What are 360 performance appraisals?

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A 360 appraisal is a development feedback for employees. The feedback on performance can come from anyone who works with the employee. For example, this might consist of co-workers, subordinates or managers. Other sources where the feedback might come from are external individuals, such as clients, and individuals who are not employees of the company. The employee can rate themselves also, this is known as self-assessment. The information can be used to make vital decisions within the organization, such as training or developmental needs.

Feedback can provide organizations and the employee with information relating to their performance. The appraisal can also be done anonymously and employees can provide feedback to their managers without feeling uncomfortable. Rather than just getting feedback from one individual, the employee is provided with an overview of their performance from many stakeholders. Strengths and weaknesses of the individual can be used to benefit the organization as specific developmental needs can be targeted. The questions asked on the performance appraisal should be specifically targeted to the individual’s job competencies.

A critical issue of 360 appraisals is confidentiality of information. Employees might be concerned about rating their superiors poorly and might fear that the information they provide might be used negatively against them in the future. The organization needs to ensure good communication with employees and encourage honesty and openness.