
Your Role As *Coach*

Getting the Most from 360 Feedback

The 360-degree feedback process introduced in your organization is designed to help people improve their own performance. Nothing more, nothing less.

An important part of that process is the dialogue that goes on between the individual receiving the feedback and his or her coach.

If you are serving in a coaching role, here are some hints on how to contribute positive and productive energy to that dialogue.

Remember why you have two ears and only one mouth. A good coach is a good listener. A good coach resists the temptation to monopolize the conversation or provide all the “answers.” A good coach asks questions that invite honest self-examination, self-discovery, and self-improvement.

Use your best dialogue skills when coaching. Focus on what you really want (open, honest conversation). Look for the early warning signs that either party is feeling unsafe. Concentrate on the actual facts (verifiable data) rather than your stories (assumptions, judgments).

Help people focus on those “high value” behaviors that have the greatest impact on their performance. That number is usually about three. When we make everything a priority, nothing is a priority. (This doesn’t suggest that we ignore all behaviors other than the “top three,” it means having too many “priorities” dilutes our effort and diminishes our effectiveness.)

Encourage people to use their Action Planning Guide in preparing their 360 action plans. The Guide is proven to help people focus on those issues that make the biggest difference.

Focus on linkages. Help your people see the connection between certain behaviors and their overall effectiveness with others.

Be an example. Without getting too autobiographical or monopolizing the discussion, share your own experiences with addressing your own 360 feedback. In addition to providing an example, this helps legitimize the feedback process.

Encourage people to manage their behaviors, not the metrics. The whole purpose in this process is not to “get better numbers.” It’s about adjusting behaviors and improving overall performance. When that happens, the numbers take care of themselves.

Agree on follow-up. Establish periodic milestones and agree on how your people will report back on their progress.