UNIT 17   MULTI SOURCE FEEDBACK SYSTEMS (MAFS)

Objectives

On completing this unit, you should be able to:

l   define 360 Degree Feedback or multi-source feedback systems (MAFS);

l   state at least five different objectives the MAFS attempt to achieve;

l   advantages or various uses of MAFS;

l   Indian models (RSDQ) of leadership development through 360 Degree Feedback;

l   should be able to describe what a 360 degree feedback profile look like;

l   mention the changes that are possible to occur as a result of MAFS;

l   mention the names and models of at least three organizations; and

l   state various steps involved in implementing MAFS.

Structure

17.1   INTRODUCTION

In recent years multi-source assessment and feedback systems (MAFS) also known as 360 Degree Appraisal became very popular. It became popular as it has been felt for long years that one person's assessment of another individual cannot be free of biases. In addition, with the focus on customers (both internal and external) and emphasis on softer dimensions of performance (leadership, innovation, team work, initiative, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurship etc.) it has become necessary to get multiple assessments for a more objective assessment. 360 Degree Appraisal is Multi- Rater Appraisal and Feedback System. Almost every Fortune 500 Company is using this in some form or the other. In this system, the candidate is assessed periodically (once in a year and some times even half yearly) by a number of assessors including his boss, immediate subordinates, colleagues, internal customers and external customers. The assessment is made on a questionnaire specially designed to measure behaviours

considered as critical for performance. The appraisal is done anonymously by others and the assessment is collected by an external agent (consultant) or specially designated internal agent (for example the HRD Department). The assessment is consolidated; feedback profiles are prepared and given to the participant after a workshop or directly by his boss or the HRD department in a performance review discussion session. Due to the innumerable variations possible in the 360 Degree Feedback and Appraisals, and its potency as a competency identification and development tool, it is important to understand the process and its dynamics.

17.2 OBJECTIVES OF 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK OR MULTI-SOURCE FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK SYSTEMS (MAFS)

It is possible to aim at the following through 360 degree or MAFS:

- Providing insights into the strong and weak areas of the candidate in terms of the effective performance of roles, activities, styles, traits, qualities, competencies (knowledge, attitudes and skills), impact on others and the like.

- Identification of developmental needs and preparing development plans more objectively in relation to current or future roles and performance improvements for an individual or a group of individuals.

- Generating data to serve as a more objective basis for rewards and other personnel decisions.

- Reinforcing other change management efforts and organisation effectiveness directed interventions. These may include: TQM efforts, customer focussed or internal customer satisfaction enhancing interventions, flat structures, quality enhancing and cost reducing interventions, decision process changes etc.

- Serves as a basis for performance linked pay or performance rewards.

- Aligning individual and group goals with organisational vision, values and goals.

- Culture building.

- Leadership Development.

- Potential Appraisal and Development.

- Career Planning and Development.

- Succession Planning and Development.

- Team building.

- Planning internal customer satisfaction improvement measures.

- Role clarity and increased accountabilities.

17.3 ADVANTAGES OF THE 360 DEGREE OR MAFS

The 360 Degree appraisal systems have certain advantages. These advantages are not substitutes for those of traditional appraisals but in addition to them. Normally MAFS should be viewed as supplements to the regular KPA or KRA based appraisal systems rather than as replacements of the same.

Additional advantages offered by MAFS are:

- It is more objective than a one person assessment of traits and qualities.

- It adds objectivity and supplements the traditional appraisal system.

- It provides normally more acceptable feedback to employee.

1 It can serve all the purposes served by the traditional appraisal system like identifying the developmental needs, reward management, performance development etc.

1 It helps focus on internal customer satisfaction.

1 It has the potential of pointing out the supervisory biases in the traditional appraisal systems.

1 It is a good tool for enhancing customer service and quality of inputs and service to internal customers.

1 It provides scope for the candidate to get multiple inputs to improve his role, performance, styles and ideas and enhances the acceptability of the individual.

1 It is more participative and enhances the quality of HR decisions

1 It is suitable for new organisational cultures being promoted by most world class organisations (participative culture, learning culture, quality culture, competency based performance culture, team work, empowering culture, leadership culture, etc.)

17.4 PREREQUISITES FOR PARTICIPATION IN 360 DEGREE FEEDBACKS

360 Degree systems can be very sensitive issues. It can throw a person not well prepared for it out of balance. It can also create some new issues in an organisation. If not designed and conducted well, it has the potential danger of the candidate developing wrong perceptions or notions about one or more of his assessors and developing new attitudes towards him. It is therefore necessary and important to mange the process well and make it foolproof. The first important step is to determine if the organisation is ready for it. The second important step is to determine if the candidate is ready for it. The following are the indicators of an organisation's readiness for MAFS:

1) The top management of the organisation is committed to develop the competencies of employees on a continuous basis.

2) There are a number of HRD systems operating in the organisation and they are being taken seriously in implementation.

3) The top management is serious about creating opportunities for employees to learn from each other and learn from their mistakes.

4) The top management is willing to invest their time and effort in giving feedback to their own subordinates.

5) The top management and senior managers take the current appraisal system seriously and do all that they are required to ensure its effective implementation.

6) The top management and senior managers conduct their performance review and counselling sessions regularly

7) The top management is committed adequately to competency building through multi- rater feedback.

8) The top management is willing to subject themselves for an assessment by their subordinates and colleagues.

9) There are not too many status barriers and ego-problems in the organisation

10) People take feedback supportively and use it for development.

11) There are not too much of politics in the organisation

12) People are not likely to use the feedback for playing politics.

13) There is a high degree of systems orientation being attempted by the organisation.

14) The organisation already is or is in the process of becoming a customer driven organisation.

15) There is a good degree of team work being emphasised in the organisation.

16) The HRD department has a high level of credibility.

17) Top management interventions are not looked at with suspicion by the employees.

18) Managers are interested in learning about themselves.

19) There is a high degree of process orientation in the organisation.

20) The organisation is a value driven organisation.

21) Softer issues of management like managing people, professionalism, development etc. are emphasised in the organisation.

22) Managers take their jobs seriously and learn.

23) There is a high degree of emphasis on competency building.

24) The organisation has a history of taking all change management tools seriously and implementing them till the end.

25) People in the organisation take feedback seriously and try to benefit from the same.

The following are the indicators of the readiness of a candidate for the MAFS.

1) The candidate is desirous of knowing himself through the eyes of others. He is willing to receive feedback from others and does not become over-defensive.

2) The candidate desires to be better.

3) The candidates are open to and known to respect the views of others.

4) The candidate should be a learning oriented individual.

5) The candidate has an attitude for healthy competition.

6) The candidate should have at least one and a half years of experience (except in the case of management trainees)

7) He should have direct working relations at least six individuals who can rate him.

8) The candidate should have no history of any previous psychological or psychiatric problems.

17.5   RSDQ MODEL OF 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK

TVRLS (T.V. Rao Learning Systems) has developed a model for Indian Top and Senior Management in terms of managerial and leadership competencies needed which is termed as the RSDQ model (Roles, Styles, Delegation and Qualities). This model of leadership and managerial effectiveness views effective management and leadership as a combination of four sets of variables. These are:

Roles: The extent to which the individual plays various leadership and managerial roles and activities. There are a number of roles, which have to be played by every manager in order to be effective as managers. These are both transformation roles (leadership roles) and transactional roles (managerial) some of these are:

l   Articulating and communicating vision and values.

l   Formulating long term policies and strategies.

l   Introducing and managing new technology and systems.

- Inspiring, developing and motivating juniors.
- Managing juniors, colleagues and seniors.
- Culture building.
- Internal customer management.
- External customer management.
- Managing unions and associations.

Styles: While effective managers recognise all the leadership roles and perform them well, it is not only the roles or activities that determine the effectiveness but also the way in which they are played. The model envisages that managers may play most roles well, devote time and effort but could be insensitive to the style with which they carry out these activities. The leadership styles have been classified on the basis of the earlier research at the Indian Institute of Management by T V Rao earlier into the following:

- A Benevolent or Paternalistic leadership style in which the top level manager believes that all his employees should be constantly guided treated with affection like a parent treats his children, is relationship oriented, assigns tasks on the basis of his own likes and dislikes, constantly guides them and protects them, understands their needs, salvages the situations of crisis by active involvement of himself, distributes rewards to those who are loyal and obedient, shares information with those who are close to him, etc.

- A Critical leadership style is characterised as closer to Theory X belief pattern where the manager believes that employees should be closely and constantly supervised, directed and reminded of their duties and responsibilities, is short term goal oriented, cannot tolerate mistakes or conflicts among employees, personal power dominated, keeps all information to himself, works strictly according to norms and rules and regulations and is highly discipline oriented.

- A Developmental leadership style is characterised as an empowering style, where the top manager believes in developing the competencies of his staff, treats them as mature adults, leaves them on their own most of the times, is long term goal oriented, shares information with all to build their competencies, facilitates the resolution of conflicts and mistakes by the employees themselves with minimal involvement from him.

It has been found that the developmental style is the most desired organisation building style. However some individuals and some situations require at times benevolent and critical styles. It has also been found in research that some managers are not aware of the predominant style they tend to use and the effects their style is producing on their employees.

Delegation: The RSDQ model considers level of delegation as an important part of a senior executive's effectiveness. This dimension has been included because most senior managers seem to have difficulties delegating, especially those effective managers who get promotions fast in their career. In view of these experiences, delegation has been isolated as an important variable of leadership. Those who delegate release their time to perform higher level tasks and those who don't continue to do lower level tasks and suppress their leadership qualities and managerial effectiveness.

Qualities: The model envisages that managers should exhibit qualities of leaders and world class managers (e.g. proaction, listening, communication, positive approach, participative nature, quality orientation etc.). Such qualities not only affect effectiveness with which top level managers perform various roles but also has an impact on the leadership style and hence are very critical.

The TVRLS instrument for 360 degree feedback for managerial and leadership development is based on the RSDQ model. In case of *managerial qualities,* there are about 75 activities identified under each of the roles mentioned above. An instrument (two versions one consisting of 55 items for senior managers and another consisting of 75 items for top level managers) developed to assess these measures the extent to which the manager is perceived as performing these roles. In the case of *leadership styles*, a 51-item instrument assesses the extent to which the above mentioned styles are exhibited across 12 different situations or activities and the impact the person makes on his subordinates in terms of five variables viz. feelings (dependence, incompetence, independence, interdependence, resentment etc.), job satisfaction, work commitment, morale and extent of learning by the subordinates. Through this instrument the participant gets to know his styles as benevolent, critical or developmental (dominant and back up) as well as their impact. *Delegation* questionnaire assesses the extent to which the participant is delegating and releasing his own time for higher level roles and tasks. There is a ten-item questionnaire that measures the various symptoms of delegation or non-delegation. In the case of *behavioural qualities,* 25 qualities are included at present using a semantic differential technique. Three open-ended questions at the end try to find out most dominant strengths and weaknesses of the respondent along with suggestions for improvement.

The instruments developed on the basis of RSDQ model is updated periodically depending on dimensions important to top management roles and positions with changes in the business environment.

Applications and variations of RSDQ: This 360 degree feedback instrument based on the RSDQ model is being used in a large number of Indian organisations including the Aditya Birla Group, IL&FS, Gati Corporation, Mafatlal Group, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Wokardt, Taj Group of Hotels, Tata Cummins, Titan Industries, Gati Cargo Management Services, Interra IT, Novell Software, Amway India, Bajaj Auto, State Bank of India and in other countries like Nigeria and Egypt by the Chanrai Group, Alexandria Carbon Black etc. The main purpose of using the RSDQ model in these organisations has been to provide insights to top level managers on others' perception and the impact they create in the organisation due to the effectiveness with which they perform various managerial roles and leadership styles. The data generated was used as the basis to aid them formulates action plans.

17.6 EFFECTIVENESS OF 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK

Two months after a series of 360 Degree Feedback sessions TVRLS (Rao and Rao, 2003) conducted a study of the effectiveness of 360 Degree Workshop. The line of inquiry was based on the aspect of gathering information regarding the impact of the workshop on people, changes observed as a result of the workshop, actions adopted towards change, further support required if any, and so on. The study covered 32 managers who had participated in the workshop. They were assessed through personal interviews and discussions on a-one-to-one basis. TVRLS reports the following. (Rao, 2000)

1) Two months after the workshop, participants were still carrying the report and workbook within easy reach for reference and reinforcement purposes

2) Of the 32 managers interviewed, 24 of them had shared the data and report including the action plans with respective bosses, peers and subordinates in an effort to solicit their support towards change.

3) The CEO of a multinational company, after going through the workshop, emailed the results of his profile and feedback to all employees. Additionally, he also made known his present focus area (based on scores in report) and action plans for the future inviting support as well as suggestions.

4) A good number of the 32 managers had initiated the practice of maintaining diaries to record their action plans and activities done during the day or week towards the plans.

5) Of the 32 managers interviewed post 360 Feedback workshop, only two persons felt that the workshop did not result in any change in their actions or behaviour. Incidentally, both of these individuals had quit the organisation!

6) 7 individuals, of the 32 managers, actually took the report home and shared the findings/data with their family members asking for their contribution to change. Not surprisingly, all seven of these participants felt they had a high level of change as observed by self, family and work related individuals too.

Negative repercussions also were reported to have occurred... Of the 32 managers interviewed, only one individual had a negative repercussion in spite of efforts to change style. This individual's open-ended feedback laid emphasis on his following up actions. His subordinates felt that they would be able to function better if he reduced 'breathing down their necks' after assigning tasks to them. After the workshop, this person made efforts to reduce his following up activities. Unfortunately, his subordinates started taking advantage of this and it resulted in them becoming more irregular in their work.

In another study using a mailed questionnaire study at TVRLS, response was sought on issues like:

l Insights gained into roles, styles, delegation and behavioural patterns; whether (s)he discovered any dysfunctional aspects of the same..

l Changes brought about in roles, leadership styles, extent of delegation, behavioural patterns, etc.

l Roles or activities specially focused on after attending the program.

l Results that seem to benefit him/her and the organisation and also if some things have not worked well.

l The impact of the 360 degree program on self, unit, and overall organisation.

l Suggestions to make such programs more useful and effective.

In addition the participants have been given a separate questionnaire to be distributed to their '*significant others*' to gain their perception on changes observed. In this aspect feedback was sought on:

l Predominant changes observed.

l Changes observed in managerial roles, leadership styles, delegation pattern, behaviour qualities, etc.

l Negative changes/no changes observed.

l Suggestions for further improvement.

The following changes were most frequently mentioned changes in behaviour. demonstrated after the 360 Degree feedback:

More focus on leadership roles:

l Articulating vision.

l Spending more time on communicating vision and goal setting.

l Being more developmental as against benevolent or critical.

l Putting attention on concern for individual needs rather than preoccupy with own.

Internal customer orientation:

l Better interaction with colleagues and subordinates.

l Learning from colleagues and benefiting from their experiences.

l Rapport with seniors.

Increased focus on fostering a team spirit:

l   Setting high goals for team.

l   Participative management.

l   Conflict management.

l   Developing mutuality.

l   Sensitivity to others' feelings.

l   Collaborative culture.

l   Cross functional review mechanism.

Marked increase in delegation and subordinates' development:

l   Empowering subordinates to take higher responsibilities.

l   Leaving routine decisions to lower levels.

l   Not interfering in matters being handled by subordinates.

l   Encouraging subordinates to learn from their mistakes and being very patient with them.

Predominant behavioural changes:

l   Assertive

l   Clear communication

l   Initiative

l   Patient

l   Proactive

l   Time management

In terms of the impact on their unit/department/organisation, the participants who responded felt that the feeling that they have benefited from the feedback has generated increased motivation especially among their subordinates. Also increased sensitivity to their managerial and leadership roles has resulted in better working relationships and a more congenial atmosphere.

Most participants have said that the changes have resulted not only because the feedback came from people who knew them best at the work place but also because they were made aware of the differences between self perceptions and reality.

In one particular case, not only did the participant respond promptly but also 15 of his assessors sent in their feedback. The data received on this participant presents a complete picture of the utility and impact of 360 degree feedback.

17.7   360 DEGREE PROFILE OF MR. A

Preview: Mr. A is a senior Vice President in an Indian MNC. Mr. A was one of the participants in the programme on 360 degree feedback for managerial styles for organisational effectiveness conducted in September, 1998. In this programme he had received the feedback from 21 assessors including two of his bosses, three peers and sixteen subordinates.

Presented below is a summary of the significant aspects of his profile prepared on the basis of 360 degree feedback he had received.

Managerial Roles

The roles that he seemed to perform well were:

- Team work and team building
- Management of colleagues
- Liaison with top management
- Technology and systems management

The roles that he needed to perform better were:

- Culture Building
- Managing associations and unions
- Public relations and ceremonial roles

Another important insight that the feedback offered him were bringing to his attention various managerial activities in which he thought he was good but others gave him a low rating. These were:

- External customer orientation
- Providing inspirational leadership
- Long term strategic management
- Communicating norms & values to unit
- Appreciation of subordinates

In terms of his **leadership style,** while he was perceived to be developmental, he also showed inclination towards being benevolent more than desired extent for a senior manager. Due to this, his style also seemed to create dependence more than he himself perceived.

In terms of delegation, the extent to which he delegated was reasonably good, but the feedback indicated that he could further increase the same by :

- Empowering juniors to take decisions in his absence rather than wait for his return
- Leaving routine decisions entirely to the lower levels
- Not getting too involved in matters handled by subordinates
- Better time management

In terms of behavioural qualities

Positive aspects of his behavioural qualities as indicated by others' perception were being calm and composed, patient, encouraging and listening to others in meetings

The areas where he needed to focus were being :

- More proactive
- More flexible
- More empathetic
- More receptive
- Change-oriented
- Informal
- Organised

A year after the workshop, when we sent him the questionnaires for our research project, not only did he respond promptly, we also had responses from 15 of his assessors commenting on his overall effectiveness post 360 degree feedback. Presented below is the summary of the feedback he received with frequency of responses.

Summary of Feedback with Frequency of Responses

S.N	Predominant Changes Observed	No of respondents
1.	Communication has considerably improved	9
2.	More appreciation of creative ideas.	5
3.	Teamwork has improved.	4
4.	More target oriented.	3
5.	Very good listener.	3
6.	More assertive, Tries to bring attitudinal change, empathetic, Performing duties better, Approachable for any type of problem, More weight age given to suggestions, Maximum attention for customer problem , Gives ideas to improve system, Has become stronger, non performers are sternly dealt with	1

S.N	Changes Observed in Managerial roles	No. of Respondents
Self	Collective decision-making process practised in a team, Improved conflict analysis & resolving, Spending more time for people development activities.	
1.	Conflict management skills have improved.	6
2.	More task oriented.	4
3.	More ability to lead, guide and motivate all employees	3
4.	More ability to mobilise & integrate various activities & resources to achieve completion of project	3
5.	Care is taken towards development of people.	3
6.	Concern for human values.	2
7.	Substantial improvement in culture building, team building, Involves self in solving the labour problems, Quick decisions and suitable solutions given in need, Conscious learner, sincere, friend philosopher and guide.	1

S.N	Changes observed in Leadership Style	No. of Respondents
Self	Controlling and disciplining concern reduced, Developmental leadership style , Use of dominant supportive style for continuous improvement, Technocratic style being improved by reducing controlling & disciplining	
1.	Slight improvement in - beliefs about subordinates, assigning tasks work commitment & inspiring people.	3
2.	More effective in training subordinates for better performance.	3
3.	Professional approach in dealing day-to-day problems.	3
4.	More participative leadership style.	2
5.	More logical, innovative & creative, Moving to adult-adult from adult-child, Owns responsibility, cares , Higher initiative in dealing labour issues, Tries to get maximum output from manpower, Improved organising skills.	1

S.N	Changes observed in Delegation	No. of Respondents
Self	Down the line delegation increased, people owning responsibility for decisions & actions.	
1.	Has improved in delegation.	11
2.	Allows risk taking, patient & gives time for work.	2

S.N	Changes observed in Behavioural Qualities	No. of Respondents
Self	Developing mutuality, Concern reduced to ensure rules/ regulations are followed, Seeing things from others' point of view , Socialising and public speaking.	
1.	Openness.	4
2.	Confident, composed, concerned for others.	3
3.	More Practical.	3
4.	Improvement in identifying the strengths & weaknesses of all sections of employees.	2
5.	Flexible, Positive attitude, More Empathetic , Behavioural Qualities excellent, Giving more stress on social values and activities, Shares knowledge, Concerned about juniors	1

	No change/Negative	
1	Ego problems hinder accepting others' views sometimes	1
2	Has become more reserved.	1
3	Planning skills not up to the mark.	1
4	Decision making qualities & professionalism missing	1
5	Change for worse in resolving conflicts & acknowledging efforts	1
6	Partial to close associates & believes on the person once chosen.	1
7	Takes decisions himself.	1
8	Does not delegate with authority to his subordinates	1
9	Does not trust people.	1
10	Continues to entertain a selected few.	1

Other comments and suggestions	No. of Respondents
Need to improve the focus on general behaviour	
Should try to be assertive.	4
Should be entrusted more responsibilities to tap potential	3
Should gather more information on Information-Tech.	2
Try not to be carried away by 'yes men', Control his ego, Be involved at group/corporate level planning, Should be more social, Visit staff when they are facing personal problems & communicate the same to top management, Try to be impartial and practical	1

TVRLS experiences in the area of 360 degree feedback (in actual workshops as well as the feedback post-workshop) indicate the following (Rao and Rao, 2000):

l   Feedback from multiple sources bears more credibility as individual biases are minimised and a more complete picture is obtained

l   360 degree feedback is a very efficient tool mainly because it emphasises difference in self perception and reality.

l   The feedback definitely has a marked positive effects such as

l   Strengthening of leadership competencies

l   Increased customer orientation

l   Greater sensitivity

l   Increased team orientation.

l   360 degree feedback does have its share of negative impact. One main reason is that people providing the feedback seem to feel that once the individual is made

aware of his/her weaknesses, there will be dramatic improvements almost immediately. Automatically others' expectations rise with respect to the individual's behaviour and increased sensitivity of the participant may also get exploited.

l   Action plans are most effective when shared with the other organisational members. This is mainly because changes desired in the individual undergoing 360 degree feedback require considerable organisational support. It would be useful for the organisation to look at how it can support the individual in terms of his/her action plans to improve

Rao (1999) made some useful observations on organisations planning to use 360 degree feedback could go about the intervention. Some useful lessons that can be drawn are :

l   360 degree feedback should be projected as a **developmental tool** before using it for appraisal. The most important aid in making it successful is to provide organisational support for planning and managing it as a change program. Initially it should be used for top management and then gradually at all managerial levels.

l   **The system should be communicated across the organisation**. The objectives should be well defined. The HRD department can perform a significant role in this. Unless all apprehensions are cleared, such a program cannot be implemented successfully.

l   Effectiveness would be maximised by **continual organisational monitoring.** Quarterly review programs of improvements post workshop would be a good idea. Moreover, those who have undergone the feedback could meet formally to discuss action plans, experiences, etc.

l   **Organisational support should be provided to aid individual development**. This could be in the form of appointing seniors of participants as mentors to continuously counsel and encourage them. A good way of integrating the system would be to add the change plan as a Key Result area in their performance appraisal; action plans will be reviewed like any other tasks and targets along with your regular performance appraisal. This is a good practice to follow.

l   Convert it into 360-degree appraisal. This is the most logical step to follow. This is especially applicable for those organisations that are looking for a 360-Degree appraisal system. They may have some hesitation to start an appraisal program and they may use the feedback as a starting point only. In such cases after the participants have experienced feedback once their inhibitions and apprehensions may become less. They get well prepared to receive feedback from others. In fact some of the participants may develop even a thirst from feedback. **Therefore a logical extension of the program is to design a 360-degree appraisal program and make it a part of the appraisal process annually.** The team that went through the program with the help of the in-house HR team or a 360-degree expert could design a simple format.

l   **Conduct re-assessments on a periodic basis.** Some of the participants undertake re-surveys using the same questionnaires after six months to a year. The RSDQ questionnaire is long and may face problems for an organisation-wide re-assess on a continuous basis. The candidate to re-assess to examine the changes could use a shorter version of it.

l   **Reward change with the help of reviewing officer.** Another way of reinforcing the change process is to notice changes and reward the same. This could be done in a systematic way by instituting change awards or integrating into the reward or recognition system some element for changes due to 360-degree feedback. Spread success stories, document and reward successes.

ı **Collect the trends in relation to commonly shared weaknesses and initiate training and other organisational actions.** When a candidate goes through a 360-degree feedback program on RSDQ model, data about him is generated on nearly 165 dimensions. Benchmarking data is also provided which gives company-wide trends. Common observations form such extensive data can be traced to certain organisational factors. This can help the organisation to develop an agenda for its training and other organisation development activities.

ı **Use data for potential appraisal, career planning and development.** This is a most common use in the fortune 500 companies. In such a case it should be announced in the beginning and the data are made available to the organisation. The data could be used for placement and promotion decisions. This is only an additional data and should not be the sole input. The data could also be used for career counselling purposes.

360 Degree has a lot of potential as a change management program. TVRLS experience shows he same. It is hoped that many corporations will exploit the potential of the same.

17.8   SOME OTHER MODELS OF 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK

While the process and methodology of 360 Degree Feedback is same across the world, the models or the tools used for assessment and feedback vary from organisation to organisation. Some of these models are provided here. The most researched leadership development models are available from the Centre for Creative Leadership at North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Philips Leadership Competencies and the 360 degree Appraisals:

Philips uses a number of tools aimed at measuring the competency levels focussing at the six competencies :

ı Shows determination to achieve excellent results.

ı Focuses on the Market.

ı Finds Better Ways.

ı Demands Top Performance.

ı Inspires Commitment.

ı Develops Self and Others.

They are *Selection Centres, Leadership Development Pack, Leadership Development Questionnaire* and the *Development Centres.*

Of the above tools, the Leadership Development Questionnaire is a multi-rater feedback tool, which can be used to gain feedback on a manger's performance in their current job from different people in their environment. Complete, objective assessment is the first step towards further development.

The feedback identifies gaps and indicates the direction for improvement, based on rating of clearly defined behaviours linked to the leadership Competencies and the Individual's present job. The questionnaire and feedback are used as a part of a structured programme which the individual works through together with a trained facilitator, leading to improvement by planning and implementing development activities.

360 degree Appraisal Questionnaire in Philips:

1) The Instrument is called: Leadership Assessment Questionnaire.

2) The High potential role holder who gets through assessment chooses the 360 degree appraisers usually form his role-set, viz., boss, colleagues, direct reports and others.

3) The questionnaire is given to the assessors with clear instruction to complete the same carefully and making sure that the ratings of behaviours are a true reflection of actual behaviour seen in practice.

4) Assessors are assured that in the feedback sessions, only the anonymised data will be used.

5) Assessors complete the Questionnaire and hand it back to the assessee in a sealed envelope.

6) Basic data of the assessor is collected in terms of his / her relation to the participant (assessee), how long he / she know the participant in his present position, etc.

7) The rating scale used is Five-point scale as under:

    5: Behaviour is shown to very great extent.

    4: Behaviour is shown to a great extent.

    3: Behaviour is shown to some extent.

    2: Behaviour is shown to a little extent.

    1: Behaviour is not shown at all.

Sample Questions from the 360 Degree Assessment Questionnaire :

1) ( ) Makes an overall plan covering key aspects of assignment.

2) ( ) Encourages others to take initiatives and be involved in decisions.

3) ( ) Challenges others constructively.

4) ( ) Integrates information from various sources, interprets it, identifies salient points.

5) ( ) Builds on the ideas and contribution of others.

6) ( ) Shows realistic appreciation of the broad business.

7) ( ) Gives feedback sensitively and constructively.

8) ( ) Secures effective cross-functional co-operation.

9) ( ) Shows resilience despite setbacks and challenges.

10) ( ) Makes efforts to discover and understand other views.

There are 120 such statements that together constitute the 360 degree Assessment. The Feedback is to be analysed and feedback is to be kept ready when the participant is ready for the next logical step.

360 degree feedback process at NIIT

NIIT introduced the formal 360 degree survey in 1995. The primary objectives were to:

ι   Provide multiple-source feedback as input to enhance inter-personal competence .

ι   Promote core NIIT Values and attributes among all staff .

ι   Foster a non-hierarchical culture through multiple role sensitivity.

ι   Use the formal opportunity of Performance Review to build "developmental/ coaching" relationship between the Reviewer and the Reviewee.

The system –known as Individual Effectiveness Feedback (IEF)- has been carefully administered over the last 4 years, refining it each year based on the learning from the previous year.

Features of IEF

IEF-NIIT's own method of 360 degree survey –is used by all the 3800 staff of the Company across all levels and positions. It is based on a questionnaire which has 5 key Values and 25 key behavioural attributes on which every NIITian gives and receives feedback on a scale of 4.A feedback team is formed around each NIITian comprising of his/her Peers, Team Members (NIIT parlance for Subordinates) and the Supervisor. Only in a few cases the external customer is included. The questionnaire is administered once a year worldwide a little ahead of the formal annual Appraisal discussion. All the filled in survey instruments are collected centrally and analysed and a consolidated score card is produced for each individual and given to him/her well in time for a discussion with the supervisor along with the annual appraisal. The output the individual receives shows the trends of scores s/he has received over years on each key parameter-in a graphical form-and also his/her own self-assessment on these parameters. The results are kept anonymous and it can not be known who has given what rating to whom. The whole process is web –enabled and NIITians can access the form as well as participate in the process through the HR web-site on the company's intranet.

Implementation

The system is administered by the HR function. Elaborate planning is done based on a review of how it was used the previous year. User feedback is invited though focussed survey on e-mail and the same is factored in to refine the tool for the next year. Detailed education is carried out both through refresher session for the old users and detailed training for the first time new users. A special guide-book is published to handle queries and also give help to use the system effectively. A video explaining features of the process and providing tips is used in all such locations where face-to face meeting with trained HR facilitator is not possible. In view of sustained communication, wide coverage and user-friendly design it has been possible to get almost 100% usage of the system across all staff .Staff have started looking forward to the time of IEF instead of HR department having to "push" it .Top management demonstrates visible commitment to the system. The Chairman and the Directors personally participate and display their own score-cards openly on their office desks and invite inputs for using the feedback to improve themselves.

Issues and Lessons

The success of the 360 degrees feedback at NIIT can be attributed to the following key factors:

l   Absolute top management commitment.

l   User-friendly design , simple form and easy workflow.

l   Linkages with Performance Management system in that the supervisor is required to enquire about the IEF report of the Reviewee and give advice on how the individual might improve on the core Values and key attributes.

l   Use of the tool purely as a developmental input and disassociation from the Reward system

l   Effective education , communication and training in support of the system.

l   Line buy-in and extensive user involvement.

However the tool and its usage can be further improved by fine-tuning the composition of participating teams. Currently it is not possible to know the feedback of 'peers' separately from the 'subordinates'. Such role specific analysis of feedback will help individuals gain a much sharper understanding of what needs to change or improve.

360 Degree Feedback PROCESS IN Johnson & Johnson

The company in line with its promise of being proactive to change had constituted a committee called Frameworks in the end 1995, of senior leaders representing various J&J companies and functions. This committee was constituted with the goal to identify key areas of focus for sustaining growth and continue to remain the market leader in future.

The committee undertook extensive research, meetings with a large cross section of employees and consultation with experts and benchmarking exercise to understand, what could be the barriers to the above objectives. The committee at the end of this initiative in mid 1996 recommended two key areas of thrust for future and they were: Ensuring continuous supply of competent *Leadership* across the organisation at all levels and institutionalises a process to encourage *Innovation.*

Accordingly J&J developed its own models on Leadership and Innovation titled 'Standards of Leadership' & "What's New' respectively. The J&J Standards of Leadership (SOL) model describes the behaviour expected to be displayed by all its leaders. The key areas of behavioural indicators are :

1) Customer Market Place Focus

2) Inter-dependent Partnering

3) Managing Complexity

4) Innovation

5) Organisation & People Development

6) Credo Values

7) Business Results

This model then got incorporated into all HR systems of J&J such as Performance Planning & Review, Succession Planning, Potential Assessment and Career Planning. An extensive training and education drive was initiated called "Leadership Challenge Programme" to help people to understand various aspects of 'SOL' and to practice the behaviours explained in the model.

The groups selected to attend "Leadership Challenge Programme" were put through a 360 Feedback Process before the programme to seek feedback on various aspects of their Standards of Leadership behaviour from their boss, peers, subordinates as well as External/internal customers. The feedback reports were handed over during the programme and participants were helped by the facilitators to interpret the data and develop the action plan for improvement.

The process of the 360 degree feedback was then extended to the rest of the organisation as an HR process. But before embarking on this exercise J&J ensures that the participating organisation is ready to successfully start off with the process. The following conditions are listed as critical success factors, which if present significantly increase the potential of the 360 Feedback Process as having a positive impact on individual and organisational effectiveness.

Some of the key guidelines are as explained below:

l   Senior Management of the unit is visible and active in the support of the process.

l   Managers understand and support the use of multi-rater feedback.

l   There is an identified set of competencies.

l   There is an effective Performance Appraisal Process already in place.

l   There is an environment of trust among those participating in the process.

l   There is an interdependency among participants in producing organisational results.

l   Participants have good observation and feedback skills.

l   There are clear expectations about the purpose of the process.

l   The information generated by the process belongs to the individual.

l   The data generated is utilised for developmental purposes only and not as a substitute for effective performance management.

WIPRO 360 Degree Process

The process is aimed at helping an individual seek objective feedback on behaviour from a group of people whom, he or she chooses and those who impact his/her job effectiveness significantly. The individual then woks on a plan to improve behaviour seeking support and involvement from this group to increase effectiveness.

The following steps were taken to introduce the process:

a)   The purpose of the 360-degree feedback was clearly defined. It was a tool to develop leaders from within.

b)   The next step was to arrive at what constituted leadership qualities. After a lot of study and research, focus group discussions and interactions with top management and consultants, seven qualities were arrived at. These were called the Wipro's Leaders' Qualities and the 360-degree tool was called the Wipro Leaders' Qualities Survey. It has now become widely known as the WLQ Survey.

c)   It was important to describe the qualities in the form of observable behaviours. Each quality was described in terms of 6-7 observable behaviours,

d)   A scale had to be selected for measuring the behaviour. Initially, it was rated as strength or a weakness on a 5-point scale. Later on this was converted to frequency scale depicting whether the leader almost exhibits these behaviours or almost never exhibits these behaviours.

e)   For the qualitative comments, there were three questions being asked. They focused on what strengths, weaknesses the leader possessed and how the respondent could help the leader. This generated a number of answers, but they were not necessarily action oriented. These questions were later changed to what the leader should continue, start and stop doing.

f)   The respondents were then decided upon. They would be the managers (or managers in case of dual reporting) , peers and juniors (in Wipro, the word subordinates is not used)

g)   The format of the report was decided next. The report would show for each quality what the weighted average of responses for a particular group (managers, peers, juniors and self) is. It would also show how the leader has fared with respect to other leaders of his/her grade (Top Management. Senior Management etc.) In terms of how he/she compares with the average and the best in class. The output was largely graphical to provide user-friendly information

h)   In the first year, the implementation was restricted to top management. Its coverage was extended to other senior managers in the next year. Each year the scope was increased till it reached a large proportion of middle managers last

year. (In all, over 500 managers received their 360-degree feedback last year, which means processing around 12000 forms!)

i)   It was decided to out source the entire processing to a third party to maintain the confidentiality of the process. Confidentiality, like justice, must not only exists but also be perceived to exist.

j)   It was decided that the co-ordination should be done at the corporate level, so that there is a distance between the process and business unit human resources.

Issues and their resolution

a)   Should it be a development tool alone or part of the appraisal process?

Many advocate that it should be used as development tool alone, and not to be shared with the supervisor. But in Wipro, we decided that it should be part of the appraisal. A key element of the appraisal system is development of the employee. At Wipro, it is believed that the supervisor and the employee are partners in the development of the employee with clear responsibilities assigned to both. The WLQ Survey therefore needs to be shared with the supervisor so that he/she can enable the development and also commit the necessary resources.

b)   Should the concerned leader decide on his respondents or should the supervisor be involved?

Initially, when managers were asked to give the names of the juniors they would sometimes give the names of juniors across business units who were favourably inclined towards them. The junior was therefore redefined as a direct report. Where the actual direct reports were less in those cases, we did not process the junior part of the report to prevent direct identification.

In the case of peers, the leader could select those among them with who he/she had regular interaction. But the supervisor needs to approve the list to prevent mutual back scratching associations.

c)   Should peers be kept confidential or not?

While peers have no fear of being victimised, there is a fear that this might come in the way of daily interactions. The greater fear is that, realising this; many peers would not be honest enough with the feedback. Hence, we decided to keep it confidential.

d)   Should qualitative comments be reproduced as they are or should they be edited to avoid personal comments or attacks?

Any editing may affect credibility. The feeling could be if this edited, then what else could have been edited? We have decided to reproduce all comments verbatim even if a few comments do hurt.

e)   Do some people use this for political ends?

In a way, this becomes the reverse of the CR (Confidential Report) because the junior feedback is anonymous and the supervisor's supervisor does read his/her comments. There is temptation for some of the reports to use this as a tool to get even with their bosses or in some cases, compensate for their own adequacy. That is the reason why we give the mathematical distribution of the rating. It helps to understand if one respondent has taken an extreme stand, either positive or negative.

17.9   HOW TO PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTING 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK?

It takes a lot of trust in an organisation and a lot of preparation before you can move from using 360 degree strictly for development purposes to using it for taking decisions on promotions and rewards. Many companies are just not ready. Most current literature on making 360 degree effective as a tool for performance and leadership-style reviews have this to recommend.

1) Begin with Development: It is advisable to introduce 360 degree as an internal tool for personal development and growth if your company has no experience of this intervention. 360 degree addresses the very basic change-management process and can be very frightening to a lot of people to think that they will be rated by subordinates and co-workers. Most companies have at least a one-year program in place before linking it to performance reviews. GE pioneered the use of 360 degree for over three years as a developmental tool and getting people used to it with out seeing any change in the organisation. The program took root and began to be seen as integral part of the company's functioning and value system only in the last few years. One good alternative is to focus on a single department or division that seems most ready for 360 degree

2) Link with company goal: No program as unorthodox as 360 degree must be taken lightly. It must be finally linked to a significant business reason that is plain to everyone. Is the purpose of introducing 360 degree to change the culture? Or is it enhancing the performance management system? Presumably, the reason is not because someone heard about or read about this new plaything

3) Train everyone: TVRLS conducts training sessions for everyone who might potentially fill out a feedback questionnaire. Such consultancy firms address issues such as data quality, confidentiality, accessibility to the reports, and their ultimate use. Trust is critical to accuracy of data and one way to ensure this is through training. Do executives view this as a constructive or punitive process? It's human nature to rush to the negative feedback. Training is required to focus on the positives because that is where the real leverage in improving performance is.

4) Follow up: The feedback report should finally go into an action plan for improvement. The superior and the Human Resources professional can help interpret the report so that the employee does not come up with a wrong action plan. The action plan, as in the case of several contemporary companies, must eventually be tied to results as well as to the rewards and punishment systems of the organisation. The focus is on individual accountability for bringing about desired culture changed. If employees, especially at top and senior leadership levels, are not held accountable for doing something with their 360 degree feedback they can simply ignore the findings and allow perpetuation of negatives in that company.

5) Company Culture: If your culture is retaliatory and punitive, the 360 degree process will not work well. In an atmosphere of downsizing, where everyone is afraid of their jobs, it can also poison people about 360 degree that they never want to use it again. In fact, 360 degree is most effective in a company which has a culture of learning and individual growth. If an executive is about to receive a 360 degree feedback, but during the previous year either (1) has not asked for feedback, or (2) has not taken action on the feedback received so far, (3) feels that some kind of retribution is going to take place, then by the time this 360 degree process gets going, there already exists an atmosphere of mistrust and fear. Unless some other development inputs are initiated to create a positive climate, 360 degree can be of very limited value to the culture change in that company.

In conclusion, it is important perhaps to note that 360 degree can be very significant behavioural science intervention in bringing about culture change in Indian corporations which continue to be preoccupied with top-down autocratic cultures. Indian leadership at senior levels continues to demand obedience and gets it either through seductive or coercive means. Indian talent continues to flourish overseas or make unambiguous choices to work for MNCs where a freer and more democratic climate prevails. The 360 degree feedback process, helps top and senior leadership break clear from the decadent past, thereby developing competencies to attract and retain world-class talent so desperately needed for business and organisation growth of world-class standards.

17.10 SUMMARY

To sum up, multi source feedback systems also known as 360 degree appraisal has become very popular in almost every organisation. In this unit, we have discussed the procedure, advantages and different models of multi source feedback systems. At the end of the unit we have discussed about preparation for implementing 360 degree feedback mechanism.

17.11 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Describe the objectives of Multi-source assessment feedback systems (mafs).

2) What are the advantages of having 360 degree or MAFS and its effectiveness?

3) Describe the RSDQ model of 360 degree feedback.

4) Explain how one can prepare to implement 360 degree feedback in an organisation.

17.12 FURTHER READINGS

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