

Manager-360 Assessment: Program Guide



**Human Resources &
Inclusive Community**
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

A [Talent Acquisition & Development](#) Program

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Program Overview

The Manager-360 is both an assessment and a process in which a manager receives confidential, anonymous **feedback** from the people who work for or around them. The raters (feedback team) typically include the manager's supervisor, peers, direct reports, external raters, plus the manager's self-assessment. The feedback is often used as a benchmark within the manager's development plan that identifies both strengths and growth areas.



The process itself should always be done with a coach for the manager to get the most out of the experience.

Purpose of the Manager-360

The purpose for participating in the Manager-360 includes:

- An opportunity to receive feedback from the people you impact the most.
- An opportunity to assess how you see yourself as a manager in comparison to how others see you.
- An opportunity to assess and reassess your strengths and growth areas as a manager.
- An opportunity to *receive* both written and verbal feedback.
- An opportunity to *provide* both written and verbal feedback to fellow managers (when you are a member of their feedback team).
- An opportunity to receive one-on-one management coaching.
- An opportunity to actively participate in identifying additional goals and strategies for your professional development needs.

- An opportunity to create and demonstrate a departmental culture where feedback is encouraged and viewed positively.
- An opportunity to increase your level of self-awareness.
- An opportunity to role model the importance of feedback, self-improvement, and up/down communication within the organization.
- An opportunity to be a part of something that very few managers dare.

Assessment Questions in the 360

We use the *Skillscope* 360 Assessment from the Center for Creative Leadership (<https://www.ccl.org/lead-it-yourself-solutions/skillscope/>). *Skillscope* is a research-based, multi-rater assessment that is designed to provide you with straightforward, practical feedback on job related skills and behaviors necessary for effectiveness in your role.

More specifically, *Skillscope* is a very “user-friendly” online assessment featuring 98 questions in the areas of: 1) Solves problems, 2) Communicates information, 3) Takes action, 4) Takes risks, 5) Manages conflict, 6) Manages teams, 7) Develops relationships, 8) Influences others, 9) Open to influence, 10) Develops people, 11) Knows the job/business, 12) Drives for results, 13) Manages time, 14) Copes with pressure/demonstrates integrity, and 15) Manages and develops self. The rating options for your evaluation team on each question is simply “Development Needed,” or “Strength.” There are also a couple of open-ended questions at the end for additional written feedback.

To see a sample report/results, contact Ken Pinnock (ken.pinnock@du.edu) or Craig Miller (craig.miller@du.edu)

Why Coaching?

It’s always important to have guidance, support, and coaching during the 360 processes from a neutral consultant/coach—in this case a member of the Talent Acquisition & Development team. A coach will help with:

- Advising you on how to assemble the most beneficial evaluation team.
- Going over your results constructively without over-personalizing comments/scores.
- Guidance on how to follow-up after the assessment with your evaluation team and any members of the team who were not asked to evaluate.
- Formulating goals and an action plan for moving ahead.

The Manager-360 Process Overview

The Six Step Process Consists of:

- Step 1:** Identifying/securing feedback team
- Step 2:** Preparing yourself / complete assessment
- Step 3:** Review results with your coach
- Step 4:** Review results with others/seek verbal feedback
- Step 5:** Create an action plan/share with others
- Step 6:** Follow-Up

Step 1: Your Feedback Team

Here are some tips on selecting your feedback team

1. The ideal number of evaluators would be 12. You can go as high as 16 but you don't want to go lower than 4.
2. You want your immediate supervisor to be a part of your feedback team.
3. You want to have a minimum of 3 peers and 3 direct reports participating on your evaluation team. It can still work with less than 3 in one or both categories, but you won't get a rater breakout report if it is less than 3 for anonymity purposes.
4. Most of your evaluation team should be comprised of your direct reports. If possible, try to include all of them. If you have more than 8 direct reports, consult with your coach to discuss options. You may not be able to have them all complete a manager-360 assessment.
5. You also count as an evaluator and must complete a self-assessment.
6. We also recommend asking a couple of colleagues outside the department to round out your evaluation team. These would be people that you work with regularly.
7. Before deciding upon your list of evaluators, you must get your immediate supervisor to approve your final list. Be prepared that they may prefer you to replace one or two initial members with choices that they feel would give you a broader range of evaluators.
8. Once your list is complete, you will be contacted by CCL and provided a link where you can enter the names and emails.

How to ask someone to be your evaluator

1. Because you will be asking people to invest time and effort in providing you with feedback, you want to be as respectful as possible when asking so that they feel it's a privilege to be a part of your feedback team. That's why we recommend asking in person or by phone. A personal touch will go a long way.
2. Be sure you ask them to be on your evaluation team instead of telling them to be on it.
3. Also be sure to share with your evaluators why you are taking the 360 and what you hope to gain. This provides the context for why you are asking them in the first place.
4. Emphasize that you want them to be as honest as possible when filling out the assessment and assure them that all scores and comments will be compiled without names for anonymity purposes.
5. Lastly, make sure they know that you will be visiting with each member of your evaluation team afterwards to go over a summary of your results and get some additional thoughts, comments, and feedback.

Example email to introduce the 360-process (you can of course edit this message to meet any specific needs).

To solicit feedback on my management strengths and growth areas, I am embarking on a project that requires your assistance. Beginning _____, I will be asking you to complete a manager-360 assessment designed to evaluate my performance. The primary purpose of this process is to solicit performance feedback from a variety of employees I regularly work with including direct reports, peers, colleagues from other departments, and of course my direct supervisor.

To do this, I will ask each of you to complete a short online assessment of my management capacities. Please know that your scores and comments are anonymous. With that said, your open and honest feedback is important to me, so please respond as truthfully as you can. Also know that I'll be working with management coach, Ken Pinnock, Director of Talent Acquisition and Development, or Craig Miller, Associate Director of Talent Acquisition and Development throughout this process. They administer the 360 and are helping me go through the results and turn any growth areas into concrete goals (which I'll share with you as well).

Thank you in advance for your involvement in the Manager-360 process. I'm both excited and a little nervous too about going through this and am grateful to have you as part of my evaluation team.

Thank you again for your participation.

Step 2: Preparing Yourself

Going through the Manager-360 process is one of the best things you could do as a manager. After all, by identifying strengths and growth areas, you will not only know which management areas to focus your efforts in going forward but you'll be taking a big step in role modeling a culture of open and honest feedback.

Below are some reflective questions to answer before beginning this process. It's important to be clear on your purpose and intent before asking others to evaluate you. Your coach will review your responses with you.

1. What are you looking forward to the most about this feedback process?
2. What are you nervous and/or apprehensive about?
3. What strengths of yours do you anticipate you'll get the most feedback on and why?
4. What "growth areas" do you anticipate will be revealed through this process?
5. Is there anything your coach should know about you, your history, or your relationship with others for contextual purposes?
6. What other questions do you have or what else do you need right now before moving ahead with the feedback process?

Additional Reflective Questions

1. Probably the most valuable/beneficial feedback that I've received before at work has been . . .
2. In *giving* feedback, what's difficult for me is . . .
3. In *receiving* feedback, what's difficult for me is . . .
4. The best way to give me feedback would be . . .

Taking the Manager-360 Assessment

- Provide your coach with the final list of your feedback team along with their emails.
- Once we have your list, the Skillscope 360 program will automatically send a link to you and all members of your feedback team which will go directly to the assessment.
- The assessment typically takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- The Skillscope 360 system will keep track of who's completed the 360 and sends reminders to those who have yet to complete it. We'll keep it open for ten days to two weeks before closing it.
- Remember to take the self-assessment yourself.

Step 3: Reviewing Your Results

Take it All In

When you get your manager-360 results (and before meeting with your coach), it's important to take your time looking over your scores and comments without jumping to conclusions, good or bad. The tendency is to look for the negatives and ignore the positives. Not good. Your feedback team put as much time into expressing your strengths as they did into identifying growth areas. It's critical you see the balance. With that said, here are some initial areas to explore when getting your results for the first time:

1. You'll want to explore your results at least three or four times. On the first pass, just simply look it over without any in-depth analysis. Don't write anything down or focus too much on one area. Avoid going right to the comment section. Just take it all in.
2. On your second pass through your results, start making notes and looking more into details, patterns, and surprises. Specifically:
 - a. What general categories were your scores high and which one(s), if any, were moderate to low?
 - b. Are there any "Blind Spots?" These are the statements where you either score yourself higher or lower than most responders on a particular statement. If you end up with several Blind Spots throughout the assessment, you may not be aware of how others are perceiving you.
 - c. Where does your self-score fall into the mix in each statement/category? Higher than most? Lower than most? About the same? Perhaps it depends on the statement.
 - d. Look for patterns in the scoring from the different groups (direct reports/peers/manager/other) to see how you fare within each grouping. Are you consistent across the board or are there some inconsistencies? How do your self-scores compare to their scores on each statement?
 - e. Particularly look to see how your self-scores compared to your direct reports and to your manager. What's consistent? What's not?
 - f. When you get to the comment section, take your time and slowly read each comment. Make notes on each point made, good or bad.
 - g. If you get caught up in analyzing who might have said what, you've lost touch with the purpose of this assessment. Let it go. Such analysis is never accurate and threatens the anonymity of your feedback team.
3. Complete the worksheet on the next page before meeting with your coach.

Processing Your Results

Identify statements or general areas that you feel would fall into the areas below. Not every statement or comment needs to fall into one of the areas below, just the ones that stand out to you.

1. Positive feedback and not surprising:

2. Positive feedback and surprising:

3. Negative feedback and not surprising:

4. Negative feedback and surprising:

5. List the questions (or areas) where you and your direct reports were not all in agreement:

6. List the questions (or areas) where you and your direct reports agreed:

7. List the questions (or areas) where you and your manager were not all in agreement:

9. List the questions (or areas) where you and your manager agreed:

10. Results can sometimes be confusing or send mixed messages. What statements or comments would you particularly like to get more information/clarification on:

11. Other thoughts/notes:

Step 4: Meeting Individually with Your Feedback Team

Having a feedback team for the Manager-360 process doesn't end after the results are in. In fact, if done correctly, their role as your feedback team is just beginning. That's because to create a culture of open and honest feedback, the giving and receiving of feedback must be ongoing.

Below are the steps involved in utilizing your feedback team beyond the assessment. Your coach will also guide you through this all-important process. In many respects, it's even more important than the actual assessment itself.

1. Regardless of the scores and comments you received on your assessment, it is imperative that you thank everyone on your feedback team for completing the evaluation (even if one or two didn't complete it...thank the whole team). Let them know that you'll be following up with each of them shortly to continue the feedback conversation in person. The key to remember here is that your feedback team made a time and effort investment in you and now it's your turn to invest back in them.
2. In preparation for your one-on-one follow-up meetings:
 - a. Be ready to summarize and share your results for each one-on-one. To summarize means sharing the general areas (strengths and growth areas) without getting into detail. Your coach will help you with this part.
 - b. Ask for additional feedback on the areas where you still need more clarification. Remember, you want to get your feedback team comfortable with the face-to-face feedback part as well.
 - c. Thank them again and invite them to continue bringing you feedback, as you'll do with them.
 - d. Go through the same steps with your manager but also spend some time discussing any areas where the two of you were not in agreement on a particular statement or area from the assessment. Please know that this is not the time to get defensive but instead a time to take in what he/she feels is important for you to know.

Below are some tips on what to say to begin your one-on-one meetings and a worksheet for writing down additional and/or clarifying feedback:

What to Say in Your Follow-Up Sessions

1. State intention of meeting

"I wanted to share my results with you. Is this a good time?"

2. Thank participant (again) for participating

"Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out the 360-assessment."

3. Share results (overall strengths and growth areas)

"These are the areas where people seemed to think I was doing well. These are the areas where I need to improve upon."

4. Ask clarifying questions

"I know I need be more _____ (i.e., receptive to hearing new ideas). Tell me how I can show that more?"

5. Ask for additional feedback

"What other things do you think I could improve upon?"

6. Summarize

"So, in summary based on our conversation, you feel that"

7. Empower them to give you ongoing feedback in the future

"It is important to me that whenever you feel that I'm not being highly effective with you as your _____ (i.e., supervisor, peer, direct report, etc.), that you tell me. Are you willing to do that?"

***Caution:** *The worst thing you could do to sabotage this whole process would be to go through the motions of the feedback component and then do nothing about it.*

Verbal Feedback Notes

On Strengths:

On Areas for Improvement:

Areas to Follow-Up On:

Other:

4. **My greatest obstacles to changing are:**

5. **The anticipated benefits to changing are:**

6. **I will consider myself successful when:**

Wait, you're not done.

Share your action plan with your manager and get his/her support. Once you have that, share your action plan with the rest of your feedback team. Why is this important? Because it completes the process. It's one thing to take in feedback and another thing to take in feedback and then do something with it. It also keeps your feedback team involved as they now know how to support you and hold you accountable for your action items.

Step 6: Follow-Up

Next Steps

1. Pull out your action plan every couple of months to review your progress.
2. Meet with your manager specifically to review your action plan.
3. Check-in with all members of your feedback team from time to time and ask for feedback.
4. Consider one-on-one coaching.
5. Consider taking the Manager-360 assessment again in a year.

Additional Feedback Information & Exercises

Truth in Feedback

By Chris Clarke-Epstein

(Training & Development, November 2001)

Positive or negative, given or received, feedback can be tricky. We shatter some popular misconceptions to guide you.

Feedback isn't always easy to give or receive. But it's vital, and timing is crucial. Here are 12 popular feedback misconceptions corrected.

Misconception 1: *We don't need to worry about feedback, we conduct performance appraisals.*

Truth: *Annual performance appraisals aren't enough.*

If you've been working unsatisfactorily for 12 months, you're good at doing something incorrectly. And if you've been doing something well for 12 months and no one has mentioned it, your performance appraisal might feel like too little, too late. Performance appraisals should be summaries of everything employees and supervisors have been discussing all year. If you're a supervisor, find ways to provide feedback each week for each person who reports to you—52 mini performance reviews a year.

Misconception 2: *It's not my job to give feedback.*

Truth: *At any company that values continuous improvement, feedback is everybody's job.*

If your workplace isn't feedback friendly, start a trend. First, praise. Reinforce positive actions and behaviors. Don't forget your boss: Positive feedback passed up the organization can have amazing results. Participate in suggestion programs honestly and enthusiastically. And request feedback on your own performance.

Misconception 3: *If you are not asked, keep your mouth shut.*

Truth: *When you don't deliver critical feedback, you declare your indifference.*

Saying nothing means you don't care. But if your feedback concerns how your company works, how customers are treated, or what the company is doing right or wrong, you

should speak up. Think through your message carefully, and make sure you deliver it with specific examples and suggestions.

When you observe someone who needs feedback and you're reluctant to give it, ask yourself these questions:

- If I were the person in this situation, would I want to be told?
- With feedback, can the person change what's happening?
- Would the feedback embarrass me to say it or embarrass the other person to hear it? If your feedback is embarrassing but necessary, spend time carefully crafting your message.

Misconception 4: *No news is good news.*

Truth: *No news is no news.*

Pretending that no news is good news prevents you from identifying and capitalizing on your strengths and improving your shortcomings. For the next week, ask each customer a simple question at the end of your conversation: "From your perspective, what's one thing we or I could do to improve our service, product, or process?" Take note of the answers.

Misconception 5: *Too much praise spoils people.*

Truth: *Praise that's grounded nurtures people.*

Although we understand our own need for positive reinforcement, most of us don't go out of our way to provide it to others. Why? Because no one's ever taught us how to give positive feedback that rings true. There's a simple formula for effective positive feedback: make it specific. "I'm glad to have you on my team" becomes "Your fresh approach to the shipping problem really helped us meet the deadline." Hear the difference?

Misconception 6: *Successful people don't need feedback.*

Truth: *Successful people and organizations know that feedback can turn failures into successes.*

What if your employer never told you what's expected of you? What if you went through school never getting a report card or taking an exam? How would you learn to function at your best? Ignorance isn't bliss. It hurts less to hear an unpleasant truth than to discover later you could've corrected the situation

Misconception 7: *Receiving or giving negative feedback won't bother me.*

Truth: *Receiving or giving negative feedback is uncomfortable for everyone.*

Hearing critical feedback is difficult emotionally. So is dishing it out. There's a predictable pattern to our reactions, however, and knowing the stages people go through when they receive negative feedback may better prepare you to deal with such reactions whether they're yours or your staff members.' Keep in mind the following acronym, SARA:

- Surprise or shock. You may have no idea how to respond at first. At this time, do nothing.
- Anger. This stage also begs for inaction. Recognize your anger, do nothing, and know you'll move past it.
- Rationalization. Here comes all your excuses and defenses. Before you share them with anyone else, listen to yourself and work to separate the purely defensive from the legitimate.
- Acceptance. In this final stage, ask questions about anything that's unclear. Receiving negative feedback doesn't mean you have to accept all of it, but you do need to think it through. Then take what's helpful and put it to use.

There's no predictable timetable for moving through those stages. Different types of feedback will cause you to move through them at different speeds. Be concerned only if you seem stuck in one stage and unable to move on.

Misconception 8: *I give feedback. I told Susan about my problem with Bill.*

Truth: *It's only feedback if you're giving it to the person involved.*

John has a problem with Bill. John tells Susan about it. That's not feedback; that's a triangulated conversation. Unless Susan tells Bill a second-hand version of the complaint, Bill will still be in the dark about John's problem.

The same thing happens with praise. A supervisor often tells everyone else how great his or her team is: "My people know I'm proud of them." Do they? Have they ever heard it firsthand? Praise, like constructive criticism, needs to be delivered to the person who deserves it.

Misconception 9: *Leaders receive quality feedback.*

Truth: The higher up people are in an organization, the less likely they are to receive quality feedback. Many people fear reprisals for telling their leaders the truth. In some companies, such fears are justified. If you're a leader, improve the quality of the feedback you receive by spending more time in the places you're likely to get it, with the

people who have the information you need. It'll take time to build the trust necessary for people to open up. Don't give up. Your time investment will pay off.

Misconception 10: *Leaders actively seek feedback.*

Truth: *Leaders—like the rest of us—rarely seek feedback.*

Leaders often ask verbally for candid feedback while their body language or other nonverbal cues shout, "Don't tell me anything negative!" If you really want honest feedback, make sure that your nonverbal messages match your words. The quality and quantity of your feedback will improve.

Misconception 11: *I'll wait until later to deliver the feedback.*

Truth: *Except in highly emotional situations, feedback is better delivered sooner rather than later.*

There's always an emotional reaction to negative or positive feedback. No magic words make negative feedback painless. The longer you wait to deliver the feedback, the less likely you'll give it, and the less effective it will be. If you have something to say, say it now.

Misconception 12: *My boss won't give me any feedback.*

Truth: *If you need feedback, seek it.*

If your boss isn't a feedback pro, regularly ask for it and be patient as he or she learns how to make it specific and timely. Stop in your closemouthed supervisor's office once a week and make one of the following requests: "Give me one thing that I need to work on" or "What's one thing I do that you'd like me to do more of?" Listen carefully, and let your boss know how you acted on his or her suggestion.

You've now learned the value of feedback and some good ways to give and receive it. But you've had many years to practice ducking the process. You're going to need some time to change your behavior. Practice the pointers I've given you and measure your progress. The rewards will amaze you.

Do You Communicate Well?

Are you effective at interpersonal communication? To find out, ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I usually try to see the other person's point of view even if I disagree with it?
2. Do I ever ask others for feedback on my communication style?
3. Do I know what my image is among my co-workers—or am I assuming I know what it is?
4. Do I resent the good ideas of others? Am I envious of others' successes?
5. Do I often start communicating with a chip on my shoulder? Am I looking for confrontation, especially from people on my staff and those who provide service for me?
6. Am I insensitive to criticism? Do I block it from coming in by sending signals that it is unwelcome? Do I defend against it as soon as it arrives?
7. Have I looked at all the ways I communicate—orally, in writing, through dress, through office arrangement, through body expression? Have I ever asked another person to help me look at these ways?

* Source: *Communications Briefings*, March 1994

The Act of Receiving Feedback

1. Listen intently
2. Avoid interrupting
3. Paraphrase what you heard
4. Ask for more information, examples
5. Ask for preferred behavior
6. Suggest alternatives if necessary
7. Commit to doing something
8. Say “thank you”
9. Devise ways to ensure change is permanent

Individual Feedback

Here is a feedback exercise that you can do individually or as part of a group exercise.

To: _____ From: _____

1. From my experience in working with you, I see your strengths to be...
2. Regarding areas of improvement, what I'd like to see you do more of is...
3. An area where we both might be able to improve upon in working together would be...

Team Feedback

Here is a group exercise that helps self-assess the group itself and the leader. In this exercise, everyone is to answer the questions aloud in the presence of the whole team.

1. When our team is clicking on all cylinders and working well together, what's happening?
2. When our team is not clicking on all cylinders and is not working together as well, what's happening?
3. Where are we now?
4. What needs to be done to start clicking on all cylinders again?
5. What do we need *more of* or *less of* from (our manager) to make this happen?
6. What does (our manager) need *more of* or *less of* from the team to make this happen?
7. What's an initial step that you can commit to right now to move forward?

FAQs

Q: Are all the responses anonymous?

A: Yes, no names will be affiliated with any of the scores or comments. With that said, the comments in the comment section will be presented exactly as written. Is it possible you could recognize the writing style of a direct report or coworker? It's possible, but you'll never know for sure, and your coach will emphasize to you that your focus should always be on the feedback and what it means and not trying to deduce who made a particular comment or who scored you a certain way. Trying to guess who wrote what will not help create a culture of open and honest feedback.

Q: What if my team is too large to include everyone? How to I keep those not asked to participate involved?

A: Great question. First, make sure those not selected also understand your purpose and intent for taking the Manager-360. Let them know that although the group was too large to include everyone, you will involve them in the feedback summary discussions and be asking them for additional feedback as well. Your coach will help you navigate this piece.

Q: What if I get “slammed” by my direct reports?

A: The good news is that we'll know where your focus needs to be going forward. It also may indicate a “disconnection” between you and your direct reports. We'll want to repair that ASAP, should that be the case. We'll also want to pay close attention to how your self-score compares to your direct reports and where your manager's scores fall into all of this. These comparisons will give us a better picture of what's going on and where our coaching should be focused as well.

Q: What if my manager's scores are the only negative ones in the assessment?

A: This is where the coaching comes in and is why coaching is a mandatory part of the Manager-360 process. Your coach is going to want to look at all your scoring comparisons before coming to any conclusions. However, if your manager's scores are the only low scores on the assessment, then certainly your working relationship with your manager will be explored in the coaching session(s).

Q: What aspects of my results should I pay most attention to?

A: The worksheet for processing your results (page 12) and the additional feedback you receive from the one-on-one's (page 17) will reveal what's most important

to pay attention to. Your coach will help in identifying key areas as well. Your final action plan should also reflect those critical areas.

Q: The lowest scores on the whole assessment are mine. That's good, right?

A: Not necessarily. Were you just tougher on yourself or do you believe you're not as effective as everyone else believes? As with all these questions, your coach will help you understand what comparisons to pay attention to most.

Q: I know a couple of my direct reports didn't complete the 360. How do I address that with them?

A: Actually, all you'll know from us is that 10 out of 12 feedback team members completed the assessment, for example. Our advice in the coaching session will be for you to go through with the one-on-one as if everyone completed the assessment. If a particular individual wants to offer up that they did not complete the assessment, that's up to them. It's still important for you to keep them in the process as planned and get their feedback, even if it's just through the one-on-ones.

Q: Who should I talk with for more information?

A: Start with Ken Pinnock or Craig Miller in Talent Acquisition & Development