards that have been implemented at DuPont. The final section discusses a case study of the 360-degree-feedback program used at AT&T (Sandra Sweet September 1995).


A survey about multisource feedback was distributed to 6,600 human resource professionals. These professionals were attendees at various national conferences, including those of the American Society for Training and Development, the Society of Human Resource Managers, and the American Compensation Association. Surveys were also sent to people on the TEAMS, Inc., mailing list. The survey was designed to determine who was using 360-degree feedback and how it was being used, and to determine the keys to successful implementation. Information was also gathered regarding various organizations’ 360-degree project guidelines and practices. Survey results are summarized from the 97 surveys that were returned.

The survey first determined how many organizations were using 360-degree feedback for developmental purposes and for performance-management purposes. Assessment-for-development-only was the most common form of 360-degree feedback (24%). Only 8.7% of companies used 360-degree feedback for performance management.

The survey then asked for the following information about multisource feedback: (1) the reasons for moving to multisource assessment, (2) how multisource information is used, (3) targeted groups for multisource assessment, (4) group size, (5) who initiated the multisource assessment process, (6) use of standardized versus
customized instruments, (7) how raters are chosen, (8) features of multisource systems, (9) how often assessment processes are used, (10) number of feedback recipients, (11) number of different instruments used, (12) time needed to complete each survey, (13) number of points on the rating scale, (14) number of items on the instrument, (15) who initiates the process, (16) data capture medium (paper, disk, phone, etc.), (17) timing of the feedback, (18) feedback given at a focal point (all at one time) or distributed over time, (19) sharing results with supervisors (encouraged or discouraged), (20) measures taken for process effect or impact, and (21) organizational demographics (TEAMS October 1995).


The author examines whether multi-rater assessment is an end in itself (the scientific perspective) or a means to an end (the practical perspective). The goal of the scientist, who sees measurement as an end in itself, is to enhance the accuracy of measurement by reducing error and rater variation. The practitioner, on the other hand, values the differing input of raters because this input represents “significant and meaningful sources of variation from which much can be learned.” Tornow equates the practitioner in this scenario to a manager in an organization. The manager uses multi-rater feedback as an insightful and valid means to an end.

The author also discusses research on the agreement between self and other ratings. There are three “core assumptions” that relate to the discrepancy between self and other ratings, which are found in many management and leadership development programs: (1) Awareness of how one’s skills and behaviors are seen by others is a key to managerial effectiveness, (2) managers need to improve in the area of self-objectivity, and (3) self-other agreement can be enhanced with feedback (self-other differences motivate managers to alter their self-views and/or improve their performance). Tornow believes that when multi-rater programs use rater discrepancies as feedback, they become powerful tools for development. Multiple-rater assessments, in order to be effective development tools, must focus on the multiple perceptions of the raters, rather than on measurement as an end in itself (Tornow Summer/ Fall 1993).

This volume is a comparison of sixteen widely used multi-rater assessment instruments. It focuses on those instruments that “relate self-view to the views of others on multiple management or leadership domains.” First, information was collected by contacting the authors and publishers of the twenty-four instruments reviewed in the original Feedback to Managers (1978). Then, an on-line computer literature search was conducted using behavioral science and business indexes. Finally, remaining reference manuals were examined and other authors and vendors were contacted.

The information received for each of the sixteen instruments was divided into three categories: descriptive information, research information, and training information. Descriptive information includes the author(s), vendor, copyright date(s), statement of purpose, target audience, cost, scoring process, certification process, instrument length, item-response format, and type(s) of raters. Research information includes the item origins, feedback scales, scale definitions and sample items, and written reports or data from studies of the instrument’s reliability and validity. The training information for each instrument includes a copy of the instrument, a sample feedback report, and any support materials (instructional or developmental) provided for trainers or participants.

A comprehensive summary of each instrument is added at the end of the report. Although each of the instruments met acceptable standards of instrument development, they are only a sample of what is available. Their inclusion in this report does not indicate that they would necessarily be suitable for the needs of all organizations. The sixteen instruments included are: ACUMEN®, Group Feedback, Benchmarks®, Campbell Leadership Index, COMPASS: The Managerial Practices Survey, Executive Success Profile, Leader Behavior Analysis II®, The Visionary Leader: Leader Behavior Questionnaire, Leadership Practices Inventory, Life Styles Inventory®, Management Effectiveness Profile System, Management Skills Profile, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, PRAXIS, Survey of Leadership Practices, The

**Note:** An updated edition of this volume with all new instruments will be published by the Center for Creative Leadership in the first quarter of 1998.


In this volume, the authors address the expanded use of multi-rater assessment instruments and affirm the need for an up-to-date reference manual describing an evaluation process for these instruments. This update to Feedback to Managers, Volume I: A Guide to Evaluating Multi-rater Feedback Instruments (Center for Creative Leadership, 1991) are designed to assist human resources professionals in the assessment of 360-degree-feedback instruments.

This report presents a simplified and comprehensive model for analyzing multi-rater feedback instruments. A step-by-step process is presented by which any multi-rater feedback instrument can be evaluated. The evaluation focuses on the use of these instruments for developmental purposes, and does not address the use or design of products for performance appraisal.

The volume divides the evaluation into sixteen sequential steps: (1) Find out what is available. (2) Collect a complete set of materials. (3) Compare your intended use to instrument characteristics. (4) Examine feedback scales. (5) Familiarize yourself with the instrument-development process. (6) Learn how items and feedback scales were developed. (7) Find out how consistent scores tend to be. (8) Assess basic aspects of validity: Does the instrument measure what it claims to measure? (9) Think about face validity. (10) Examine the response scale. (11) Evaluate the feedback display. (12) Understand how breakout of rater responses is handled. (13) Learn what strategies are used to facilitate interpretation of scores. (14) Look for development and support materials. (15) Compare cost and value for the price. (16) Consider length a minor issue.

Applications for each step are discussed. Although the steps are not equal in complexity and importance, the authors suggest that critical decisions should be made early in the process to eliminate instruments that are either not valid or do not meet
the organization’s needs. And, although no instrument is perfect in structure, content, and applicability, careful evaluation will allow users to make trade-offs in order to select the most appropriate instrument for their needs (Velsor, Leslie et al. 1997).


Vinson begins by discussing a 1993 survey that indicated that most employees were dissatisfied with their organization’s performance appraisal system. Other studies, however, show that employees value knowing where they stand and what they must do to improve. Vinson offers 360-degree, or multi-rater, feedback as an alternative to traditional feedback. She begins by discussing the benefits of using this type of feedback. She asserts that 360-degree feedback can be effective when it is accompanied by a follow-up session. Many companies have used 360-degree feedback as part of total quality management efforts. As such, it may be useful for promoting “team cohesiveness.” It also tends to reduce rating bias because the responsibility for feedback involves more people than in traditional, single-source, downward appraisal.

The author also discusses the downsides of 360-degree feedback. First, it can be painful. Many feedback experts believe that the respondent providing the harshest criticism is often considered “untrustworthy” by the recipient. Second, there are often conflicting opinions, and there is no way to determine whose feedback is right. Also, raters often suffer from “survey fatigue,” which results from having to participate in too many feedback assessments. These concerns raise the question of the reliability and accuracy of 360-degree feedback. Feedback that is not accurate will not be of any use to its recipient.

The final question asked about 360-degree-feedback systems is whether or not they improve performance. The author asserts that performance improvement can be less than satisfactory with any type of feedback. Often intentions to change are high but employees lose their commitment. Vinson offers several suggestions to facilitate the use of 360-degree feedback to produce change: (1) The feedback must be confidential and anonymous. (2) One must consider the length of time an employee has been in the position. (3) A feedback expert should interpret the feedback. (4)
Follow-up and the development of specific action plans are essential. (5) Feedback should not be used to determine salary or promotions. (6) Feedback should include written descriptions as well as numerical ratings. (7) One must ensure that instruments are statistically valid and reliable. (8) Feedback should not be utilized with too many employees at one time (Vinson April 1996).


Wall, of Manus Associates in New York City, discusses two conclusions that he and George Yukl of the State University of New York at Albany have arrived at from working together extensively on the development and implementation of 360-degree-feedback systems. The author first discusses the work of David Bracken (1994; see the annotation on page 5) about the design and use of 360-degree-feedback assessments. Bracken offers prescriptions for making sure that 360-degree feedback is experienced as a powerful tool for individual and organizational development. Wall agrees with Bracken that 360-degree feedback is essential to the development process for employees. His experience, however, has led him to make the following observations.

The first involves the use of response scales. Wall suggests that response scales based on frequency are preferable to response scales based on degrees of satisfaction or agreement. He asserts that frequency-based responses measure observable and specific behaviors and minimize subjectivity. Second, Wall compares two response-scale formats (how many possible choices are available to a rater using the scale). He believes that a six-point response scale adds no appreciable value over a four-point scale. In addition, a six-point scale may tend to confuse and burden respondents. One recommendation is to use a four-point scale (that is, give the respondent four choices) but supplement it with the constant option of “Don’t Know” or “Not Applicable.” Wall states that 360-degree feedback is an excellent way to support various initiatives, but it is only powerful to the extent that it is reliable and accurate. To guarantee accuracy, questions must be clear, understandable, and based on observable interactions (Wall January 1995).

This article presents various methods and considerations involved with 360-degree feedback that will help ensure maximum benefits from the process. The author asserts that 360-degree feedback, by collecting a broad picture of an individual’s performance or skills, provides valuable information needed for the changing roles of managers. He presents three fundamental questions about feedback: (1) Why have feedback at all? (2) Who can be assessed by 360-degree feedback? (3) Should feedback assessments try to describe behavior or judge behavior? Ward addresses various issues related to these questions, along with their implications.

He then discusses various issues that concern implementing 360-degree feedback. Descriptions are provided regarding the perspectives of various rater groups: bosses, direct reports, peers/co-workers, customers, and self. Ward’s concern about implementation is that, in order to achieve the maximum developmental impact, 360-degree methods must be properly applied.

There are five pitfalls that should be avoided: (1) 360-degree assessments should not focus only on the person’s weaknesses or needs. (2) Feedback should be collected with an emphasis on proper implementation and on follow-up action. (3) Confidentiality is necessary for honest ratings. (4) The purpose of the feedback should be communicated to all employees involved. (5) The feedback and its use of developmental action-planning should be supported within the organization. The final step, after collecting and using 360-degree feedback, should be an evaluation of the organization’s training and development needs (Ward February 9, 1995).


The authors argue that, according to previous research, self-ratings are generally problematic. Self-ratings tend to be inaccurate when compared to more “objective” raters—in this case, subordinates, peers, supervisors, and customers or clients.
Although research is fairly limited on this subject, the authors use available studies to develop a model for self-perception accuracy. They then discuss the implications of self-rating accuracy for human resources professionals.

Self-perception is measured (via self-ratings) on a particular dimension of interest. Others’ perceptions are measured on the same dimension of interest (leadership abilities, for example). Self-other agreement is determined by comparing the two perceptions. The degree to which they agree or disagree determines self-rating accuracy. The model shows that this comparison process results in three categories of individuals: accurate estimators (high degree of self-other agreement), over-estimators (inflated self-ratings compared to others), and under-estimators (deflated self-ratings compared to others). The implications for human resources professionals are that over-estimators proceed to have diminished organizational or personal outcomes from the feedback, accurate estimators have enhanced organizational/ individual outcomes, and under-estimators have mixed outcomes.

The authors then discuss the elements of their model of self-perception accuracy. First, they look at the determinants of self-ratings and other-ratings and the process that determines the two stages of perception: initial perception and reviewed perception. Next, they discuss the process through which the self-other agreement is measured by categorizing the degrees of agreement. Finally, implications of self-other agreement are discussed. The authors address the need for further research, stating that it is necessary to better understand self-perception accuracy and its implications (Yammarino and Atwater Summer 1993).


Yukl and Lepsinger give specific suggestions for implementing 360-degree feedback and discuss factors that affect its impact on development. They assert that 360-degree feedback can prompt measurable changes in managerial behavior. This behavioral impact is the result of providing managers with honest and specific feedback about how their behavior affects others. This impact can be diminished, however, if certain issues are not examined.

There are two categories of pitfalls: (1) design and administration of the assessment,
and (2) design and facilitation of the follow-up activities.

In designing a questionnaire or selecting one from an external source, certain qualities are desirable. First, it should be well researched to assure that the items and scales can be linked directly to managerial effectiveness. Second, the items should measure specific and observable behaviors. Third, the behaviors should be described in positive terms, and each item should be worded so that it pertains directly to the rate. Fourth and last, the questionnaire should specify the relationship between the rater and the rate. Separate questionnaires should be considered for each group: self, supervisors, peers, subordinates, and customers.

There are a number of suggestions for administration of the assessment. Respondents should be chosen who are important to the manager’s effectiveness and are influenced by it. The number of respondents should be large enough to form a comprehensive sample and ensure confidentiality of ratings. Training should familiarize raters with the purpose of the feedback, ensure confidentiality, and advise raters to avoid bias. For example, “halo error” occurs when a well-liked manager receives high ratings on all scales, regardless of his or her actual level of performance.

The feedback report should present the data from each rater group separates. Self-ratings should be compared to both others’ ratings and to the norms, or a managerial effectiveness model. Feedback should also be displayed by item as well as by scale. The overall purpose of the feedback is for us to develop an action plan. One way to facilitate follow-up is to have a feedback workshop involving a group of managers and a facilitator. In this workshop, managers interpret data and develop specific goals and plans. Follow-up on plans can include skills-training, support and coaching, and assessments of impact and effectiveness of the assessment process itself. The impact of 360-degree feedback requires further research, but experience has demonstrated the potential benefits of using 360-degree feedback for development (Yukl and Lepsinger December 1995).
This part describes the research methodology used for the study. The chapter consists of several parts dealing with research method, statistical population, sampling, data collection tool, method of data collection, and method of data analysis, respectively.

**Research method**

Research method is by surveying-descriptive kind.

Descriptive method:

**Descriptive research** is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. It does not answer questions about how/when/why the characteristics occurred. Rather, it addresses the "what" question (What are the characteristics of the population or situation being studied?) (Patricia, Shields et al. 2013). The characteristics used to describe the situation or population are usually some kind of categorical scheme also known as descriptive categories. For example, the periodic table categorizes the elements. Scientists use knowledge about the nature of electrons, protons and neutrons to devise this categorical scheme. We now take for granted the periodic table, yet it took descriptive research to devise it. Descriptive research generally precedes explanatory research. For example, over time the periodic table’s description of the elements allowed scientists to explain chemical reaction and make a sound prediction when elements were combined.

Hence, research cannot describe what caused a situation. Thus, Descriptive research cannot be used to as the basis of a causal relationship, where one variable affects another. In other words, descriptive research can be said to have a low requirement for internal validity. The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. Often the best approach, prior to writing descriptive research, is to conduct a survey investigation. Qualitative research often has the aim of description and researchers may follow-up with examinations of why the observations exist and what the implications of the findings are.

In addition, the conceptualizing of Descriptive research (categorization or taxonomy) precedes the hypotheses of exploratory research (Shields and HassanTajalli 2006). For a discussion of how the underlying conceptualization of Exploratory research, Descriptive research and exploratory research fit together see the conceptual
framework. The descriptive method includes a set of methods the aim of which is to describe the process of decision-making (Sarmad et al, 2004, 80). In this method the researcher tries to study the existing condition objectively and without involving in any subjective inferences he reaches to objective conclusions.

**Survey Method**

Survey research is often used to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister et al. 2011). Survey research can be specific and limited, or it can have more global, widespread goals. Today, survey research is used by a variety of different groups. Psychologists and sociologists often use survey research to analyze behavior, while it is also used to meet the more pragmatic needs of the media, such as, in evaluating political candidates, public health officials, professional organizations, and advertising and marketing directors. A survey consists of a predetermined set of questions that is given to a sample (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister et al. 2011). With a representative sample, that is, one that is representative of the larger population of interest, one can describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn. Further, one can compare the attitudes of different populations as well as look for changes in attitudes over time. A good sample selection is key as it allows one to generalize the findings from the sample to the population, which is the whole purpose of survey research."

Surveying is a method of collective research, which acts beyond an especial technique in data collection; while it is mainly use questionnaire, but other techniques such as constructive interview, observation, content analysis etc. are also utilized (khakei.g 2012).

**Statistical population**

Statistical population is a set of people or units that are of at least one defined attribute; generally in every research the population under study is a statistical population that the researcher tends to study about variable attribute(s) of its units. The definition of statistical population must be comprehensive. That is, the definition must involve all the units under study spatiotemporally (sarmad, hejazei et al. 2005). At the present research the population under study involves managers and faculty members of Osmania University.
Sampling method and sample volume
The sample includes a number of people from a population with some similarity between their attributes, it represents the population, and there is some congruity and consistency between sample and population, hence sampling is a set of measures taken for selecting a number of people from a population in a way that represent that population (Hafeznia 2011). Samples are selected in two general ways. One of them deals with probability which is of scientific value, is called a random method; and the other, improbability, and is known as situational method. Probability samples include: simple probability, Stratified probability Sampling, group or cluster sampling, locational sampling. We determine the sample volume through Cochran formula; sample volume is 120 people of 30 departments of Osmania University, i.e. 30 four-membered groups. After determining sample volume through systematic random sampling, we distribute the questionnaires.

Method of data collection
1. Library-based method (Secondary research)
Researchers also needed to use library methods in the researches seemingly of no secondary nature. In secondary research nearly all efforts of a researcher are done in libraries. Library method is also used in compiling a book, etc. (Hafeznia 2011). At the present research for the library method we have used books, scientific journals and papers, internet and theses.
2. Questionnaire-based method (Primary research)
In this method different factors are effective, through the uniform functions of which the researcher can collect his required information. These factors include: 1- data collection tool (questionnaire), 2- performers of the questionnaire, 3- planning and management of conducting the questionnaire, 4- respondents (Hafeznia 2011). At the present research questionnaires were distributed among statistical sample (managers and faculty members of Osmania University) and according to the obtained answers to the respondents the data were analyzed through SPSS software.

Data collection tool
For collecting the required data, since there was no standard questionnaire of this kind, we design a questionnaire through the following fivefold stage.
1. Survey of literature and theoretical basis of research subject;
2. Preparing and codifying primary form of the questionnaire with regard to extracted parameters;
3. Consulting with supervisors and advisors and making the required corrections;
4. Testing questionnaire between 40 people of statistical population for determining its reliability;
5. Making corrections and codifying final form of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is one of the common tools of research and a direct method for data collection. Questionnaire includes a number of questions about the variables under assessment from studied population. These questions are made through special techniques and scales in a way that the researcher can collect the required information from the population or sample under study. Each question is about one dimension or variables of the subject under study and must be designed in a way that clarify what is supposed to be answered by the respondent or members of the population and the sample (Hafeznia 2011).

Finally the quality of questionnaire depends on the researcher’s skill and recognition, his clear perception of the required information and previous tests.

**Introducing questionnaire**

In this research, we have used Likert’s five - choice scales for answering the questions. We have used a questionnaire with 3 general questions about gender, experience and position of the people and 40 questions about research hypotheses. Questions 1 to 7 are about variables of knowledge and proficiency, 8 to 12 about communications, 13 to 21 about job performance, 22 to 30 about working with others, 30 to 33 about management resources, and finally questions 34 to 40 about planning and organization.

**Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

Validity of the questionnaire

Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what is supposed to measure, that is, the collected data must not be collected through extra tools of research and some parts of the required data about measuring variables must not be omitted. In other words, it must show the reality. Naturally, adopting invalid tools will lead to collecting irrelevant data and disarrangement of research steps and data analysis, and
also it will lead to the loss of energy, facilities, financial resources and the impossibility of reaching to a correct conclusion (Hafeznia 2011).

The validity of this questionnaire is approved by the related experts and university professors.

**Reliability of the questionnaire**

Reliability, which is also known as credibility and precision, refers to the fact that a measuring tool which is made for assessing a variable or an attribute in a similar condition will lead to similar results in a different place and time, on the other hand the durable and credible tool is the one, which is consistent from one set of measurement to the next (Hafeznia 2011).

At the present research 40 questionnaires were primarily completed by the statistical sample and the reliability of the measuring tool and its internal consistency was calculated through SPSS software with the test of alpha Cronbach. The obtained value for α-Cronbach is 0.947 for the research tool, i.e. questionnaire; this indicates that the measuring tool is reliable (Table 3-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.947</td>
<td>40</td>
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Research variables
This research is of six independent variables, including knowledge and proficiency, communications, job performance, working with others, management resources, and planning and organization; and of one dependent variable, i.e. 360-degree feedback appraisal.

Method of data analysis
Since the ordinal scale is used for ranking the variables and there are a limited number of groups under study, we have used the Kruskal-Wallis test for analyzing the data.

Summary
This chapter begins with an introduction and then followed by research method, statistical population, sampling method and sample volume, tools and method of data collection, validity and reliability of the questionnaire and finally deals with research variables and method of data analysis.