

GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF KDVI DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

KDVI strives to ensure effective, rich and meaningful feedback from our development tools. The quality of the feedback is highly dependent on the care taken to frame the purpose for 360° feedback. As such, it is important to position multi-party feedback as an opportunity for participants to critically evaluate themselves and for others (as observers) to provide honest, constructive feedback intended for leadership development.

The following guidelines can be used by programme co-ordinators and coaches to prepare their clients and observers for an effective 360° feedback process.

I. Basic Administration Process

Although individuals can take any of our leadership development tools and interpret the results on their own, they are most effectively used when working with an executive coach, a counsellor, a psychotherapist or in group settings such as workshops and retreats where a facilitator can help the executives understand and apply the results.

Our development tools are often administered as part of an executive development programme initiated by a CEO, human resources director, or director of a leadership development centre or business school. The initiative can also come from an individual executive or group of executives seeking feedback that can help them become more effective as leaders and as a team.

The basic administration process includes the following steps:

- The co-ordinator selects the leaders who will participate in the 360° feedback process.
- The co-ordinator informs participants of the purpose and objectives of 360° feedback process (see Section 2 below).
- The co-ordinator provides KDVI with participants' names and e-mails.
- The co-ordinator sends participants an email framing the objectives of the survey. The email should include practical details about the survey process. A template can be provided by KDVI.
- KDVI sends links from the platform to take the survey online at an agreed date. Emails come from support@kdvi.com.
- Participants take the survey and add observers, who will automatically receive an e-mail with link to take the survey online (see Section 3 below).
- When all the questionnaires have been completed, KDVI provides the co-ordinator with a PDF feedback report for each participant.
- The co-ordinator can also purchase a Facilitator's Guide and/or Participant Workbook, both in PDF format, for each development tool. The Guide provides detailed information for the coach on each tool and how to interpret the feedback results; the Workbook provides information and guidance for the participant.

Preparation

- Decide how 360° feedback fits into your programme design and communicate this to manage participant expectations and concerns.
- Co-ordinator sends names and e-mails of participants to KDVI.

Survey period

- Six to eight weeks in advance of programme or coaching engagement, KDVI sends participants an invitation email with link to access survey online.
- Participants complete their “Self” survey.
- Participants identify and inform observers of the 360° feedback process. Participants need to have obtained observers’ consent before they share the names and email addresses with KDVI.
- On the survey website, participants register their observers. Once they are registered, observers receive an automatic e-mail with a link to access the “Observer” survey.

Generating reports

Two working days after the survey deadline, KDVI e-mails PDF’s of the feedback reports to the co-ordinator.

2. Preparing Participants for the 360° Feedback Process

The introduction of a 360° feedback process frequently triggers resistances and defensive reactions. People may be sceptical about the purpose and intended use of 360° feedback and worry about the reprisals that may follow such feedback. Negative feedback can also lead to defensive reactions on the part of the person being assessed, dooming the development process. As such, it is important to prepare and frame 360° feedback to manage any anxieties that may arise.

Recognise the resistances to 360° feedback

Before implementing a 360° feedback process, it is important to identify resistances and defences against feedback, if they exist. Openness to feedback varies from individual to company to national culture. Consider that:

- Some leaders, those for whom position and authority are important, may view a 360° feedback exercise as the overstepping of boundaries by subordinates.
- Others fear that the process will jeopardise existing working relationships by delving into problem areas.
- Others may worry that there might be negative political implications: scores might be manipulated or misused as a part of a performance review.

Such resistances can then be managed by clearly communicating the purpose and objectives of 360° feedback (see next section).

PURPOSE: *Frame 360° feedback as a development opportunity, not as absolute judgement or evaluation*

It is important to frame the giving and receiving of feedback as a development process and an opportunity for growth. 360° results are not absolute but rather bring together a collection of perceptions from multiple perspectives. These perceptions, whether aligned or not, serve as a starting point for observation, reflection, sense making and constructive dialogue about an individual's behaviours and opens up opportunities for change.

Benefits of 360° feedback from KDVI development tools include:

- Reality testing: *Do others perceive me as I perceive myself?*
- Upstream and downstream management: *Do different stakeholders perceive me differently?*
- Gain insights into strengths and areas for development.
- Expand behavioural repertoire and discover more creative ways of solving difficult interpersonal problems.
- Redefine superior-subordinate relationships.
- Become more effective at career management and professional advancement.
- Become more effective at operating in teams.
- Better manage the tensions between their professional and private lives.

As such, co-ordinators should communicate early on with participants the purpose and benefits of 360° feedback.

CONTEXT & DESIGN: *Determine whether the individual or organisational culture is open to critical feedback, or not*

Consider the organisational culture and whether the organisation is one which is truly invested in leadership development and encourages critical feedback or whether 360° feedback is just part of a checklist initiative with no coaching or real follow-up with participants. The sincere engagement by the organisation in the feedback process is critical to its success.

Organisations who hope to implement a 360° feedback system also need to design organisational development programmes that allow executives to practise honesty in a safe environment and guarantee that people will not be punished for telling the truth.

CONTROL: *Emphasise the active role and control participants have over the 360° feedback process*

Consider whether the organisation has made participation mandatory and the willingness of the participant to invest in this process. To manage the anxieties from and resistance to receiving feedback, inform participants that they have control over the type and quality of feedback they will receive. As participants choose their own observers, it is important, for developmental purposes, that they:

- select a wide range of observers (superior, co-worker, direct reports and other stakeholders) for a more rounded view of their behaviour, and
- select individuals who are willing to provide honest and constructive feedback.

As such, co-ordinators should communicate to participants early on what it takes to ensure rich, critical and constructive feedback.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Highlight participant confidentiality

Communicate to the participant that the results of the 360° process are confidential. Feedback reports are sent to the participant and coach/coordinator only. It is up to the participant to decide whether they would like to share the results with others.

3. Preparing Observers for the Feedback Process

In addition to preparing participants for the feedback process, observers should also be informed beforehand of the purpose and objectives of 360° feedback and their important role in this process, i.e. the opportunity to provide the participants with meaningful and constructive feedback in an anonymous setting.

PURPOSE: Participants inform observers about the purpose and objectives of the 360° process

As participants are responsible for selecting their observers, we recommend that they contact them (before adding them as observers on the survey platform) to secure their agreement, let them know that they have been chosen to act as observers and explain to them the context and the purpose of this process. This increases the chance that they will take the time to complete the questionnaire.

ANONYMITY: Highlight anonymity of observer feedback

In order to ensure honest feedback, participants should communicate to observers that, with the exception of the Superior's, the feedback is anonymous. Participants will not have access to any individual's answers. A consolidated average of observers' scores and comments will be made so that participants can see the summary information only and no observer will be identifiable.

It is therefore important that participants make their Superior aware of the fact that their feedback to the quantitative part of the survey (multiple choice questions) is not anonymous. However, their comments will be anonymous and included with the comments from other observers.

If there is feedback from more than one Superior, their answers will be combined and participants will not be able to identify them. However, the co-ordinator does have the option to request that feedback from multiple Superiors be shown separately (maximum of three Superiors).

4. Importance of Follow-up

The real challenge of 360° feedback is to manage negative feedback and to do something with the information

received. It is important that 360° feedback is accompanied by a solid debriefing with the participant, as well as follow-up to ensure commitment to change.

DEBRIEFING

We recommend that the participant works with a facilitator, coach or counsellor to understand the results, manage negative feedback and to develop an action plan for change.

Negative feedback can be managed by:

- Framing the feedback as perceptions, not value judgements.
- Asking participants to explain and account for what they see and to develop hypotheses on why particular feedback was negative.
- Keeping an open mind and striving to minimise defensive reactions. Participants should ask themselves such questions as: does the feedback make sense? Is the information to the point? Does it reveal a new perspective? Does it provide useful data about my possible blind spots?
- Looking for patterns and weighing the relative importance of a single feedback: if most of the feedback was positive with only one or two negative responses.
- Balancing positive and negative feedback: people tend to gravitate to negative feedback so it is important to look at the bigger picture.
- Considering context in analysis of feedback: what is the organisational climate like? What is the opinion towards 360° feedback? How open and honest are the responses? What are the interpersonal issues which may have affected ratings?

FOLLOW-UP

We also recommend a follow-up process to ensure that the insights gained through the feedback report and debriefing session result in behavioural change. The implication and engagement of others in the follow-up process can also help the individual remain committed to their action plan for change.

- Return to the observers. Thank them for their effort, candour and courage in providing feedback (particularly where the feedback was given by subordinates); share with them ideas for improvement, ask for their reactions, and enlist their help to work towards change.
- Share the feedback with others - their spouse or significant other, their manager or their coach. This process of exchange serves as a reality check and helps participants identify possible routes to improvement.
- Review progress every three to four months; consider taking the same 360° survey again at a later point in time, with the same observers if possible.

For more information, please see our website: www.kdvi.com.