

## So what do your colleagues really think of you?

Ignorance can sometimes be bliss, but typically self-awareness is needed to achieve your potential. Seeking and receiving feedback may seem scary, yet how else can you know for sure how you impact on others ?

Michelle Lucas, our resident Executive Coach from Greenfields Consultancy often supports clients using 360 degree feedback tools. They're called "360 degree" because they structure feedback from all around you - your manager, those that report to you and the people you work alongside.

Seeking 360 feedback can signal you as forward thinking or a potential leader. If shared, the practice can help establish a highly co-operative working environment. There are many tools on the market or you may develop your own, either way, there are 5 questions you need to think through:

- 1 **Why do you want a 360?** It's a great self-improvement tool. Perhaps you have been trying out some new behaviours or are adapting to a new culture? It's an opportunity to check whether you are meeting people's expectations.
- 2 **What questions do you want feedback on?** Specific requests will return more detailed feedback e.g. don't ask about your "communication skills" – ask if you were effective chairing a meeting. Balance questions across the areas you are confident in and those you know you struggle with. This allows people to offer supportive feedback together with constructive criticism.
- 3 **Who do you want feedback from?** Try to select people you have worked with on a number of occasions over a period of time. Balance the respondents amongst those you think will be positive and those who may be critical – you can learn from both perspectives. Importantly, feedback should be processed anonymously to encourage people's candour.
- 4 **How will you ask for feedback?** Try to put your request into context and explain why you are asking for it and why "now". Will you simply e-mail them or will you ask them in person or both ?
- 5 **How will you handle the feedback you receive?** 360 feedback can be daunting, so ensure you are mentally prepared for the results with support mechanisms in place e.g. a trusted 'sounding board'. Try not to be defensive, it's simply an alternative perspective and of course you may receive some blindingly positive feedback ... remember to embrace this too!

Some people say "feedback is a gift" – but for many, it's as welcome as a hand knitted sweater from Granny! Whether surprising or painful wouldn't you prefer to know how people see you? How else can you manage and improve their perceptions of you? Personal development is an essential ingredient for survival as an employee. If you don't manage yourself your organisation may do it for you ... if you're lucky this will be a development plan, if you're unlucky, it could be a P45! Do you want to risk it?

For more information about greenfields visit [www.coachU4success.co.uk](http://www.coachU4success.co.uk) or call Michelle for a free consultation on 07717 122 950

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**Contact : [Michelle@coachU4success.co.uk](mailto:Michelle@coachU4success.co.uk)**