From Feedback to Impact

Translating 360° feedback into business gain

You will hear some people say that leadership development is something that organisations invest in for the long run, and that no one should expect an immediate payoff. We take exactly the opposite stance. You should be able to see results right away. If you do not see results relatively quickly, we doubt you ever will.

J Zenger & J Folkman

TWC

The challenge for the CEO

The CEO looks at the body language of the senior management team. She has just announced that she and team should explore the introduction of a 360° feedback exercise. In her last company she had found the feedback process, for individuals and the team, a trigger to powerful conversations. These conversations with each of the team helped to create alignment of expectations and clarity of leadership priorities. With the collective team, the review of overall trends had facilitated a shift from portfolio protectionism to allow the team to operate as a genuine strategic decision making force.

Looking at this new team, she is now less convinced about her plans. Although a few of the team seem supportive, she also senses a fair amount of scepticism. Predictably it is the Operations Director who expresses the view of the sceptics: "Will this make any business difference? Even worse, will it be a time-consuming distraction from the challenges we all face?"

The CEO takes a deep breath before calmly stating, "Well, it depends."

> *360° feedback can create behaviour change under the right circumstances. Yet there are many studies that seem to indicate that 360° processes sometimes create no measurable changes, and at times, may actually have negative effects.*

Dave Bracken

Overview

Tim Harford[1] argues that if we are moving away from the world of "predict and control" to one of "experiment, evaluate, adapt and keep repeating", then feedback systems will become an increasingly important dynamic in business success. The systems we use to capture feedback and translate the learning into actionable insights for improvement are therefore key to competitiveness. Get this process right and we accelerate performance. But if the signal is lost in noise, we stall.

This is particularly true of the processes applied in 360º feedback methodology, utilised extensively across a range of applications: ad hoc coaching, a component of development programmes, as well as more formalised processes in performance and talent management.

The logic that underpins 360º feedback follows the causal sequence of:

- feedback provides important **insight**

- this insight identifies **priorities** for some kind of change

- these priorities are translated into **action plans** for development

- the implementation of these action plans results in **change with improvements** in performance and a positive organisational **impact**

Within this sequence of cause and effect, there is scope for any number of hazards, hazards that block the transition from feedback to performance improvement and business impact. Throw in to the mix the proliferation of vendor systems in the last few years, covering the spectrum of the "good, bad and ugly", and it is unsurprising that 360º feedback has had mixed outcomes in the evaluation of impact.[2]

The question then is not: does 360º feedback work? Instead it is more helpful to ask a specific set of questions:

- **what design and content features improve its effectiveness?**
- **under which organisational conditions does it "work"?**
- **which processes optimise its impact?**
- **with which types of individuals does it make most positive difference?**
- **what is needed in the follow through to ensure its impact is sustained?**

This article draws on the evidence base from research studies[3], and our consulting experience in the design, implementation and evaluation of over one hundred and fifty 360º feedback projects to identify the key dynamics that ensure that feedback drives the kind of performance gains that make a sustainable impact.

From feedback to insight

In principle, few would argue against the importance of feedback. In practice, many have experienced feedback processes that resulted in little change or business benefit.

Why then can feedback fail to generate insight? And what is required to ensure the time and effort of capturing the feedback results in the insights that trigger learning and improvement?

Confusion about the purpose of 360° feedback

360° feedback can fulfil a number of different objectives, but if the honest answer to the question "What do we want a 360° feedback process to do?" is "we need to be seen to be doing something about leadership development", it is unlikely that much that is positive will happen.

If we need real time feedback across project teams to improve collaboration for faster innovation, crowd sourced feedback might be the best response. If the goal is to raise levels of employee engagement then an upwards appraisal process will identify what is helping or hindering work place commitment and discretionary performance.

Or if the purpose is to target coaching activity on the specific challenges facing each senior executive within a successor pool, then the 360° feedback methodology will be highly personalised, essentially a bespoke application for each participant, and one different to a standardised process implemented to support performance conversations.

Feedback comes in many forms[4]. There is feedback that:

- helps us feel **appreciated**. Here we feel understood and acknowledged
- provides **coaching** to help us learn, grow and change and improve
- is an **evaluation**. It tells us where we stand and is a comparison either against others or a set of standards

These different forms of feedback are of course all valid. But the appropriate emphasis will hinge on the overall purpose of the exercise.

Purpose drives a number of decision points to finalise the optimal mix of content, design, technology and process logistics. And if we have a mismatch between goals and subsequent design and implementation, we shouldn't be surprised that the feedback process doesn't results in the insights we anticipated.

> *The bugle blast of evaluation can drown out the quieter melodies of coaching and appreciation.*
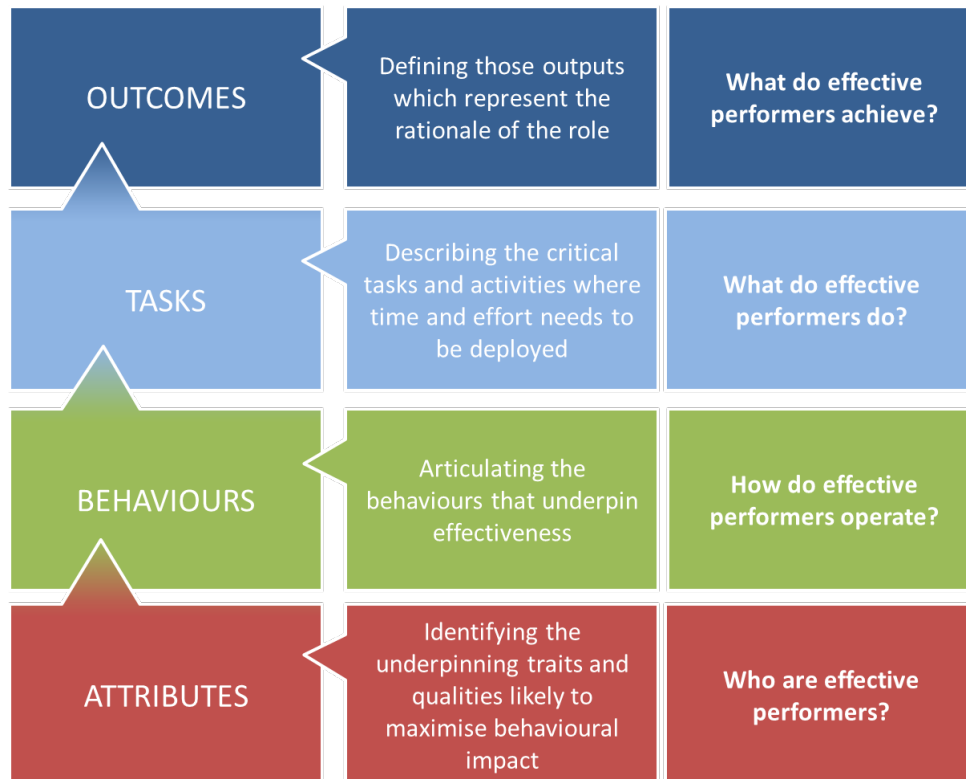
Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen

From feedback to insight

Wrong headed or overly complex frameworks for design

360° feedback signals what is important to the organisation. If the framework for 360° feedback design reflects the organisation's business strategy and talent management philosophy it is an important statement of expectations.

Performance can be understood at four levels:

OUTCOMES	Defining those outputs which represent the rationale of the role	**What do effective performers achieve?**
BEHAVIOURS	Articulating the behaviours that underpin effectiveness	**How do effective performers operate?**
TASKS	Describing the critical tasks and activities where time and effort needs to be deployed	**What do effective performers do?**
ATTRIBUTES	Identifying the underpinning traits and qualities likely to maximise behavioural impact	**Who are effective performers?**

What should be the focus of the feedback?

A process built on **outcomes** enables feedback on issues of direct organisational relevance. Clear feedback on outcomes - the "what" of fundamental business purpose - leaves little wriggle room and can be an important motivator for personal change. But outcomes (productivity, service responsiveness, innovation and so on) are a consequence not simply of personal effectiveness but of any number of contextual factors (the legacy of the past, the impact of current environmental factors) which may have a favourable or unfavourable effect on outcomes. Feedback based only on outcomes can provide more insight about who is more or less lucky than who is more or less effective.

A framework based on **tasks** should provide insight about the effectiveness with which time and energy are deployed across the critical activities that drive positive outcomes. At best, this is a helpful perspective in understanding why outcomes are or aren't being achieved. However, for complex organisations with many different roles and associated task requirements, feedback has to be highly targeted and customised for different roles or fall back on generic tasks that may lack immediate relevance to participants.

Some frameworks focus more on **behaviours**, to clarify the how of performance. If the aim of the feedback programme is, for example, to reinforce cultural values and gain a better insight into operating style and fit, then a blue print of behaviours is the guiding principle for design. The downside of this approach is that the feedback, because there is less direct read across to bottom line outcomes, can lack edge.

From feedback to insight

Attributes, although often applied in 360° feedback systems, generally should be avoided in design. Attributes require feedbackers to evaluate cognitive and personality traits and motivations, a response task that can result in a halo effect based on "likeability" and lack the specific insight to drive personal change.

As in life generally, there are no perfect solutions, the framework for design will be a compromise to manage trade-offs, reflecting the purpose of the exercise[5] and the practical constraints of budget, time and speed.

Off the shelf solutions have their place, particularly for quick and low cost implementation as part of generic development programmes. There was a time when the high costs of bespoke development could only be justified by a large number of programme participants. On line technology now makes bespoke development an inexpensive option even for relatively small numbers. Increasingly, the trend is to create bespoke variations reflecting the different challenges faced by different participants at different organisational levels or within different business areas.

In our experience, organisations can be too ambitious in the frameworks they utilise in 360° feedback design, resulting in unwieldy and time consuming questionnaires and overly complex report outputs. If the goal is to provide discerning feedback with differentiated insights to pinpoint what is and isn't working well, focus and simplicity are the guiding principles.

> " *The lack of meaningful feedback was the number 1 reason cited by talented people for leaving an organisation.* "
>
> **Brene Brown**

From feedback to insight

> *Subordinates, peers and supervisors have distinct perspectives on the competencies that are relevant for effectiveness.*
>
> **Judith H. Semeijn**

Poor questionnaire construction

360° feedback is well positioned to answer some, but not all, questions of effectiveness. Rather than start with a top down model of everything that seems relevant to success, progressive design starts with the perspective of the end users who will be asked to provide feedback. Typically these end users are less concerned with any conceptual framework and more alert to the questions:

- **what impact is this individual having on me?**
- **are they helping me to do my job?**
- **is it a positive and energising experience?**
- **or are they holding me back and making working life more difficult?**

And each feedback group has its distinctive agenda.

For **line managers**, the fundamental question is: are you proactive in helping me shape the future? This is a line management evaluation of strategic contribution, innovation and initiative to make progress and take the lead in the implementation of change to keep raising the bar of performance.

Alternatively, for insecure line managers, the questions are: what are you doing to make me look good with my own manager? Are you avoiding the kind of risks that might embarrass me with my line manager? Here the agenda is less about innovation and more about caution around compliance to minimise risk.

For **peers**, feedback is shaped by the issues of responsiveness, support and assistance. When under work load pressures, the key questions for peers are: will you help me, and will you give me the information and resource I need? Peers are well placed to recognise those individuals who are going the extra mile for the organisation vs. those more motivated to protect and defend the functional and business interests of their immediate work area.

Team members have a different agenda. For the team, in the short term, the issue is: are you making it easy for me to do a good job? This is partly about removing the barriers to effective performance; the organisational stuff that gets in the way of individual and team productivity. It is also about putting in place the support and resource to optimise the efforts of each team member. In the long-term, team members want guidance to support their personal, professional and career development.

The dynamics of working relationships with **stakeholders** create a different set of expectations. Stakeholders represent that grouping of internal customers and external contacts with less exposure to the specifics of day to day behaviour. For stakeholders, their focus is less with the inputs of competency and more the outputs of delivery that matter to them. For stakeholders the issues in 360° feedback should be: does the individual deliver against agreed expectations? Is delivery an easy, enjoyable and energising process?

From feedback to insight

Much 360° feedback questionnaire design has been shaped by the principles applied in psychometric assessment. Here the requirement has been for high scale reliabilities and inter-rater consistency for the constructs that make up the feedback framework. Robust measurement is of course important for defensible design, but the psychometric perspective seems to assume that every feedback group can and should complete every question. The result often has been long-winded feedback questionnaires of repetitive content.

Until the 360° feedback industry abandons its pretence that it is in the game of psychometric assessment, end users will be required to endure long questionnaires for no meaningful gain. In 360° feedback systems where differential content is targeted at different feedback groups - applying the principle of "who knows what" - conventional psychometric assumptions break down.

Validity that answers the question: *"is the process having an impact with noticeable business benefits?"*[6] seems a more pressing consideration than the generation of spurious reliability estimates.

> ❝ *I'm not sure what takes more guts - giving feedback or getting it.* ❞
>
> **Seth Godin**

Immaturity of the feedback population

Insights are generated from feedback when those providing the feedback are:

Willing to give feedback. This is partly about the context which shapes the expectations and perceptions that underpin candid feedback. For some organisations, the combination of hierarchical power and low levels of trust is a significant constraint to open and honest feedback. Alternatively a culture of arrogance or complacency can avoid the kind of challenge needed for insightful feedback. A culture of stretch, based on the belief that we can keep improving is fundamental to discerning insight.

Able to give feedback. This assumes that colleagues *can* provide insightful feedback, implying significant exposure to the individual to make meaningful evaluations. Where working relationships are based on relatively infrequent interactions, feedback should be designed more about outcomes rather than assume colleagues can provide highly detailed evaluations of behavioural effectiveness.

Given **time** to provide feedback. One of the biggest challenges for 360° feedback has been the proliferation of lengthy feedback applications that attempt to do too much[7]. The knock on effect has been a significant time commitment, particularly for those individuals with multiple requests for feedback from different colleagues. For busy people, either they ignore the request for feedback (the insight is lost) or the feedback is rushed and cursory (the insight is inaccurate).

From feedback to insight

Laissez faire process logistics

In one survey[8], 22% of firms found 360º feedback to be of high benefit, 57% of moderate benefit, and 22% of low benefit. What does it take to be a high benefit firm?

A number of factors emerged, but one clear theme was that higher benefit organisations are *"differentiated by a greater level of administrative control, discipline and careful implementation"* in process management. For each step in the 360º feedback process, the *"participant's experience is carefully managed."*

This is attention to the detail of execution including:

- **well positioned communication and briefing of the exercise to provide clarity of ground rules and expectations**
- **control over the nomination process**
- **discipline in tracking activity**
- **well defined accountabilities in the follow through**

On line technology (self registration for participants, automated processes to track and issue reminders, etc.) has reduced the costs of 360º feedback activity. And innovations will continue to open up options for greater efficiency and effectiveness. But there is reason for scepticism about those fully self service systems that claim to "do it all" without any human intervention.

If the objective is to generate high volumes of reports at low cost, full self service systems "work" by pleasing the Finance Director. But if the goal is to create the change that drives performance to delight the CEO, they won't.

A checklist* to ensure **feedback optimises** insight:

	Low	Moderate	High
the objectives of the overall feedback programme are defined clearly and linked to a tangible organisational outcome	1	3	5
the framework underpinning design is aimed at the appropriate level of performance and highly relevant to the different challenges facing participants	1	3	5
the feedback questionnaire targets different questions across the different feedback groups, balancing credible coverage with sensible user completion times	1	3	5
the population providing the feedback is willing and able to invest time and energy in the process	1	3	5
implementation logistics are mapped out as an end to end process to create the right "mood music" at the outset through to follow up to reinforce development	1	3	5

*Track your score as you work through this article. A total score of more than 55 and you should be seeing significant business gains. Between 40 and 54 and it will be useful to revisit your feedback strategy and end to end process to identify the specifics that will make improvements. A score of less than 35, and it may be time to overhaul your current approach and reposition the feedback process for future activity.

From insight to priorities for change

The feedback programme is well positioned with a clear purpose and the specific application designed and implemented thoughtfully. So far so good.

The challenge in the sequence is now ensuring that the insights from the report back of the feedback are translated into meaningful priorities for each participant.

What are the potential hazards to navigate, and how can these risks be minimised?

> " *What is it that makes feedback such a conundrum for givers and receivers?* "
>
> **Doug Stone & Sheila Heen**

Insights are too general

Concrete and personalised questions about specific issues work better than generalised, abstract and impersonal statements.[9] If we are interested in feedback about, for example, strategic thinking, we can ask for ratings on the statement: "He/she is a strategic thinker". This might generate some kind of insight but the feedback might also make it difficult to identify priorities for change.

Instead, variations of the question framed for different groups, along the lines of:

- **"identifies the key opportunities and threats facing our part of the business" for line managers**
- **"provides a valuable sounding board to help me rethink my strategic plans" for peers**
- **"asks powerful questions to help me work through the long-term consequences of my ideas" for team members**
- **"introduces new ideas to stimulate fresh thinking in my business area" for stakeholders**

might prove more useful.

Arguably this approach of reframing the issue through the eyes of different work colleagues runs the risk of conflating strategic thinking with other skills. But in the world of 360° feedback this is unavoidable. Colleagues cannot look into our heads and assess the thought processes and knowledge that aggregate to strategic thinking. But they can however comment on the situations in which strategic thinking has a positive or negative impact on them. And the collated feedback, drawing together the perspectives of the different groups, will provide a more informed view of strategic thinking.

From insight to priorities for change

Insights seem contradictory

Here the hazard is that the signal of the valuable insight is lost in the noise of competing and contradictory messages.

Given the conflicting expectations and demands of different work groups, to some extent this is inevitable. If for most people, working life is a juggling act to manage the dynamics of working relationships - upwards with the manager, sideways with peers, downwards with the team, and outwards with stakeholders - we shouldn't be surprised if the reasons for one group's happiness might sometimes underpin another group's unhappiness. Here 360° feedback is also a snap shot into the organisational reality of power dynamics.

An individual receives feedback from her peers that she is unresponsive to their requests and is overly protective of her team. Feedback from her team members indicate that they feel overwhelmed and want more guidance and support. This is the profile of an individual struggling to manage the art of juggling and accommodate different colleague expectations. Alternatively it is a manager who has inherited a team low in experience and skills, and the individual simply needs time to bring them up to speed. In either scenario, in the short term it seems clear that expectations need to be re-negotiated with her line manager and her peers.

The outcomes of a feedback exercise will often - at least on first sight - seem messy and confusing. But if we avoid the noise of asking every feedback group every question, we can anticipate a clearer signal to help individuals understand which issues and relationships are more or less a priority.

Insights are uncomfortable

It may be that the feedback is accurate, specific and the key messages are clear. But these messages are not emotionally welcome.

Feedback can be a difficult experience because when we hear feedback two basic needs compete. On the one hand, we want to be loved and respected for who we are; no judgement, but an unconditional acceptance of us as individuals. On the other hand, we want to learn more about ourselves. We want to improve because we want to be more successful.

Challenging feedback pulls us in two directions; towards the learning that will help us improve, and away from any threats to our personal identity and the kind of person we think we are.

Some insights are too uncomfortable for us to process[10]. There is something about the feedback that asks too many difficult questions and challenges our sense of who we are. And this triggers negative feelings, typically the emotions of disappointment, embarrassment, shame and regret.

Factor in the reality that this challenging feedback may be inaccurate, and our minds will apply different cognitive strategies to spot an escape route that avoids uncomfortable feelings.

> *Every person must choose how much truth they can stand.*
>
> **Irvin Yalom**

From insight to priorities for change

If the feedback we receive can be **more or less positive**, and **more or less accurate**, we can anticipate four scenarios.

Support to celebrate

This is the accurate feedback from colleagues that identifies what is genuinely working well for us. This is where we are having a positive impact, and one that is appreciated by others. This is the feedback that should be encouraging and energising for the individual.

For modest or highly self critical individuals the risk is that this feedback is down-played[11] as they focus only on the more challenging feedback. But this is the insight that should provide powerful motivation to stop and reflect on strengths and identify opportunities to build on these strengths.

Support to ignore

This is the positive message that is inaccurate with a potential to delude us into complacency. It may be that our colleagues lack the experience or skill to provide discerning feedback. Or we may be basking in the warm glow of the halo effect, shaped by our likeability, recent lucky successes, or the legacy of an outstanding predecessor. In this scenario, it is tempting to hear a positive signal that is misleading.

Most relatively self aware individuals in our experience have the humility to spot this type of feedback. But for some individuals this may be hazardous feedback, concealing the real issues that are key gaps or constraints to their effectiveness.

	Inaccurate	Accurate
Positive	**2** Support to ignore	**1** Support to celebrate
Negative	**4** Challenge to let go	**3** Challenge to accept

From insight to priorities for change

Challenge to accept

This is feedback that is accurate and uncomfortable. This is the feedback that stings. It highlights either a gap in expectations (we are not doing enough of something) or a counter-productive behaviour (we are doing too much of the wrong thing). Options here include:

- *rationalising* away the accuracy of the insight through any number of mental tricks (e.g. the Mandy Rice-Davies tactic of "they would say that wouldn't they" to question the intentions and motivations of our colleagues).

- pointing to *the impact of work context as an explanation* for this awkward feedback. This is the "we're doing the best we can under the circumstances" stratagem. This tactic of course can be valid. Context explains much in a feedback exercise, and any number of strategic, structural and cultural factors can be used to explain why we do not operate in the best of all possible worlds and why the feedback is the way it is. But we fool ourselves and our team if we think the feedback is only about the situation we are in and isn't also highlighting something important about our approach.

- *minimising the implications* of the feedback by pointing to the competing priorities of our role and how we can't do everything. This is the "something has to give" trick, and when push comes to shove, this is not an insight that deserves much attention. This may be true, but if this trick is deployed to duck difficult feedback, it may create longer-term problems.

Challenge to let go

This is the false alarm of inaccurate and challenging feedback. For a variety of reasons, specific insights may be well wide of the mark. Colleagues have misinterpreted our actions, overlooked the impact of context or over-stated an issue, and provided unfair challenge with little genuine insight. Here the "feedback" is less about the individual and more about the feedbacker and the narrative they have created about the person.

This feedback is problematic as it can undermine the credibility of the overall pattern of the feedback. The negative emotions triggered by this feedback can become a significant constraint to responding to the feedback that is accurate. Here the individual should ignore the "insight" and let go of the emotions it has aroused.

> *Responses to threats and unpleasantness are faster, stronger and harder to inhibit than responses to opportunities and pleasures.*

Jonathan Haidt

From insight to priorities for change

## The debrief is poorly facilitated

The evidence is clear; the involvement of a credible and capable facilitator makes an important difference to the process, providing a dynamic that increases the likelihood of a positive outcome. An experienced facilitator can do much, not only in working through the range of emotional responses experienced in receiving feedback, but in ensuring that insights go from "that's interesting" to "that's important".

Significantly, the research[12] indicates what individuals value from the facilitator supporting the debrief. "The best coaches analysed strengths and weaknesses, helped assimilate feedback and made concrete developmental recommendations." Surprisingly perhaps, non-directive coaching seems to be less effective than the approach in which the facilitator shares their own views, takes an active role in interpreting the results, and makes explicit suggestions and practical ideas.

Rod Johnson[13] outlines the Feedback Acceptance Grid to identify the interaction between the individual receiving the feedback and the person facilitating the debrief of the feedback. This is our variation.

On the Y axis, individuals are more or less open to feedback. There are individuals who are receptive to feedback, curious to learn and find out ways of improving. For others, challenging feedback is a threat to their leadership identity and they become defensive when asked to rethink the story they tell themselves[14].

On the X axis, some facilitators have more or less credibility. This isn't simply about the business experience, professional qualifications or interpersonal skills of the facilitator, important though they are. This is credibility as a combination of legitimacy and trust as perceived by the individual.
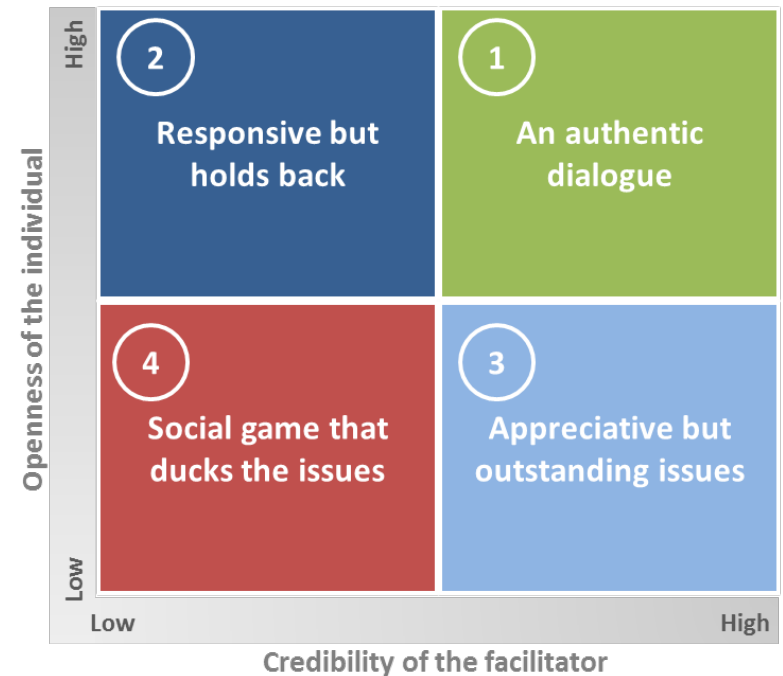
From insight to priorities for change

An authentic dialogue

Where the individual is open minded and the facilitator is viewed with credibility, a mature conversation should open up. It isn't an unquestioning acceptance of the entirety of the feedback, but it is a willingness to explore and understand the key messages. Here feedback is a "problem to be solved" and both the individual and the facilitator engage in working through the "problem" to translate insights into priority actions.

Responsive but holds back

The individual is open minded but there is a question mark about the credibility of the facilitator. Various dynamics may be at work. The facilitator is inexperienced or ill prepared, there are concerns about confidentiality, or the personal chemistry with the coach just doesn't work. Whatever the reason, the conversation is awkward. The individual wants to learn from the feedback, but keeps the facilitator at a distance, and conclusions and priorities are not agreed.

Appreciative but outstanding issues

In this scenario, although the facilitator is viewed positively, respected for their experience and expertise, the individual is on the defensive.

Here there is scope for the "games people play". The individual can "agree" with the feedback (after all, the facilitator is an "expert"), but holds back from a fuller discussion of the implications. Alternatively they "disagree" but intellectualise the issues. In either case, the debrief will not work through the "problem" to identify key priorities to trigger action.

A social game that ducks the issues

This is the debrief that is going nowhere fast. A defensive individual who is sceptical about the facilitator will play a polite social game, following conversational conventions. But it is an artificial discussion that goes through the motions.

In this scenario, any insights that do emerge from the feedback are lost with no conclusions agreed or commitments made.

“ *Clients using 360° feedback expect and want their coach to take a much more active and directive role in interpreting their results and making developmental recommendations to leverage actual behaviour change.* ”

Ken Nowack & Sandra Mashihi

From insight to priorities for change

A checklist to ensure **insights become priorities** :

	Low	Moderate	High
■ **the feedback is played back in grounded language, and clearly pinpoints specific issues**	1	3	5
■ **the context of the dynamics of different working relationships is understood to identify key patterns from what may at first sight seem contradictory or confusing messages**	1	3	5
■ **the individual is open minded and responsive, with a growth mind set, engaged with a credible facilitator**	1	3	5
■ **the facilitator takes an active and problem solving role in the debrief to provide another perspective, share insights and offer practical suggestions, concluding with clear commitments**	1	3	5

" *Honest feedback is so rare that it is often misinterpreted as rudeness.* "

Tim Harford

Turning priorities into actions for development

From the initial noise of the feedback, the signal has emerged to identify key priorities. How do priorities go from positive intentions to practical actions that will drive change?

And what are the potential hazards that can become a barrier to action plans and their implementation?

In our experience there are four high level feedback outcomes, and the priority issues need targeted action planning.

"I'm in a hole"
This is the feedback with considerable challenge that questions the individual's fundamental effectiveness and impact and raises doubt about their credibility. If **"I'm in a hole"**, the issue is usually obvious. Stop digging and get out of the hole. Typically the development agenda is about a major gap to fill or a specific counter-productive behaviour that is a significant barrier to effectiveness.

An uncomfortable experience in the short-term, but well managed with individuals who combine courage and humility, the debrief can lead to a robust turn-around action plan to rebuild working relationships and restore credibility. For other individuals this outcome is difficult and asks too much of them to refocus their leadership priorities and re-establish their working relationships. For highly defensive or fearful individuals, the risk here is that the digging continues and the hole gets bigger.

"I'm just about doing OK but struggling"
There is a significant number of individuals where the feedback indicates they are finding working life difficult. These are the individuals surviving rather than succeeding, and finding it difficult just to keep going. This is operating on the "back foot", caught up in tackling the pressures and priorities of today without the space or time to build for tomorrow.

If **"I'm just about doing OK but struggling"** the priority is often about moving from bad habits to good habits to get on the front foot of working life.

Turning priorities into actions for development

At best action planning is a rethink of first principles to remind individuals of their purpose and focus. It is also the opportunity to revisit skill sets and identify the specifics that need to be addressed to find a route to effectiveness.

At worst, bad habits are hard to eliminate and new habits aren't established, and the individuals continue to struggle, damaging to themselves personally, as well as the development of their team, and for the organisation in the longer-run.

"I'm doing well but failing to flourish"
These are the individuals who are making a positive impact, but no longer enjoying the range of the challenges they face. Sometimes the issue is one of fatigue resulting from the over-load of particular business commitments and pressures. For other individuals, the issue is less fatigue, and more boredom. They have got up to speed in their role, established working relationships with their colleagues, and built a capable team, but are now beginning to coast.

For those in the category of **"I'm doing well but failing to flourish"** there is a need to establish a different set of challenges and expectations to re-engage. For some individuals action planning may therefore be less about personal effectiveness and more about the renegotiation of expectations with their colleagues, and in particular the dynamic with their own team. For others, development planning becomes a conversation about career aspirations and the review of options to consider which new challenges will help revitalise their approach.

"I'm doing exceptionally well and flourishing"
For these individuals the feedback - a clear and unconditional endorsement from colleagues of their impact - can be an encouraging and energising experience. These are the individuals who are highly valued and trusted colleagues, a joy to work with and who take huge enjoyment from their role and interactions with colleagues. At a personal level they are inspiring role models for their colleagues. At an organisational level they are the catalyst for greater organisational productivity, innovation and growth.

If **"I'm doing exceptionally well and flourishing"** the development agenda is to build on established strengths to become extraordinary[15] at the current level, or put in place an action plan to take on a different role in future.

Turning priorities into actions for development

If these priorities are to become actionable, a few general principles apply.

It's not always just about the individual

In action planning there is often a temptation to see the feedback as exclusively about the individual and their personal development. Responsive and motivated individuals are keen to take action. The risk however is a shopping list of next steps which, however satisfying to generate, is impractical given the many other priorities competing for individual attention and time.

The reality is that the priorities emerging from the feedback exercise are also about the context in which the individual operates. This isn't simply the organisational factors (strategic clarity, structural coherence, cultural consistency, enabling processes, etc.) that optimise the likelihood of success. It is about the specific contextual dynamics within an individual's work environment - the challenges of the role, the maturity of different working relationships, the capability and motivation of colleagues - that makes it more or less easy to make a positive impact.

A good starting point then for individuals is to ask:

- what does the organisation need of me right now? What is helping or hindering me from responding to this requirement?
- what do my different colleagues want from me? How are the expectations of my manager, peers, team members and stakeholders shifting?
- are these expectations complementary or contradictory? Can these expectations be managed? Or do I need to renegotiate more realistic requirements with key colleagues?

These questions are not intended to let individuals "off the hook" to avoid any tough messages about their personal skill sets or operating approach. But they provide an important context for action planning to be grounded in the realities that individuals face.

No doubt insightful feedback will have indicated priorities for some kind of personal change. But the change may have to be part of other changes that occur in the workplace, changes for the individual's manager, with peers and stakeholders, as well as for the team and how it will operate in future.

When priorities drive action planning that has business impact, it has implications for others, not just the individual participating in the exercise.

> *If we don't understand the system that produces the feedback, we make the mistake of trying to adjust one component of the system and expect that to solve the whole problem.*

Doug Stone and Sheila Heen

3. Turning priorities into actions for development

Agreed accountabilities to share the results with colleagues

An implementation strategy for 360º feedback that assumes the report back is personal and confidential may be flawed. In our experience, and supported by the research, the expectation should be that a summary of the results will be shared with key colleagues. This of course implies clarity of accountabilities at the outset of any feedback programme.

As Dave Bracken points out[16] "a participant who is not required to share results and action points with some significant party is unlikely to demonstrate behaviour change."

One of the major gains of 360º feedback is that it triggers key conversations. These are the conversations with the line manager to check alignment of expectations and negotiate a better working relationship around shared objectives and priorities. And conversations with team members will link the individual's priorities and development to how the team will operate in future.

This approach also makes it easier to go from feedback to what Marshall Goldsmith describes as *feedforward*[17]. In feedforward the participant selects a key priority from the feedback where change will make a positive difference on others, describes this to them, and asks for suggestions to achieve this change. This is to move from judgements about past impact to practical ways to improve future effectiveness.

Public commitments about key priorities reinforce accountability and trigger action.

> " *Not following up with raters appears a good predictor of decreased effectiveness.* "

Marshall Goldsmith & Howard Morgan

3. Turning priorities into actions for development

From goal setting to habit implementation

Goal setting we are told is the success story of behavioural change. For meaningful change to happen, the good intentions of "do our best to get better" need to be translated into specific and challenging goals. Specific focuses our attention on key priorities; challenging provides the purpose to motivate and persist in the face of setbacks.

It's a good story, but the advocates of goal setting are now having a rethink[18]. As it turns out the acclaimed efficacy of goal setting to achieve improvement may be largely based on artificial studies in the lab with participants given simple tasks, findings that fail to generalise to the complexity, uncertainty and changeability of real life situations.

With the benefit of hindsight, this may be unsurprising. SMART goals, the foundation of most organisations' performance management processes, are not that smart[19].

> " *The goal setting methodologies that we've used for decades just don't lead to employees achieving great things.*

Mark Murphy

Instead of conventional goal setting, there is now a shift towards a more pragmatic approach based on:

- **Implementation intentions**[20] to kick start change and ensure that priority actions are reinforced by key triggers. This is to reframe our goals as "if then" statements, where the "if" is the cue of a specific time or situation that triggers the "then" of an action, an action that if repeated becomes a new habit.

- **Small wins**[21] to replace "Big Hairy Audacious Goals". Here the emphasis is on translating priorities into immediate actions with a high likelihood of success. Once a small win has been achieved, it builds momentum for another small win. The next problem becomes more manageable for larger wins over time.

- **Tiny habits**[22] and breaking priorities down into small and manageable chunks of activity where the principle of minimum viable effort works to advantage. If the *"chains of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken"*, tiny habits require less motivation and make change easier and speed up the process.

This may not be the inspirational stuff of "dream the impossible". Rather it is an evidence based approach that works and overcomes the classic problems of goal setting to put in place specific and practical next steps that trigger us to move in the right direction.

As Scott Adams points out: *"You should have a system instead of a goal."* We improve the chances of priorities become the actions that leads to change if we implement a system rather than rely on ambitious goal setting.

Turning priorities into actions for development

In this grid, adapted from Marshall Goldsmith[23], one axis indicates that priorities can be based on the positives and about good habits, or the negatives and about bad habits. The other axis reflects the extent to which the priority is the focus for significant personal change. Some issues require a major investment in development; others much less so.

Building new habits
"If I'm a 3, what do I need to do to become a 7?"
This is the kind of significant change that requires a rethink of our personal identity to identify a new "me" and to put in place a different pattern of behaviours based on new habits.

This is, for example, the change in which a highly hands on and directive manager needs not only to move to a new operating style but to acquire new skills in delegation and coaching. At first this is hard. The manager finds himself thinking "You idiot" every time a team member makes a mistake. But over time, new behaviours are implemented and the consequences are positive, and they become habitual patterns.

Eliminating bad habits
"If I'm a 1, what do I need to do to at least move to a 5?"
This is the type of change that is made with some reluctance; after all, some of these habits have been served the individual well in the past. It is also the change that comes with some difficulty; these habits may be an integral part of the individuals' identity.

This, for example, is the individual with a quick wit, a wit that has been deployed well in meetings to win arguments with colleagues. Over time however the quick wit becomes a sour sarcasm that alienates colleagues and is now counter-productive, and a bad habit to eliminate.

Turning priorities into actions for development

Preserving good habits

"If I'm a 7, how can I keep it a 7?"

This is the arena in which we maintain and reinforce established positives that are working well for us. The focus here is less: what do we need to acquire, and more what do we need to do to ensure we don't lose it?

An individual, adept in recognising the contribution of others and praising their achievements, is well regarded for their engaging and motivational management approach. And they are promoted. After a few months in their new role, the individual realises that this behavioural pattern is less evident. Peer rivalry at this level is not supportive of the individual's generous spirit. But the individual determines to hold on to this approach and ensures the habit is restored and maintained.

Making peace to minimise the downside

"If I'm a 1, can I live with that fact, or at least ensure the 1 of my inputs doesn't become a 1 of my outcomes?"

This is not the strategy of "eyes wide closed" to the fatal flaw that is counter-productive and having negative consequences for the individual as well as their colleagues. But it is the acceptance that some our vices will never become virtues and the most effective strategy is to minimise their impact.

This is the self awareness that recognises, for example, the warning signs of stress levels bringing out a natural tendency to impatience, with the savvy to manage the situation (typically avoid) when it will impact negatively on others.

In checklist to ensure, **priorities become realistic and realisable actions** with a better likelihood of the change that will result in improvement when individuals:

	Low	Moderate	High

.

■ **look at the emerging priorities within the context in which they operate to differentiate what specifically is an issue for them, and a focus of their personal development, and which priorities are an issue for others**

1	3	5

■ **share the results with their colleagues, and in particular initiate conversations with their line manager and team members. Here insights from the feedback become the priorities that feedforward into meaningful action**

1	3	5

■ **approach action planning in a practical way that owes less to the setting of stretch goals and more about establishing a system of small wins based on implementation intentions and tiny habits**

1	3	5

Development that drives change for impact

Feedback becomes insight, and from this insight priorities emerge to form a robust action plan.

The challenge then is the implementation of this plan in the busy-ness of organisational life to ensure development happens, that this development has a positive outcome, with gains in effectiveness that have a business impact.

What are the potential hazards that can block the move from action planning to change that drives improvement; and how can these hazards be mitigated?
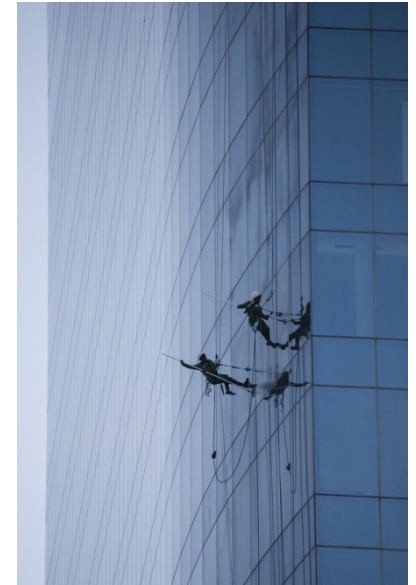
Everyone has a plan 'till they get punched in the mouth.

Mike Tyson

Am I willing at this time, to make the investment required to make a positive difference on this topic?

Marshall Goldsmith

Development that drives change for impact

Moving from ideological dogmatism to personalised interventions

The market place for development and change management is a noisy one in which thousands of success formulae and methodologies clamour for attention. Within this racket four fundamental positions can be identified[24].

Historically, **"fill in the missing gaps"** has been the dominant philosophy. Here we look at what is missing, typically from a competency listing, and establish actions to fill in any gaps. And if we keep filling in enough "bricks in the success wall" we build a portfolio of capability that allows us to excel and keep progressing.

Elsewhere in the market place of development solutions, vendors claim that we become more effective, not so much by acquiring new good stuff but by "avoiding the bad stuff". This is the position that excellence lies not so much in the positives but in the **elimination of the negatives** that act as a barrier to our effectiveness. As Merrill Chapman paraphrased: *"The race goes not to the strong, nor swift, nor more intelligent, but to the less stupid."* This is to recognise that we can be our own worst enemy, behaving in counter-productive ways that are not only bad for ourselves, but have a negative impact on our colleagues.

In another market stall that has attracted much attention of late, **strengths based development** argued that this thinking is wrong-headed. We don't achieve excellence by focusing on what is missing or counter-productive, but by building on our existing strengths. Because our strengths emerge from deep seated dispositions that are not easily changeable, it is argued that the only sensible strategy goes with the flow of our nature and works on optimising the talents we already possess.

Just as strengths based development was establishing itself as the dominant paradigm for development, practitioners were next informed that our strengths may be our greatest hazard. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, for example, suggests that our strengths, far from being our greatest opportunity, can act as derailers to weaken us[25]. Here it is worth noting that the advocates of derailment also cherry pick their research, ignoring the evidence when hypothesised derailers in fact turn out to be predictors of success[26].

From another corner in the market place, **versatility** made a pitch for attention. Here the concept of the "Golden Mean" applies: not too much, not too little, but the right amount, deployed in the right way at the right time is the basis of effectiveness. Excellence lies in balance to avoid the excesses of both virtues and vices to operate with moderation in context.

If some individuals manage with the "brakes" on (avoiding the challenges that might expose their shortcomings) and others keep revving the engine (over doing their strengths), versatile managers know how to read the road to drive at the optimal speed.

Development that drives change for impact

These different positions do of course represent important truths.

- Gaps do matter, and key gaps will be a limiting factor
- Counter-productive behaviours are damaging and a barrier to effectiveness
- Strengths, well deployed, are an important dynamic of excellence
- Versatility provides flexibility to adapt to changing demands

But each position fails to do justice to the "whole truth"[27].

- Some gaps don't matter all that much, or their impact can be mitigated by adopting any number of compensatory tactics
- Some counter-productive behaviours may in fact incorporate a virtue, and eliminating the behaviour may undermine overall effectiveness
- Strengths, over-deployed, can be a risk factor and create a lopsided approach that lacks adaptability
- Versatility may be an ideal, but places significant demands on our cognitive and emotional resources

The problem is that the talent management industry largely operates on the basis of "simplify then exaggerate". Stake out an extreme position as a solution to every problem, then package it into a methodology that can be implemented easily. As Jeffrey Pfeffer[28] has pointed out, when the *"advice given to leaders is too often based on the ideal world, not reality"*, the outcomes will be predictable.

Behavioural change is nuanced and messy, and as Carl Jung wisely noted, *"the shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe that suits all cases."*

Any adherence to a dogmatic position can only create problems. A wiser strategy is to abandon any ideology for development, accepting that different approaches will be needed for different individuals. Development happens when:

It is **highly personalised** to put in place the interventions of immediate and specific relevance to the individual given their particular circumstances in the context in which they operate. This is agreeing a customised portfolio of development activity, drawing on the optimal mix of on the job experience and work assignments, peer based learning through networking, coaching and networking, and self-based learning for the individual.

It is tied to **real life challenges** of organisational relevance. The 70-20-10% principle of development[29] might be overstated, but it is a useful reminder of the importance of experience in building the capability and character to operate effectively. Experience maps - a clear blue print of the critical experiences needed for progression - are a practical tool to guide development planning.

It is part of an organisation's **way of doing business**. When there is a mismatch between any formal or informal development processes and how, for example, key resourcing decisions are made, we shouldn't anticipate many positive outcomes from development. This is also about the level of senior management commitment to development activity. Senior managers are shaping a culture that is responsive to learning and actively involved in the development of the next generation of professionals and managers.

Development that drives change for impact

Ensuring accountabilities for people development
It was Peter Drucker who originally said: *"the fastest way to develop yourself is to develop others."* This is wise advice, and a variation was popularised by Richard Feynman in his "teach to learn" technique[30].

Personal development happens when we are required to develop others. This works at a number of levels:

Firstly it requires individuals to check what they know and don't know and revisit their own level of experience and expertise. This rethink also **forces a shift from "me" to "we"**. When the issue is less: "what do I need to do to become more successful", and more: "what do I need to do to help others succeed?" managers develop their own skill sets.

Secondly, the need to develop others builds **key skills that are transferable** to a range of different situations. If developing others requires individuals to be more effective in, say, authentic conversations, this skill set also becomes an important asset in peer interactions, customer relationships and supplier negotiations.

Thirdly, the development of colleagues opens up time and space for the individual to get **from the back foot on to the front foot**. When team members step up to take on greater responsibility and operate with less supervision, the manager moves from solving today's problems to identifying tomorrow's opportunities.

In principle we know the benefits of proactive development. In practice, organisations often struggle to make it a priority and realise the gains. If Korn Ferry's analysis of leadership capability[31] is accurate, and that "developing talent" is the 66th in the listing of 67 competencies, it is unsurprising that surveys consistently indicate low levels of bench strength in the talent pipeline.

For coaches helping individuals work through an action plan of personal development, a shift from "me" and what I need to do to one of "we" and what I need to do to develop the team, is the beginnings of important change.

For organisations this is about clarifying roles and responsibilities to ensure people development is recognised and rewarded as a critical management activity.

> 66 *The lesson is this: the less we focus on ourselves the more we benefit. It's an interesting equation: Less me. More them. Equals success.*

Marshall Goldsmith

Development that drives change for impact

Maintaining momentum through follow up and the evaluation of impact

In the busy-ness of organisational life, new priorities emerge competing for our attention and there is no limit to the distractions that can take us off track in our efforts at change and improvement.

In our experience, individuals become more effective through the implementation of a disciplined system, incorporating:

Check-lists and score cards to review progress, identify any set-backs and maintain focus. Marshall Goldsmith[32] makes the important point that sometimes in our sophistication we forget how a simple structure ensures we remember what we need to remember. A short check-list based on a few priority issues and trigger actions, reviewed on a regular basis, is a useful discipline in maintaining momentum. This is development as a daily, weekly and monthly ritual.

Regular reviews with key colleagues and stakeholders. We can of course over-play the request for feedback from others. Our colleagues have their own pressures and priorities. But well-timed, the question: "what can I do to make your life easier and better?" continues the conversation and helps track progress.

Changes in the working environment. *"There's just one way to radically change your behaviour; radically change your environment."* If implementation intentions, small wins and tiny habits are effective in kick-starting change, then the same principle applies in sustaining our efforts at change. Rather than relying on will power and motivation to achieve change, we use triggers in our environment to "nudge" us[33] in the right direction. If, for example, we are looking to improve our meeting management, putting an

egg timer on the table will remind us of the importance of respecting others' time.

A support system. Individuals can go it alone, but this is to make change harder than it needs to be. Individuals who translate their action plans into improved effectiveness involve others - their colleagues, trusted advisers - in the process. Our colleagues not only provide encouragement to motivate, but challenge when we back-slide.

Acceptance when the change is not happening to refocus. Sometimes the attempt to change just doesn't work out for us. This isn't through any lack of effort or the deployment of savvy tactics; it's just the way it sometimes is.

If we see our efforts at improvement as small experiments, where we try something different and evaluate its impact, some of these experiments will work, and some won't. The objective is to keep experimenting, abandoning the unsuccessful experiments until we find an approach that is effective and has a positive impact.

For facilitators working with individuals as part of a feedback and development programme, follow through is critical. Any combination of reminder emails, telephone calls and coaching sessions provides an opportunity to reinforce key messages and check that commitments are being kept.

Development that drives change for impact

A checklist to ensure **action plans achieve results and have impact**:

	Low	Moderate	High
development applies a customised strategy of mix and match for each individual to establish the interventions relevant to the priority issues they face within the context in which they operate	1	3	5
participants ensure a key activity for their personal development is the development of their team	1	3	5
systems are established to reinforce ongoing development, track progress and evaluate outcomes	1	3	5

People don't get better without follow up. So let's get better at following up with our people.

Marshall Goldsmith

Conclusions

Feedback owes its origins to engineering. In a physical system, there is a clear link between cause and effect in which feedback about the effect triggers change in the cause. In 360° feedback processes, typically the link between feedback and impact is fuzzy. And this fuzziness is a constraint to the changes - personal and contextual - that improve outcomes.

Much of 360° feedback operates around the assumption that feedback makes explicit the gap between how we see ourselves and how others see us. This new level of self-awareness, the theory suggests, is an important motivator to close the gap between any differences, and trigger a process of personal development.

The reality is much more nuanced. The transition from feedback to impact is a complex sequence that requires thoughtfulness in design and implementation, sensitivity in debrief and action planning and discipline to maintain momentum.

If organisations want to optimise the impact of their feedback programmes, a shift in mind set is needed to rethink:

- **the content and design of feedback applications**

- **the end to end process from positioning to follow up and evaluation**

- **the guidance they provide participants for personal development as well as the infrastructure required to support action planning**

Enhancing the effectiveness of feedback depends on a complex interplay of intrapsychic, interpersonal and organisational factors.

Ken Nowack

Did it work for the CEO?

A 360° feedback process was finally agreed and implemented with the senior team. The CEO looks around the group before she begins the conversation to summarise the key trends that have emerged from the analysis of the results. It will be a useful session to identify the strengths within the team, as well as some of the gaps and risks that have emerged. But before she shares the data she remembers the question first raised by the Operations Director: "will it work?" Had it?

For some in the team she is confident that it did "work". Surprisingly it had been the Operations Director who had been the first to share his results with her. Although he was surprised by the level of peer challenge, he was encouraged by the positive endorsement from his own team. Some peer relationships needed attention, but the CEO knew he recognised what he had to do, and he would do it.

The feedback had identified a major issue with the team of her Marketing Director. Caught up in a series of projects last year she had neglected the development of the team, and it was clear she had to allocate more time to bringing some new team members up to speed, as well as dealing with one individual who was coasting. The feedback had been a bit of a "wake up call" about her leadership priorities, and she was already working with one of the OD coaches to put in new processes with her team.

She glanced at the IT Director. She had expected challenge, but she was surprised by how tough the feedback was for him. He hadn't discussed the exercise personally with her, and she knew he hadn't given his team a heads up in any debrief. The feedback had reinforced a well known outcome: a lack of pace and urgency to deliver on an ambitious change programme.

The exercise should have been an opportunity to explore the underlying reasons, but she suspected he was still finding it difficult to process the feedback. This would need time and follow up.

The Head of Legal and Risk she knew was uncomfortable with the results. The feedback had highlighted an aggressive leadership style that others found intimidating, her own team as well as some of her key stakeholders. That had surprised the CEO, but on reflection, there were a few warning signs that she should have picked up earlier. The feedback had identified a leadership problem that was having significant business consequences. Another tough session to be scheduled in the diary.

Finally she looked at the Finance Director. Typically reserved in these kind of sessions he seemed to project more confidence today. His feedback had been extremely positive from his peers, his team and stakeholders. Not only was he making a significant business impact, but the feedback highlighted an engaging and responsive colleague who was making the organisation a happier place. The CEO was delighted. She knew the Finance Director had worked hard over the last year to build relationships (not something that came naturally to him), and it was encouraging to see the positive impact it was having on his colleagues and the wider team.

Did the 360 feedback exercise work? It was probably too early to call, and she would review the outcomes again in 12 months' time. In the meantime, however, there was an opportunity for the team, as individuals and collectively, to turn the insights from the process into practical actions with major organisational benefit.

Notes

1. Adapt, Tim Harford

2. Smither, J., London, M., & Reilly, R. (2005). Does performance improve following multisource feedback? A theoretical model, meta-analysis and review of empirical findings. Personnel Psychology, 5; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996, "The effects of feedback interventions on performance" Psychological Bulletin, 119 ; Pfau, B. & Kay I. (2002). Does 360 degree feedback negatively affect company performance? HR Magazine,47

3. Useful overviews: Kenneth Nowack & Sandra Mashihi, 2012, "Evidence-based answers to 15 questions about leveraging 360-degree feedback", Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, Vol. 64; David W. Bracken & Dale S. Rose, 2011, "When Does 360-Degree Feedback Create Behavior Change? And How Would We Know It When It Does?" J Bus Psychol 26; Smither, J. W., London, M., & Reilly, R. R. 2005, Does performance improve following multisource feedback? A theoretical model, meta-analysis and review of empirical findings, Personnel Psychology, 58

4. Thanks For The Feedback, Doug Stone & Jane Heen

5. Increasingly feedback systems to support performance management are integrating outcomes with tasks and behaviours

6. Psychometrician Jum C. Nunnally provides a simple definition that many assessment firms neglect: "an application is valid if it achieves its intended purpose"

7. A group of 100 senior managers is taking part in a 360 feedback programme. Each participant nominates 9 colleagues to provide feedback. Each respondent needs 20 minutes to provide the feedback. The programme therefore requires a total of 42 person days. If the feedback questionnaire is adapted and shortened for the different feedback groups to take only 10 minutes completion time, the total time is now 21 days.

8. E Rogers, Improving the Payoff From 360 degree Feedback,, Human Resource Planning

9. Effective sports coaching for example does not rely on generalised exhortations or vague observations of performance. It drills into the specifics of process and technique that provides concrete advice for future improvement.

10. Without over playing neuroscience - now the new gold rush among the charlatans - negative feedback is perceived as a threat by the amygdala, triggering the fight or flight response.

11. As well as personality, expertise plays its part in how individuals respond to feedback. Novices seem to benefit from positive feedback, whereas experts tend to seek out negative feedback; http://www.progressfocused.com/2016/08/when-is-positive-feedback-more.html The much acclaimed positivity ratio was abandoned following a revisit of the research; https://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/jan/19/mathematics-of-happiness-debunked-nick-brown

12. Robert Hooijberg and Nancy Lane, 2009, Using Multisource Feedback Coaching Effectively in Executive Education, Academy of Management Learning & Education Vol. 8

13. http://info.growingyourleaders.com/blog/how-to-improve-employee-feedback-effectiveness

14. The issues of course are more complex than this. "Leaders who received unfavourable feedback initially had negative reactions, but six months later they had created significantly more improvement goals than other leaders." Smither, J.M., London, M., Flautt, R., Vargas, Y, & Kucine, I. 2003, "Can working with an executive coach improve multisource feedback ratings over time?", Personnel Psychology

15. J Zenger & J Folkman, The Extraordinary Leader; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHs_v6WaKgM

16. Dave Bracken, "360 Feedback From Another Angle", Human Resource Management; http://quarterofeight.com/dwbracken/Website/angle.pdf

Notes

17. Marshall Goldsmith, Leadership Is a Contact Sport: The "Follow-up Factor" in Management Development http://www.strategy-business.com/article/04307?gko=a260c

18. Why Goal Setting Doesn't Work; https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201407/why-goal-setting-doesnt-work; Why Setting Goals Could Wreck Your Life; http://www.fastcompany.com/3002763/why-setting-goals-could-wreck-your-life;   Goals Gone Wild; http://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/09-083.pd

19. fhttp://www.leadershipiq.com/blogs/leadershipiq/35353793-are-smart-goals-dumb

20. Implementation Intentions Facilitate Action Control; https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/dont-delay/201001/implementation-intentions-facilitate-action-control

21. Teresa Amabile and Steve Kramer, 2011, "Small Wins and Feeling Good", Harvard Business Review; https://hbr.org/2011/05/small-wins-and-feeling-good

22. https://dougtoft.net/2015/06/07/designing-behavior-change-an-introduction-to-the-work-of-bj-fogg/

23. Marshall Goldsmith, "Triggers"

24. Acceleration; http://www.amazureconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Acceleration-LeadershipDevelopment.pdf

25. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016, "Strengths-Based Coaching Can Actually Weaken You", HBR; https://hbr.org/2016/01/strengths-based-coaching-can-actually-weaken-you

26. P.D. Harms, Seth M. Spain & Sean T. Hannah, 2011, Leader development and the dark side of personality, The Leadership Quarterly; http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1085&context=managementfacpub

27. To add to the mix, Charlie Munger points to the Lollapalooza Effect of complex and non linear interactive effects. "Extreme success is likely to be caused by some combination of the following factors: a) Extreme maximization or minimization of one or two variables; b) Adding success factors so that a bigger combination drives success, often in a nonlinear fashion; c) an extreme of good performance over many factors." Leadership theory has largely failed to address these interactions. See also The Weakest Link In The Chain; https://www.farnamstreetblog.com/2016/08/mental-model-multiplicative-systems/

28. Jeffrey Pfeffer: Why the Leadership Industry Has Failed; https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/jeffrey-pfeffer-why-leadership-industry-has-failed Also, http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/leadership/why-leadership-development-programs-fail

29. Identifying the evidence for the 70-20-10 principle; https://www.td.org/Publications/Blogs/Science-of-Learning-Blog/2014/07/70-20-10-Where-Is-the-Evidence. One analysis suggests that 52:27:21 is more strongly associated with high quality development; https://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/global-leadership-forecast-2014-2015_tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf

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31. http://handfieldjones.com/talent-management-skills-ranked-as-weakest-competencies-in-global-leaders/

32. Marshall Goldsmith, How a Simple Checklist Can Help You Get Way More Done; http://www.inc.com/linkedin/marshall-goldsmith/1-most-dysfunctional-belief-successful-people-marshall-goldsmith.html

33. http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2013/september-13/small-nudge-big-impact.html