# 360-degree feedback



How to improve the accuracy and impact of feedback with 360-degree reviews



Be Brilliant.

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Introduction

## Why multirater feedback matters

What is multirater feedback and, most importantly, why does it matter? Easy enough to answer.

According to the experts, multirater feedback is a fundamental element in best practice performance management<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the Performance Management Standard, written by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), indicates that gathering feedback from individuals other than an employee's manager to assess performance is a best practice related to goal setting/management<sup>2</sup>.

What's particularly surprising is that, while 360-degree feedback and multirater assessments have been proven to provide many benefits, most organizations don't use them widely. Various studies conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council indicate further indicate that the organizations that do use 360-degree feedback, cover only a small percentage of the total employee population<sup>3</sup>.

Lepsinger and Lucia, authors of the best-selling book, The Art and Science of 360° Feedback, found that surveyed human resources managers use 360-degree feedback for performance appraisals infrequently<sup>4</sup>.

Is your organization leveraging the power of 360-degree and multirater feedback to enhance your performance appraisal process? Perhaps? Not sure? Reading this eBook might be time well spent.

#### In this eBook, you'll:

- Learn about the benefits 360-degree or multirater feedback can bring to your performance management practices
- Discover best practices for implementing multirater assessments
- Find out how you can adopt best practices in your organization using Halogen TalentSpace™
- Read about companies who have already adopted these best practices and are reaping the benefits

# The benefits 360-degree feedback brings to performance appraisals

360-degree multirater feedback can deliver a host of benefits to both the employee and the organization. For example, research has found that when employee performance management includes multirater feedback, organizations see:



More accurate, credible and reliable performance appraisal ratings



Increased employee acceptance of performance feedback



Improved employee performance



Higher functioning work teams

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

### More accurate, credible and reliable performance appraisal ratings

Organizations often use performance management data to make important talent management decisions regarding employees. This is why it's so critical for appraisal ratings to be accurate, credible and reliable.

Employee performance appraisal ratings can affect many activities including goal assignment, development plans, promotion or lateral move opportunities, compensation decisions, and more. The more confident a manager can be in rating an employee and making these decisions, the better. Having accurate data in-hand not only makes it easier for the manager to make these decisions, it also makes the employee more likely to understand and accept the decisions.

Academic and field research has shown compelling evidence that multisource feedback systems are more accurate, credible and valid than single-rater systems. The Corporate Leadership Council<sup>5,6</sup>, SHRM<sup>7</sup>, CCL<sup>8</sup>, Schuster-Zingheim and Associates<sup>9</sup>, and Bersin by Deloitte<sup>10,11</sup> all confirm these findings.

Gathering feedback from colleagues, direct reports, other managers, teammates (or even people outside of the organization) provides more comprehensive insights than a single-source system and leads to more accurate, credible and reliable performance ratings and data. This is because multisource feedback allows for various perspectives to be included, based on varying experiences with the individual, most of which cannot be provided entirely by one's manager alone.

Multisource feedback gives a manager a more complete picture of the employee, their performance and their development needs, and helps remove bias or subjectivity that may be inherent in single-source feedback. Employees, in turn, have



## Increased employee acceptance of feedback on their performance

It's one thing for a manager to feel confident that they've sought a broad range of views in order to gain a complete and accurate picture of their employees' performance. It's quite another for the employees themselves to feel that this feedback is fair and representative of their performance.

When performance feedback comes from a single source, or is perceived to come from a single source, it's easier for an employee to ignore the message or believe that this feedback isn't an accurate representation of their performance. They can more easily dismiss it as "just one person's opinion."

If an employee doesn't agree with or believe the feedback that they receive is accurate, they simply might not accept it or make any effort to improve or change.

When employees know that feedback is coming from multiple sources or is repeated consistently — they are more likely to accept what they hear as more representative of their performance. They're also more likely to adopt a recommended change or engage in development to improve their performance in this area.

Research by the Corporate Leadership Council<sup>12</sup>, the University of Rhode Island<sup>13</sup>, and Kwela Leadership & Talent Management<sup>14</sup> all show that receiving multirater feedback increases employee acceptance of feedback.



## Improved employee performance

Not surprisingly, having high-performing employees is a goal for any organization. When employees perform well and are highly engaged, better business results will naturally follow.

Multirater assessments have been shown to improve individual employee performance. In part because the employee is more likely to accept the feedback and ratings, and in part because the feedback is often more specific or is reinforced, the employee is more likely to internalize the message and take steps to improve their performance.

Multirater feedback has the greatest impact on employee performance when it was part of a comprehensive approach to performance management that also aligns individual goals with organizational strategy, aligns development with employee goals, and includes regular follow-up on progress, development and performance.



## Higher functioning work teams

Working in teams is becoming more common for organizations. If these teams are high-performing, employees and the organization alike will benefit.

What can we say about high-performing teams? They enable employees to share the workload more evenly, benefit and learn from each other's strengths, and improve peer relationships. Because of this, they tend to result in higher employee engagement. In addition, high-performing teams have been shown to work more effectively and yield better results for the customer, which benefits the organization<sup>15</sup>.

Research by the Harvard Business Review<sup>16</sup>, SHRM<sup>17</sup>, Schuster-Zingheim and Associates, Inc.<sup>18</sup> and CLC<sup>19</sup> suggests that using multirater feedback can help to build high functioning teams.

By participating in multirater assessments of each other, team members provide their own assessments or judgments about how an individual is performing in various areas. If this is done in a transparent and trusting environment, the feedback can support great improvements in team work by:

- opening the lines of communication
- correcting colleagues' inaccurate perceptions of themselves or others
- reinforcing team norms and expectations
- fostering individual development
- encouraging individual accountability
- increasing team members' trust in one another

The behaviors required for effective teamwork are not necessarily the same behaviors required to be an effective individual contributor in a more traditional, top-down management relationship.

As more and more work becomes team-based, these skills become critical to individual and organizational success. Soliciting and receiving multirater feedback from team members can help improve each member's individual as well as team working skills.



In a team setting, multirater feedback allows employees who are working together with shared goals, customers and problems to contribute meaningful and relevant feedback to individual performance reviews, as well as enhance the individual's understanding of how their colleagues perceive them and their work.

# Best practices for implementing multirater assessments

Now that we've examined some of the proven benefits of gathering 360-degree or multisource feedback, let's look at the best practices that support these benefits.



Introduction

Have employees choose raters with manager approval



Provide aggregated, anonymous feedback



Gather ratings on demonstration of competencies



Provide training for participants



Follow up with coaching and development



#### Best practice #1

## Have employees choose raters with manager approval

Research by the Corporate Leadership Council<sup>20,21</sup> and Hoftra University<sup>22</sup> suggests that allowing employees to choose their multirater assessors, subject to their manager's approval, is the best practice, as compared to a process where the manager, HR or some other authority chooses the assessors.

Allowing the manager to review, approve and alter the employee's selections as needed, helps ensure the integrity of the process. Managers can help ensure the raters selected are appropriate.

Manager approval also helps preserve rater/feedback anonymity, since the employee doesn't know who exactly was included in the final list of assessors. When employees can select their own raters they:



tend feel that the process is fair and trustworthy



see its value



are typically more accepting of the feedback itself, since they've helped chose assessors



rate the process as being of greater benefit



#### Best practice #2

## Provide aggregated, anonymous feedback

In order to get the most honest and accurate feedback from raters and drive up process participation, it's important to keep identities anonymous and to aggregate any ratings and feedback that are provided back to the employee.

The Corporate Leadership Council<sup>23</sup> and SHRM<sup>24</sup> found that when assessors know their feedback and ratings will be aggregated and kept anonymous, they tend to rate employee performance more honestly and accurately.

When assessors believe their identities may be made known to the employee, they often inflate their ratings, or provide more positive feedback. This phenomenon happens both with peer assessments and upward assessments.

Process participation by multirater assessors can also increase with anonymous, aggregated feedback as it helps to reassure them that there will be no personal consequences as result of their feedback and ratings.





#### Best practice #3

## Gather ratings on demonstration of competencies

Gathering ratings on an employee's demonstration of competencies in multirater assessments makes it clearer and easier for assessors to evaluate performance since their evaluation is based on defined and required performance criteria. Multirater assessments have been shown<sup>25,26</sup> to provide more consistent evaluation across the assessors and to improve process transparency and fairness.

Evaluating the demonstration of competencies also allows you to connect your multirater feedback and performance management processes to your organization's culture and strategy. Using competencies in multirater assessments, reinforces desirable behaviors across the organization.





#### Best practice #4

## Provide training for participants

Prior to completing a multirater assessment, you should provide your assessors training so they understand the behaviors and competencies being measured, as well as the standards and criteria they should apply when determining their ratings. They'll also want to know how their feedback and ratings will be aggregated and delivered to employees, so they have confidence in the process and trust its anonymity.

Proper training ensures fairer, better calibrated ratings and feedback. It also helps to drive up process participation from assessors, who feel comfortable they have the knowledge/skills to complete the task.

Whoever delivers the feedback to the employee — manager, HR or other authority — also needs to be trained to deliver the feedback in a nonthreatening way, and to help the employee interpret and internalize the feedback. Failing to provide this training has been shown to reduce the effectiveness of 360-degree and multirater reviews.

If you don't already provide it as part of your performance management training, ensure your managers are trained in how to coach their employees, provide feedback, support employee development and career progression, and recognize and reward performance and improvements on an ongoing basis.





#### Best practice #5

## Follow up with coaching and development

At the other end of the process — the receiving end — employees need to be coached on how to receive and act on 360-degree or multirater feedback<sup>27</sup>. They need to understand the context and purpose for 360-degree or multirater feedback, so they view it as a development tool rather than a potential threat.

Employees also benefit from development planning as a follow up to multirater feedback, to help address any areas of weakness. For this development to be truly effective, employees need to understand their preferred learning style, be able to effectively identify appropriate learning resources, and be held accountable for completing any assigned learning activities. Their performance improvements should also be measured and recognized through subsequent performance appraisals and 360-degree/ multirater feedback.

For multirater feedback to be truly effective, the employee and their manager should use it to inform and enhance activities such as goal setting, development planning, ongoing coaching and feedback, career planning/ management, rewards/recognition, etc. This helps ensure managers and employees are working together to leverage each employee's existing strengths and to help them develop new ones.

In fact, multirater feedback should become an input to all your other talent management processes and decisions. This integration and follow up helps to make the employee more accountable, drive performance improvements and help you derive the greatest benefit from the process.

To guide your efforts, you might like to download these helpful checklists and templates:



Tips for effective coaching conversations »



Employee feedback template »



Development plan template »



A manager's checklist for diagnosing development needs »



Checklist for ensuring training transfer »

# Improving the accuracy and impact of feedback in the Halogen TalentSpace<sup>™</sup> suite

So how do you implement these five 360-degree feedback best practices and ensure everyone in your organization follows them? Halogen TalentSpace<sup>™</sup> can help. Let's take a look at how.



Introduction

Have employees choose raters with manager approval



Provide aggregated, anonymous feedback



Gather ratings on demonstration of competencies



Provide training for participants



Follow up with coaching and development

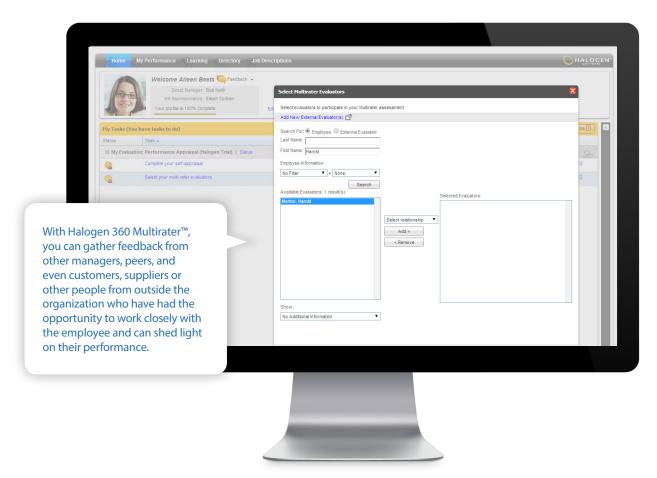




#### Best practice #1

## Have employees choose raters with manager approval

With Halogen Performance<sup>™</sup> and Halogen 360 Multirater<sup>™</sup>, you can design your performance review or 360-degree assessment process to allow employees to choose from whom they'll gather 360-degree feedback (subject to their manager's approval).





Best practice #2

## Provide aggregated, anonymous feedback

With Halogen Performance<sup>™</sup> and Halogen 360 Multirater<sup>™</sup>, you can easily aggregate all the 360-feedback you collect, decide who can see it, and keep the results anonymous. Change Management Able to express facts and ideas clearly, in a credible manner. Usually uses an appropriate tone. Displays good judgment as to what information should be communicated. Listens to others, but does not always elicit feedback. Job Specific Competencies **Building Organizational Commitr** Rarely able to express facts and ideas clearly, in a credible manner. Does not always use an appropriate tone. Has difficulty judging what information should be communicated. Does not always listen to others. Rarely elicits feedback. Creating a Challenging Environn Strategic Thinking Unable to express facts and ideas clearly. This limits credibility. Often uses an inappropriate tone. Exercises poor judgment in determining Managing Employee Performance information to share with others. Unwilling to listen to others or accept feedback Training and Development Recognition and Rewards Job Specific Competencies Sum Employee Comments Succession Planning Communication Communicates effectively and appropriately. Uses good judgment as to what to communicate to whom as well as the best way to get that accomplished. Speaks in a clear and credible manner, selecting the right tone for the situation and audience. Listens to others and allows them to make their point. This is quite different than those who tend to select the wrong means of communicating, or who communicate information to inappropriate people. It also confrasts with those whose messages are not clear or lack credibility, as well as those who demonstrate poor listening skills and are unreceptive to feedback. Report Options Overall Report on competency results using: 
Form scoring scale Competency point scale ■ Managers and HR reps cannot view the Summary Report by Rater or Tabular Report HR reps can view Multirater reports for their representees Employees can view Multirater reports on the manager appraisal after this step is complete: Employees can view Summary Report by Rater and Tabular Report Disable bar graphs in the Report by Rater - I believe I have great communication skills Peer

- Have seen excellent Communication skills

- Has always communicated well in her projects Manager Has meet the requirement for communication skills Direct Report

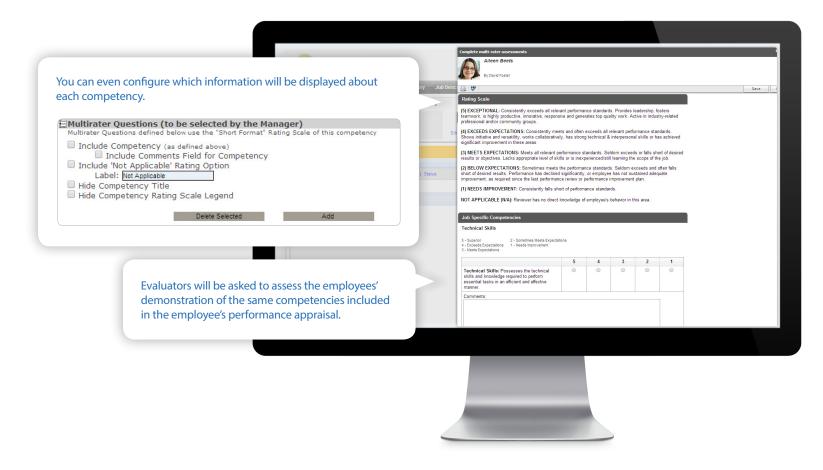
- Has communicated appropriately



#### Best practice #3

## Gather ratings on demonstration of competencies

Halogen 360 Multirater™ lets you easily gather feedback on an employee's demonstration of competencies.





#### Best practice #4

## Provide training for participants

Assessing someone else's performance and providing feedback are skills that all your 360-degree evaluators need to acquire. You should provide training on how to:

- participate in your process
- use your rating scale and fairly assess performance
- give effective feedback (if you're gathering comments as well as ratings)



With Halogen TalentSpace™, you can easily include training materials for evaluators in your learning catalog, and even make them accessible from the Useful Links section of your Halogen TalentSpace home page.



And Halogen TalentSpace™ also gives you access to a wealth of services, training and resources that can help.

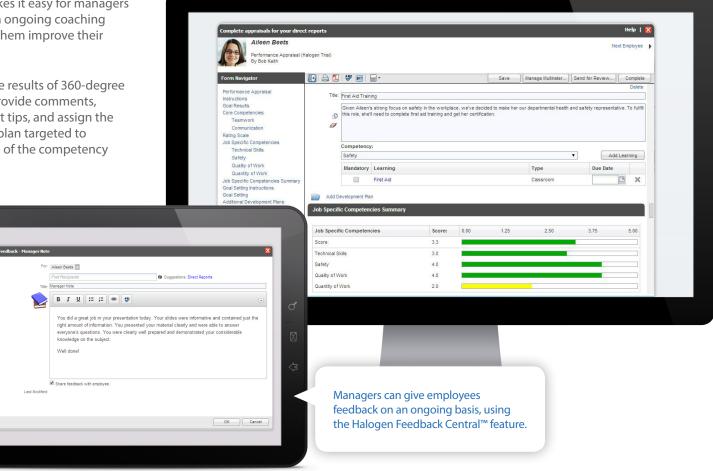


#### Best practice #5

## Follow up with coaching and development

Halogen TalentSpace™ makes it easy for managers to support employees with ongoing coaching and development to help them improve their performance.

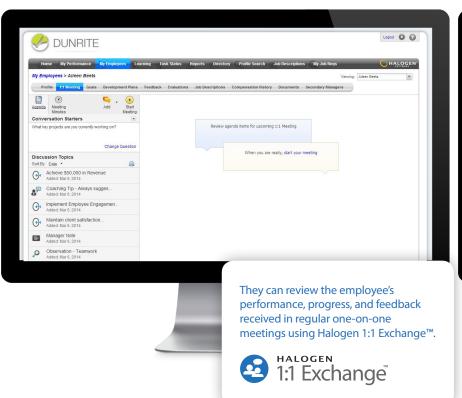
When they're reviewing the results of 360-degree feedback, managers can provide comments, coaching and development tips, and assign the employee a development plan targeted to help improve performance of the competency in question.

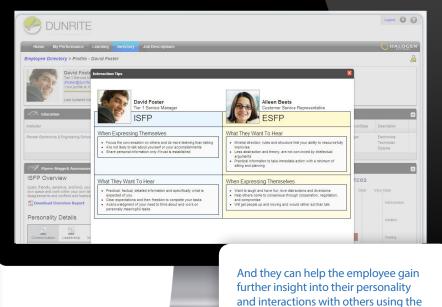




#### Best practice #5 continued

## Follow up with coaching and development





Halogen® Myers-Briggs® module.

Myers-Briggs

## Improving the accuracy and impact of feedback with 360 degree reviews in practice



Introduction

#### California HealthCare Foundation



Read the full CHCF story»

The California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF) is an independent philanthropic organization committed to improving the way health care is delivered and financed in California. By promoting innovations in care and broader access to information, the organization strives to ensure that all Californians can get the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford. CHCF: commissions research and analysis; publishes and disseminates information; convenes meetings of key health care groups; and funds development of programs and models aimed at improving health care in California.

When CHCF began looking at changing the organization's performance appraisal process, one of the most frequent comments from staff was that they should be doing more evaluations using multiple thirdparty reviews or 360-degree feedback. With foundation staff working on multiple projects with numerous stakeholders, feedback from various parties was required to get a full picture of each employee's performance.

An employee performance and talent management suite that included a multirater feedback feature was key to meeting this challenge. Such a suite would make it convenient to gather and analyze feedback from peers, direct reports, or other supervisors on particular competencies or on an employee's overall performance.

"The whole idea was to get input from more people than just the supervisor, because the supervisor may not spend that much time with the employee," said Kim Galvin, Director of Human Resources.

"My overall goal with implementing the multirater feature was to respond to this concern, and improve upon last year's employee satisfaction survey results."

Initial employee feedback on Halogen Performance™ with Halogen 360 Multirater<sup>™</sup> has been strong, with 99 percent of staff completing their reviews this year, and almost all of them being on time.

"Over 90 percent of the people who responded to the question of what they think about multirater review said that we should keep it part of the process for next year," said Galvin. "The anecdotal comments that I received back from supervisors were also very positive. They like the ability to use the split-screen so they can work on the review while looking at the third-party feedback."

"In my personal review, I was a supervisor using third-party feedback and someone who provided third-party feedback, and I felt that the process was really simple and streamlined. It was not time consuming; it was extremely valuable."

Kim Galvin, Director of Human Resources

## Improving the accuracy and impact of feedback with 360 degree reviews in practice



Introduction

### Delicato Family Vineyards



Read the full DFV Wines story»

Delicato Family Vineyards (DFV Wines) is a family-owned winery with an 80+ year winemaking and winegrowing heritage. Three generations of the Indelicato family have overseen vineyard operations and winemaking at their California properties, maintaining the unparalleled standards for which they are known.

The administration of their former, paper-based performance management system was complicated because the majority of Delicato's employees work in operations where there are many different positions and a complicated reporting structure, and where employees typically work shifts.

"As we continued to grow, the logistics of administering appraisals for workers with multiple supervisors, or across several layers of management became more difficult," said Lillian Bynum, Vice President Human Resources. "It was challenging to collect information from multiple supervisors and ensure there was some level of consistency in the information gathered, as it required hours of reading and document comparison."

Delicato now uses Halogen TalentSpace<sup>™</sup>, which includes the ability to have multiple contributors to reviews — an important feature given the structure of the vineyard's operations department. Halogen 360

Multirater allows Delicato to collect 360-degree feedback from multiple sources, to create a complete view of the employee's performance over the course of the year.

"More than 50 percent of our employees work in operations, where shifts rotate, multiple layers of management exist, and a given employee may have several supervisors during the year," detailed Bynum. "Having multi-rater assessments enables us to simplify the process of getting information from the right people and putting it into a single review. The end result is an accurate view of how an employee is performing, and better management of employees, since all supervisors are accountable."

"Our goal is to move performance management from being just another task on the list to something supervisors think about on an ongoing basis," said Bynum. "Moving to webbased appraisals is helping us achieve this, as there's less paperwork, everyone is accountable, and we have the tools available to encourage supervisors to manage performance week over week"

Lillian Bynum, Vice President Human Resources

## Improving the accuracy and impact of feedback with 360 degree reviews in practice

## **Findorff**

Introduction

J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.



Read the full J.H. Findorff & Sons story»

As the first general contractor in Madison, Wisconsin, J.H. Findorff & Son Inc. has been in operation since 1890. The company performs carpentry, concrete, masonry, drywall and steel erection work. The company enjoys a high degree of repeat business due to its reputation as a reliable, quality contractor.

Historically, Findorff used a paper-based system to conduct and manage performance appraisals for office employees only. It wanted to expand this to include all project managers, office staff, and field leaders. As the company was experiencing tremendous growth, particularly in the under-35 age category, and expanding its HR department, Findorff knew it was time to invest in an online employee performance and talent management solution.

"Employees were telling us that they wanted more feedback on a consistent basis, and our appraisal process lacked an element of ongoing accountability," said Renee Boyce, HR Manager of J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.

Findorff also wanted to respond to employee requests for 360 degree multirater feedback within the appraisal process. In the construction business, employees can work with a number of project teams throughout the year the members of these teams are the most appropriate ones to contribute to employee evaluations. "Before we implemented Halogen's performance and multirater feedback solutions, only our top managers would be responsible for all reviews — which could mean that an

employee was getting feedback from someone they may not have interacted with on a daily basis," said Boyce. "We wanted to add more value to the appraisal process, and e360 Multirater was a great way to do this." "Now we can incorporate feedback from the field side, office staff, etc. and can focus on the employees' goals and career paths," said Boyce. "There is much more value in the review process and employees are satisfied which is very important to us."

The multirater feedback functionality has become a competitive hiring advantage for Findorff. "We find that younger staff really care about employer feedback and a sense of career growth," said Boyce. "They grew up getting a lot of feedback from parents, teachers, coaches and mentors and the need does not go away when they enter the workforce. Now with Halogen Performance<sup>™</sup> and Halogen 360 Multirater<sup>™</sup> we can let recruits know that they'll get that feedback and have a personalized development plan, so they understand what their career path is and where they are going."

Findorff has used Halogen Performance™ and Halogen 360 Multirater™ to transform its appraisal process from a cumbersome managerial task to a competitive differentiator and a corporate benchmark of success. "Our business is all about relationships and the Halogen solution allows us to carry that through to our employee management," said Boyce. "We feel that has become an invaluable tool in constantly improving our workforce and our business."

## Key questions for your organization



Introduction

Does your organization currently use 360-degree feedback to improve the accuracy and impact of feedback and performance reviews?



If you don't, what's standing in the way?



Would some of your employee groups benefit more than others from receiving 360-degree feedback?



If you are conducting 360-degree assessments, which of the best practices described in this eBook does your organization currently follow?



Which ones should you think of implementing?



Does your current work culture welcome 360-degree feedback? If your answer is no, what do you need to work on changing?

# 360-degree review resources

## Here are a few resources that can help you:



Introduction

To learn more about how to excel at goal management, visit the Learn section of the Halogen website.



You'll find "How To" articles, webinars, whitepapers, forms and templates, a 360-degree feedback center of excellence, and more.



And become a regular reader of the TalentSpace blog.



How to: How to set up an effective 360 degree evaluation process



Article: Enabling individual evolution with 360 feedback



Article: The multirater assessment system: The key to a strong communication culture



Webinar: Why 360-degree feedback is music to your ears



Template: 360-degree feedback templates

## Wrapping it up

We hope you've found this resource valuable in your talent management journey. At Halogen, our vision is to help organizations like yours build a world-class workforce that is aligned and engaged, and delivering exceptional results. We know that your people can be a sustainable competitive advantage.

If you'd like to access the latest thinking on each of the talent management facets discussed here, check out Halogen's TalentSpace Blog.

You can also stay connected via all of our social channels. Join the conversation!



Like us on Facebook »



Follow us on Twitter »



Follow us on LinkedIn »

## About Halogen Software

Halogen Software offers an organically built cloud-based talent management suite that reinforces and drives higher employee performance across all talent programs – whether that is recruiting, performance management, learning and development, succession planning or compensation. With over 1,750 customers worldwide, Halogen has been recognized as a market leader by major business analysts and has garnered the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry. Halogen Software's powerful, yet simple-to-use solutions, which also include industry-vertical editions, are used by organizations that want to build a world-class workforce that is aligned, inspired and focused on delivering exceptional results.

#### **Ouestions? Contact us!**

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Introduction

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- <sup>25</sup> Corporate Leadership Council (Corporate Executive Board), Literature Key Findings Trends in 360-Degree Reviews,
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