

**BREAKFAST
OF
CHAMPIONS**



Using 360° Feedback
to Increase Your
Leadership
Effectiveness

Eagle Vision
Leadership
Development
Group



Feedback on your performance gives a boost to your development plans, adds energy to your leadership style and helps create an environment where you can truly be the leader your team needs (and wants) you to be. Feedback is indeed the breakfast of champions.

As a leader, getting feedback is an important process that is often difficult to implement. Formal 360 degree feedback programs are frequently rolled out in organizations as HR initiatives, and due to the cost and complexity of the process, are often the privilege of the highest ranks. As valuable a process as this is, it's true that many people have difficulty receiving feedback that is less than complimentary. We may say we're open to feedback, but often we're looking for confirmation and validation.

Because of the sensitive nature of feedback, debriefs are typically part of the process so the leader receiving the feedback can understand the meaning behind the data, rather than focus on the numbers themselves. Creating developmental action plans, opening dialogue with the team in order to strengthen it, and identifying obstacles to team performance can all be handled through conversations and meetings.

When selecting raters to complete the survey, there are several things to consider:

- Invite as many people to participate as possible as this gives you more feedback to notice trends and it helps with rater anonymity
- Invite people from all perspectives, including your boss, direct reports, peers and others who can give you helpful feedback
- Communicate critical information to all invitees:
 - Purpose of the survey
 - Deadline for completion
 - Process details
- Send reminder messages to all invitees in case someone hasn't had a chance to complete it yet; deadlines can sneak up on people quickly and this will improve your response rate

A 360° survey can give you a well-rounded picture of how others perceive your leadership skills and behaviours. Before you decide to embark on this journey, consider some of the finer points when it comes to asking for feedback.

- Use it for developmental purposes to help the receiver
- Allow raters to respond anonymously; get someone else to conduct it for you if necessary
- Select as many raters as possible
- Select raters from many different areas (boss, peers, direct reports, customers, etc) to get a balanced picture
- The climate for feedback in your organization should be one of trust
- Develop an action plan based on the feedback you've received; share this plan with your immediate supervisor (not the feedback itself)
- Thank your raters and let people know what you intend to do with the feedback (based on appropriateness)
- Remember that the information given by your raters is the perception that rater has about your behaviour, and may not agree with your own perception
- The ability to receive developmental feedback is a tremendous skill, and the ability to do it well builds trust
- When reviewing the feedback, try to control your defensiveness
- If you find yourself getting emotional or angry, breathe deeply and remember that it is a difficult process for everyone
- Take time to get your emotions under control before discussing the feedback with your team
- How you respond to the feedback will impact their willingness to give feedback (honest or otherwise) in the future; respond wisely
- If you have any reservations, ask your HR team to assist you, or hire an external coach to help you through the process

Final Thought: Feedback is the *breakfast of champions*. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day; it nourishes and strengthens the body. Likewise, feedback nourishes a leader's career. As with many things that are good for us, we don't always like the taste. So we take the good with the bad knowing we will be the better, the stronger and the wiser for it. A true leader is a humble leader, and is willing to take this step to improve, for his/her own good, for the good of the team and for the good of the organization. Everyone wins.

Leaders often find that with the help of a coach, performance can be enhanced significantly in a short period of time. A typical coaching partnership begins by establishing *objectives and goals* and building a customized *development plan*.

The Duke Executive Leadership Survey conducted in the fall of 2008 finds *"there is a connection between inspirational leader behaviors and follower performance. Inspired by their leaders, followers pursue more challenging goals, which in turn leads to greater organizational success."*

So what makes a leader inspirational? According to the survey it's *"followers who see their leaders as more competent and trustworthy"*.

How do you know if your followers see you as competent and trustworthy? Ask them.