



New Dynamics

Performance and goals

360 feedback: a guide for managers

Run a constructive multi-rater feedback process with clear questions, careful reporting and a development plan.

Practical guidance · Worked examples · Printable worksheet

New Dynamics Editorial Team

Published 15 September 2026

www.new-dynamics.com

contact@new-dynamics.com

Inside this guide

Define the purpose before selecting raters	3
Invite people who have observed the work	3
Ask about behaviour and impact	3
Worked example: delegation	3
Debrief and development worksheet	4
Protect trust in the process	4
Put the guide into practice	4
Frequently asked questions	5
Review the first cycle	6
About New Dynamics	6
Your working worksheet	7

Read in order for the full approach, or use the linked contents to find a section. The final worksheet gives you space to record decisions and next steps.

Run a constructive multi-rater feedback process with clear questions, careful reporting and a development plan. This practical guide to 360 feedback brings together a step-by-step approach, illustrative examples, a reusable worksheet and answers to common questions. Start with the section closest to your current challenge, then use the working session to turn the guidance into a clear next action.

Define the purpose before selecting raters

360 feedback collects perspectives from people who see different aspects of someone's work. Decide whether the exercise is for development, a formal review or another stated purpose. Participants need to know how the results will be used before they contribute.

A development exercise should help the recipient identify useful behaviours to practise. It should not quietly become a ranking tool. If results will influence an employment decision, explain that use and arrange appropriate review of fairness, evidence and process.

Invite people who have observed the work

Choose raters because they have relevant experience, not because their opinions are likely to be positive. Aim for coverage of the relationships important to the role: manager, colleagues, collaborators and direct reports where applicable.

Check that each rater has had enough opportunity to observe the behaviours in question. Offer "not observed" instead of forcing a score. Explain confidentiality and reporting honestly. A small group or a recognisable example may reveal a contributor even if names are removed.

Ask about behaviour and impact

Use specific prompts: "When did this person make a shared decision clearer?" and "What would make working with them more effective?" Avoid personality labels or requests to infer intent. Ask for examples from an agreed period.

If using a scale, define its anchors and distinguish frequency from quality. Keep different rater groups visible where reporting is safe. Their perspectives may differ because they observe different work; an average can hide that explanation.

Worked example: delegation

Illustrative scenario: a manager receives positive feedback from senior colleagues but direct reports describe unclear delegation. A facilitated review explores the context. Senior colleagues see completed outputs; direct reports experience changing briefs and late decisions.

The development action is to agree scope, decision rights and check-in dates when delegating. The manager practises this on two suitable pieces of work and asks recipients whether expectations were clearer. The aim is an observable change, not an immediate increase in a feedback score.

Debrief and development worksheet

- **Pattern:** Which behaviour appears in more than one relevant example?
- **Context:** What did each contributor have an opportunity to observe?
- **Strength:** What should the recipient continue doing?
- **Experiment:** What one behaviour will they practise differently?
- **Support:** Who can coach them or provide a safe practice opportunity?
- **Follow-up:** When will they ask whether the change helped?

Give the recipient time to reflect before asking for a plan. A facilitator can help distinguish a specific criticism from a broader conclusion about the person.

Protect trust in the process

Review reports for identifying details and inappropriate content using a documented process. Do not edit away a legitimate concern simply because it is uncomfortable. Explain how serious concerns move into an appropriate confidential process.

After the cycle, ask whether questions produced usable examples, raters understood the purpose and recipients received support. Delete or retain records according to the communicated rules. Use [competency-based feedback](#) to connect observations to clear role expectations.

Put the guide into practice

Set aside a working session with the people who own this process and one or two people who experience it. Use a fictional or appropriately authorised case, so the discussion can be specific without sharing unnecessary personal information. The purpose is to leave with a usable decision or document, not just agreement that the topic matters.

Prepare the case

Choose a fictional role and identify the relationships that see its work. List the behaviours each group could reasonably observe. Ask whether the proposed raters have enough recent experience to answer. Remove questions that require a contributor to guess about work they do not see or to judge someone's personality.

Write the starting assumptions down before discussing solutions. If the group disagrees on what happened, identify the information needed to resolve that difference rather than building a plan on an untested story.

Work through the decision

Review sample comments and separate observation, impact and interpretation. Compare an unsupported label with a specific example. Decide how to handle a difference between rater groups without assuming one group is correct. Draft a debrief question that invites the recipient to explore context rather than defend a score.

Ask each participant to explain the proposed decision in their own words. Differences in interpretation often reveal an unclear criterion, a missing responsibility or an instruction that will be difficult to follow.

Test an exception

Introduce a report where a small rater group or distinctive example makes the author obvious. Review what can be reported under the stated confidentiality arrangement. Also test a comment that raises a serious concern. Decide how it reaches an appropriate process without exposing it casually in a development report.

Record what changes in this situation and what remains the same. An exception should lead to a clear next step, with an owner, rather than an informal workaround that nobody can explain later.

Agree the handoff

Agree who conducts the debrief and how the recipient gets support afterwards. The handoff should contain the agreed development action, the practice opportunity and the follow-up date. It should not circulate the full raw feedback to people who do not need it simply because they are involved in development.

Finish by confirming the owner, the next action and the date when the result will be reviewed. Give the person receiving the work enough context to continue without repeating the whole discussion.

Frequently asked questions

Should 360 feedback be anonymous?

Anonymity can encourage participation in some settings, but it must be credible. Group size, writing style and examples can reveal contributors. Explain the actual reporting arrangement and its limits before collecting feedback. Some teams use attributed feedback for specific collaboration discussions; others use controlled aggregation. Choose deliberately and do not promise privacy that the process cannot deliver.

Can 360 feedback determine a performance rating?

It can provide relevant perspectives, but a set of opinions is not a complete assessment of performance. Contributors observe different work and may apply criteria differently. If the organisation intends to use feedback in a consequential process, explain that purpose, assess the method and review evidence and fairness appropriately. Do not repurpose a development exercise after people have contributed.

What if the recipient strongly disagrees?

Allow time to process the feedback and explore specific examples. Disagreement may reveal missing context, a factual error or a different interpretation of the behaviour. The facilitator should not force acceptance of every comment. Look for a useful experiment the recipient can try and a way to gather better evidence, while routing factual corrections or serious concerns through the appropriate process.

Review the first cycle

Ask whether the recipient could identify a practical behaviour to develop and received a real chance to practise it. Review question quality, rater burden and the clarity of confidentiality explanations. If the process produced mostly vague praise or criticism, improve the prompts and preparation before repeating the survey.

Keep a brief record of what was tried, what participants found useful and what needs to change. Compare the result with the original problem rather than judging success only by completion. If the process created extra work without improving clarity, quality or support, simplify it and test again. Share the agreed change with the people who will use it, and name the person responsible for keeping the guidance current.

About New Dynamics

[New Dynamics](#) connects goals, feedback, recognition and reviews around the way organisations work. This guide is published by the New Dynamics Editorial Team as part of our practical library for HR leaders, managers and People teams.

Use the examples and worksheets to structure your own discussions and adapt them to your organisation. Illustrative scenarios are not customer case studies. Policy and employment guidance needs appropriate local review before adoption.

For questions about this guide, corrections or a conversation about your performance management process, email contact@new-dynamics.com. Explore the complete [guide library](#) for related resources.

Your working worksheet

Use the prompts from this guide to prepare one real conversation or decision. Keep personal or sensitive information in your organisation's approved records. This page is for your own working notes.

Pattern: Which behaviour appears in more than one relevant example?

Context: What did each contributor have an opportunity to observe?

Strength: What should the recipient continue doing?

Experiment: What one behaviour will they practise differently?

Support: Who can coach them or provide a safe practice opportunity?

Follow-up: When will they ask whether the change helped?

Discuss your next step with New Dynamics: contact@new-dynamics.com