

Part Two – Tips to Get the Most From the 360 Process

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Natalie Michael

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By Natalie Michael, CHRP

What do leaders need to do to get the most from the 360 process? Here are five tips.

- 1) Be like a scientist.** When they first open the feedback packet, they need to approach it like an objective observer and tell themselves: “This will be interesting. I get to see how my behaviour is impacting the team and I can learn how to create more productive relationships.” By doing this, they are affirming that the results will tell them something about the impact they are having on other people and it will provide information that will help them develop better relationships.
- 2) Manage Defense Reactions.** If leaders want to get something out of this process and become more mature, effective leaders, they need to self-manage their defense reactions. To do this, it is useful for HR professionals to ask them to brainstorm their typical defensive reactions before reading the report. “If I don’t like what I hear, will I want to fight back and argue the results? Or, will I withdraw inside myself?” Knowing these answers ahead of time can make the process smoother.
- 3) Aim for Versatility.** When prepping leaders to review the results, it is recommended that HR leaders or a coach that is facilitating the process ask participants to consider what the results reveal about the versatility of each participant’s style. Do the results reveal that they can successfully lead and interact with a variety of people? Are they able to create productive relationships with people that are different from them? Do they tend to get better results with one of the stakeholder groups? Looking at the results from this lens can help them target their development efforts.
- 4) Evaluate the Feedback.** When reviewing the results with leaders, it also important to ask leaders to evaluate the feedback and to take a critical view. They need to specifically look for sugar coated comments. Many people try to come up with really nice ways to give tough messages and the leader needs to be tuned to this. If a leader sees a comment like: “He can be opinionated, but I am glad we know where we stand.” They need to ask themselves: “When does my opinion get in the way of team relationships?” On the other hand, if some feedback doesn’t ring true for them, they need to be equally discerning and ask themselves: What could be going on with the other person that would lead to this perception?”
- 5) Leaders Don’t Need to Change Their Style, But They Need to Add To it.** Finally, recognize that the goal is to develop more versatility in a leader’s style, not change it all together. The goal is to become less “style limited” and to add a broader range of behaviours to their repertoire for better results. By having more versatility, they will be able to engage a variety of stakeholders and in turn, they will be more productive and have better relationships. And, surprise, surprise, that’s the point of a 360!

Natalie Michael is an Executive Coach and Leadership Consultant with the Karmichael Group. She has a Masters in OD, is a certified coach, and she is a certified HR professional in Canada and the US (CHRP, SPHR).

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