

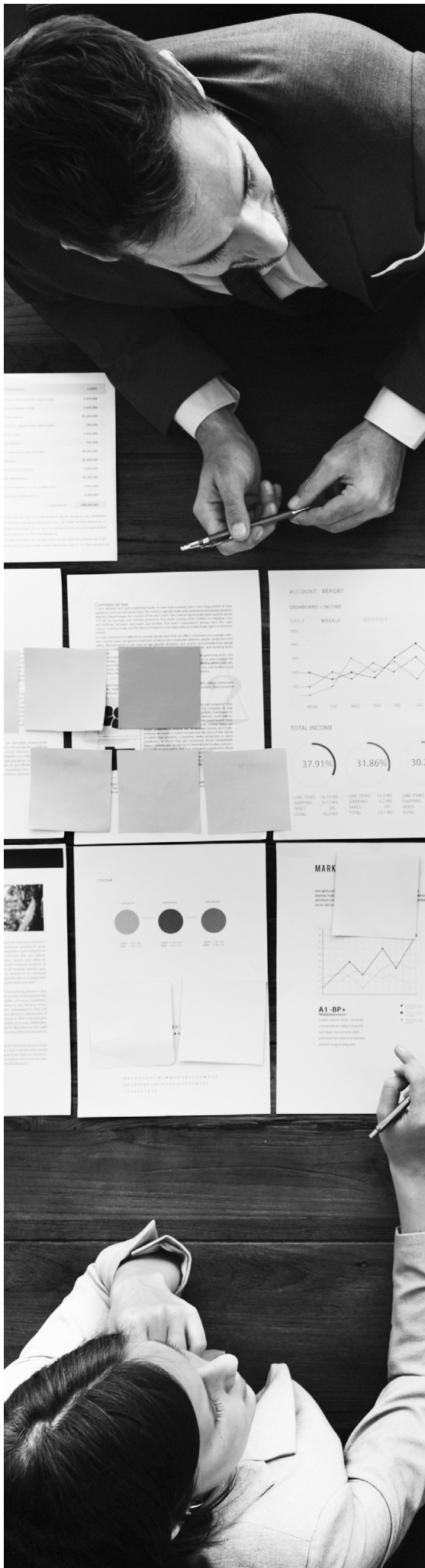
360° FEEDBACK

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LE MÉDIA DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES

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HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT 360° FEEDBACK IN A COMPANY?



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First and foremost, it is important to highlight that **360° feedback evaluates a person's performance from both an individual and a collective perspective.** It gathers perceptions from a group of people who work with the feedback recipient, at a given time and in a given context. It is more than just a personal development tool as it can also help to promote change by outlining and communicating expected behaviors. Which means that 360° feedback can be regarded as a vehicle for **the cultural transformation of a company.** When individual data is consolidated, 360° feedback can be used as a strategic HR tool for managing competencies, including, but not limited to, those relating to management and leadership. In fact, more and more companies are using 360° feedback to develop the competencies of their specialists or project managers, for example.



DEFINITION OF 360° FEEDBACK IN A COMPANY

Historically, this approach was used for managers, especially senior management. **Today, 360° feedback is used at different levels of the organization and acts as a driving force for change.** It enables all stakeholders to better understand their professional ecosystem and make their interactions more effective.

A FORMAT THAT SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The recipient self-evaluates the competencies required for their role or future development, such as managerial skills, resilience, ability to remain focused on priorities or to learn quickly from their mistakes.

The health crisis has forced companies to move towards hybrid management, leading to new HR challenges and the need to strengthen certain specific competencies, such as giving meaning, ensuring responsive and friendly management, and paying attention to consistency and the work-life balance. For example, which skills foster closeness and a sense of belonging, even when employees work remotely?

The reviewers, who are chosen by the recipient and usually then approved by their manager and/or HR, complete the same questionnaire.

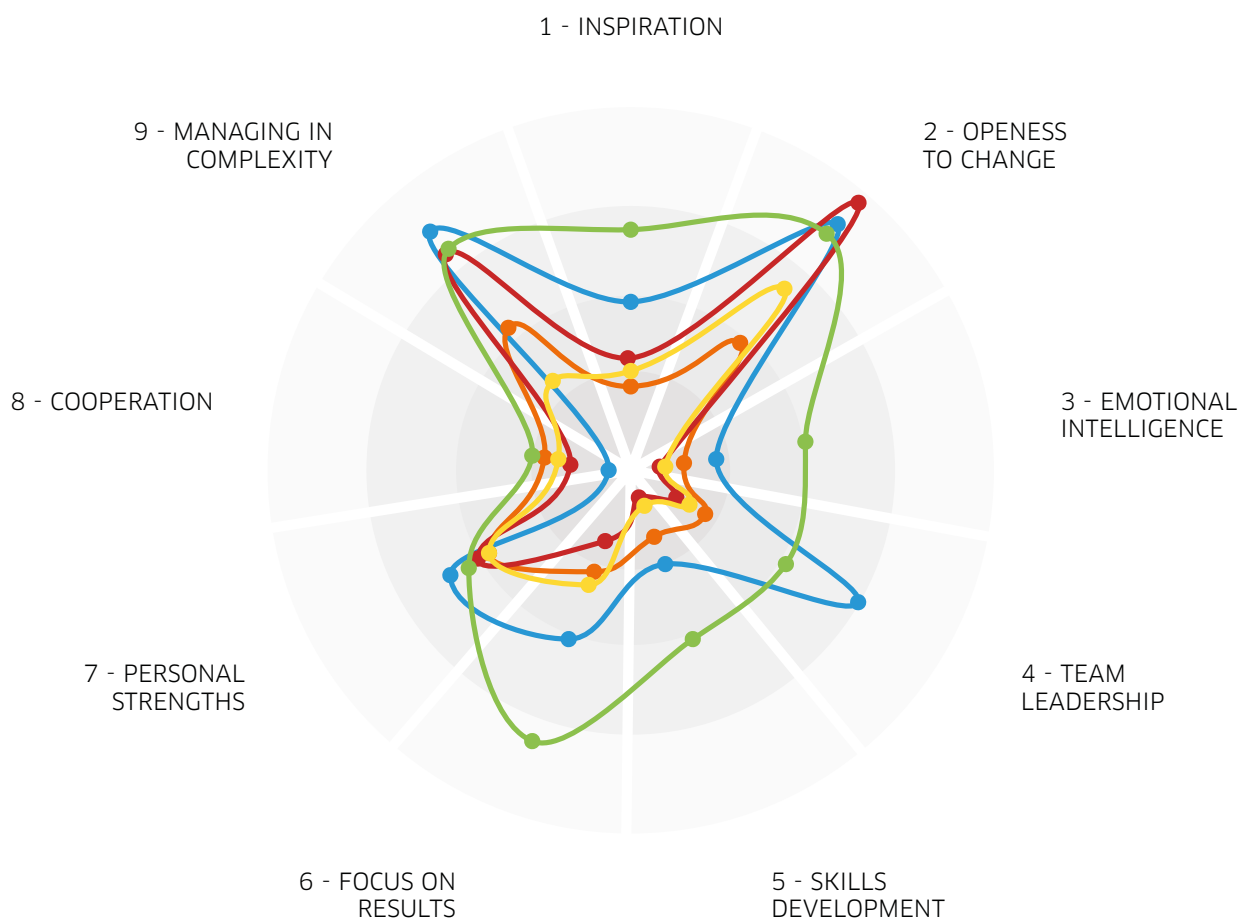
The results are then collated into a single report. It is good practice to ensure that only the recipient can access the results, as well as the person who is responsible for providing the results of the feedback. The feedback phase provides an opportunity to discuss these results, help the recipient to recognize their strengths and identify competency areas that still need to be worked on

360° feedback assesses the skills that are needed today and above all those of tomorrow, exploring the issue of employability by suggesting ways to promote professional development.



360° FEEDBACK IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL.

Experience has shown that 360° feedback is less useful when used as a performance **appraisal tool** as the results are often artificially “inflated”, especially when used to determine fixed or variable remuneration.



🔄 Self-assessment 📌 Manager 👤 Peers 🗨️ Direct reports 🤝 Partners

A VEHICLE FOR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The 360° method turns feedback into a fully-fledged management and talent management tool. It cuts across both individuals' professional development and successful team building. Some companies use the tool to manage mobility to key positions within the organization.

Implementing 360° feedback is all about teaching employees that knowing their strengths and the areas that they need to work on will improve their working experience. It will also encourage them to be conscious of their role within the organization and their impact in the broader sense. **By helping them to move beyond a narrow vision of their career path, 360° feedback reminds them of the meaning of their tasks and the value of their contribution.**

360° feedback is also a lever for commitment. The reviewers' feedback can help the recipient become more aware of their contribution to the company as well as the impact that their behavior, both positive and negative, has on their professional ecosystem. **This is important because employee commitment is essential for the success of any business transformation plan.** Understanding how they contribute to the company's overall plan and to achieving collective objectives "automatically" strengthens each employee's commitment.



HOW HR BENEFITS FROM 360° FEEDBACK

For teams in human resources departments, analyzing the 360° feedback **can reveal individual and collective issues relating to skills already mastered and those that need to be developed further.** Whether in terms of purpose, expectations, future aspirations or the potential to be promoted to coveted roles, the 360° feedback results highlight motivational levers as well as any potential for disillusionment and disengagement.

360° appraisals credibly reinforce the feedback culture as they are based on the opinions of a number of people who interact with the employee. It therefore helps smooth out any friction and tensions between manager and employee or between colleagues.



CARRIED OUT IN WAVES, 360° FEEDBACK MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO EVALUATE THE STATE OF HUMAN CAPITAL AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT.

It provides an opportunity to assess the relevance and effectiveness of HR programs: which ones are successful and which should be continued, training needs or even whether it is necessary to explore new avenues. Consolidated analysis of data from a wave of 360° appraisals provides valuable HR management insights that can benefit the talent development strategy.

HOW TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT 360° FEEDBACK?

CREATING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

360° feedback requires an appropriate questionnaire! The questionnaire must be based on the company's competencies framework (if this exists) and reflect its strategic objectives. Above all, the 360° feedback must serve the business. Depending on the context, in particular, the budget, this could be an existing questionnaire or a questionnaire tailored to reflect the reality and objectives of the company as accurately as possible. Two questions need to be asked when constructing the questionnaire: what challenges does the company face (economic, cultural, social, technological, etc.) and what skills does the target population (senior executives, managers, experts, etc.) need to have in order to meet these challenges? Writing the questionnaire is an art in itself as it needs to reflect expected behaviors while also "speaking" the company's language. **A questionnaire that is insufficiently robust (badly phrased questions, too vague, not aligned with the project objectives, etc.) will make it impossible to draw any relevant conclusions.**



What topics are explored in the questionnaire? Most 360° appraisals focus on "soft skills", i.e. behavioral skills that have been particularly affected by the health crisis and remote working. Shared meaning, collaboration, openness to change and to other people, or communicating clear objectives and guidelines, are some of the skills that are in particular demand.

It is also useful to ask about the other skills that will make a real difference to a manager, specialist or senior executive, depending on the objective of the questionnaire. For example, in the case of a specialist, their ability to expand and disseminate knowledge within the organization. Finally, the questionnaire should also take into account the company environment and its issues. Are there behavioral competencies that are specific to certain professions: appetite for innovation, aesthetic sensitivity, etc.?



SOME EXAMPLES OF ADAPTING 360° QUESTIONNAIRES

- **For a leading global gaming company**

This company wanted to ensure that senior executives and managers would be able to anticipate market trends and monitor them on a regular basis. Qualintra therefore devised the following “Entertainment is a serious matter” behavior for them. The challenge was to adapt the 360° feedback questionnaire to reflect the company’s economic situation.

- **For a company specializing in beauty products and global cosmetics**

As part of a 360° feedback program for all operational managers and support staff, the company wanted to raise awareness of the importance of understanding the world of beauty. Qualintra wrote a set of behaviors around “Demonstrate a keen sense of beauty”.

- **For a digital transformation consultancy**

In this company’s jargon, entrusting a mission or project to an employee is called “placing an order”. Therefore, the behavior was defined as follows: “Ensure that the order placement is clearly understood”.

These behaviors should adopt the language of the company using 360° feedback to reflect its reality. They cannot just use the same wording as other companies. This illustrates how Qualintra adapts, develops and deploys 360° feedback to create the questionnaire.

CHOOSING THE REVIEWERS

The choice of respondents is critical because **the range of respondents must ensure relevant feedback for the recipient**. The people contacted are generally the respondent's N+1, staff, partners, colleagues and peers, service providers, customers. These individuals must work with the recipient on a regular basis. To ensure that the appraisal is objective and useful, the selection of respondents must avoid

declared supporters and opponents. A bad choice of reviewers can also jeopardize the project if the results are too noncommittal or too critical.

INTRODUCING THE PROJECT

All stakeholders should be briefed before they start the 360° feedback. The project manager or initiator (who can also be the recipient) encourages clear and concise communication with an emphasis on objectivity and process. **The project should be presented as part of a commitment to continuous improvement rather than as part of disciplinary action or insisting that staff comply with a set of ethics.**

It is also useful to highlight each participant's development potential. Communication is key for a successful 360° project for all the participants and their ecosystem. It is therefore essential to get all employees "on board".



THE 360° FEEDBACK PROCESS

As stated earlier, the recipient completes the questionnaire. The same questionnaire is also sent to the people who are selected as reviewers. The process must incorporate a guaranteed response rate by using a participant reminder system so that the individual report provides relevant data. This is part of the role of the service providers whose input is sought for these projects.

ANALYZING THE RESULTS

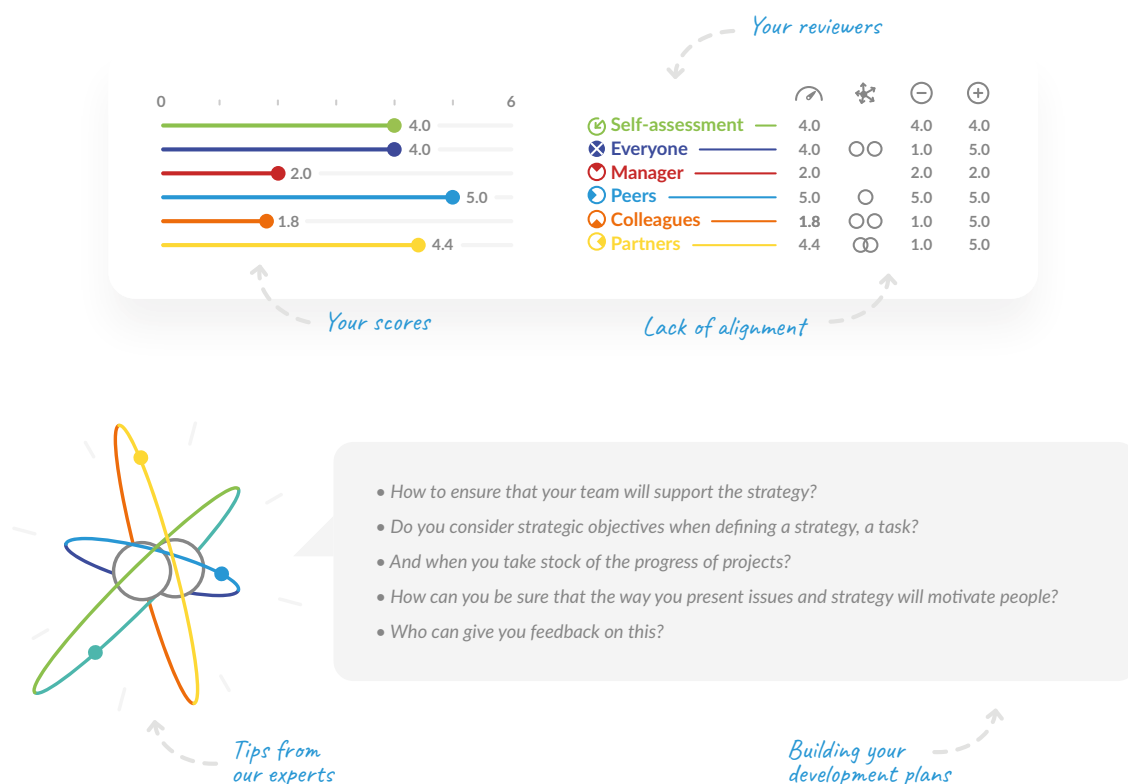
The individual report presents the results of the questions in a quantitative (frequency or accreditation scale) and qualitative format based on the participants' answers to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Some comments may keep turning up in the answers. This makes it easier to interpret the

strengths and competencies that need to be developed. **The recipient must read the results before the feedback session to avoid going through the report during the session, which is intended to focus on strengths and areas in need of improvement.**

THE QUALINTRIA PLATFORM ENCOURAGES MORE DEMOCRATIC 360° FEEDBACK

Qualintra has developed a digital platform that lets recipients see their results in two formats: a PDF summary report and an interactive dynamic platform that allows them to view their detailed results in the order and at the pace that suits them. This platform was developed to facilitate deployment of the 360° tool within organizations. In fact, for budgetary reasons, this appraisal method is often just used for senior executives. Qualintra is convinced that this is a powerful tool, both for developing managers and skills, and therefore it has attempted to make it more widely available and anchor it

more deeply within companies. The Qualintra platform makes it possible to dispense with the expertise of an external coach by offering training for internal HR teams to help recipients analyze their reports, as well as offering many other benefits. On the platform, the recipient can access recommendations for action and coaching questions so that they can begin thinking about the design of their development plan.



FEEDBACK

The feedback phase is indispensable for successful 360° appraisal. It is conducted as a coaching session during which the (external or internal) coach discusses the results with the recipient, helps them to understand the results and in particular to identify their strengths and areas in need of development. The feedback recipient then draws up an individual development plan during the meeting. The feedback phase ends the 360° feedback process and reinforces its message. Nevertheless, it is very important that 360° appraisals result in an individual development plan, including actions to improve any

skill gaps identified. Experience has shown that it is very difficult to create a completely relevant development plan “off the top of one’s head” during the results feedback session. The coach and the HR partner can help the recipient to finalize it at a separate meeting after the debriefing session. We recommend arranging for the recipient and their manager to meet in order to share the lessons learned from the 360° feedback and the development plan, and to ensure that the n+1 will subsequently fulfil the role of “people developer” with the feedback recipient. The development plan needs to be monitored regularly to ensure that the actions are carried out.



Example of a Qualintra 360° feedback process

After the individual feedback phase, if the client so wishes, Qualintra will organize a three-way meeting with the coach, the recipient, and their manager. This will ensure that the development plan is shared and that both participants can discuss the results, without the recipient having to disclose the entire report.

FEEDBACK OF INDIVIDUAL RESULTS IN GROUPS

Companies that do not have a budget for individual feedback, or those with a large number of employees, can organize collective feedback in the form of co-development workshops.

Recipients receive their report and read through it beforehand. Then, during the seminar, in sub-groups of two to three people, they discuss and work with a coach to flesh out and create their development plan.

The main benefit for the company is that it requires a smaller budget than for individual feedback. The second benefit is the opportunity for collaboration and strengthening employee relationships. This concept allows you to involve a community of managers in the issue of 360° feedback and promote awareness of a need to demonstrate certain behaviors that are set forth in the questionnaire.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR ENSURING SUCCESSFUL 360° FEEDBACK

WHAT FACTORS SHOULD WE PRIORITIZE TO MAKE SURE THE PROJECT RUNS WITHOUT ANY HITCHES?



THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN SETTING AN EXAMPLE BY SUPPORTING THE APPRAISAL CAMPAIGN

As mentioned above, 360° feedback extends beyond the HR sphere as it conveys key messages about expected leadership and managerial behaviors. Senior managers therefore need to be involved from the outset and act as ambassadors for the project. They should also be the first to benefit from it. 360° campaigns that senior managers consider “not for

them” have less impact. Skills development crucially depends on senior managers setting an example by demonstrating that the employer is committed to this process. Feedback culture is therefore central to leadership and sends a clear message to employees: everyone is equal when it comes to 360° feedback!

COMMUNICATION FOCUSED ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The idea of being appraised by one's peers can make people feel apprehensive. **Communication is therefore critical for a successful a 360° appraisal campaign.** It is important to introduce each person's role in a motivational and instructive manner and ensure that both recipients and respondents are clear about what is

expected of them. It is also easier to **allay any concerns by emphasizing that the goal is skills development.** Once again, it is important to stress that this is much more motivating than simply measuring employee competencies.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS ABOVE ALL

Lack of clarity about the ethical rules and confidentiality of results is a major issue.

Specifying who will have access to the results and who is going to report back on them is particularly important. This will convince more people to participate and encourage them give more honest answers. Outsourcing 360° feedback or choosing a digital platform is a prerequisite for providing reassurance about this point. In addition to confidentiality, it is also important to emphasize the rules of feedback: no personal attacks, use respectful language...



IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

Time for discussion is crucial to facilitate understanding and assimilation of the results so that they can be incorporated into a person's professional development. The recipient must be part of the process, but also willing to question their assumptions, value the reviewers' opinion and discuss the development plan in order to evolve.



METHODS TAILORED TO THE TARGET GROUP

Adhering to procedure is another key factor for success. Care must therefore be taken to use the most persuasive approach with employees. Even though it is still often reserved for small populations (leaders, potential talent, etc.), it is becoming more widespread. Many companies now use it for their local managers, experts, project managers, etc. Of course, the most relevant logistical and budgetary arrangements should be taken into account in any case. If one can justify using external coaches for senior managers and executive committee members, it might be appropriate to think about alternatives for larger groups. This could involve training internal staff within HR teams or offering collective feedback sessions, facilitated in the form of co-development sessions.

This makes it possible to forge close links between the recipients and to nurture a community.

360° feedback can be carried out at different times depending on the company strategy or the individuals concerned. For instance:

- a digital campaign targeted at a population (executive committee, then the top 50, then the top 150 etc.) to accelerate cultural integration into a new managerial skills framework, for example on a voluntary basis as part of individual progression, incorporated into a range of accessible tools
- as part of a program for senior management (at the start and/or end)
- as a systematically planned step when someone takes up a position or changes roles within the company.

EXPERT OPINION

BENEFITS OF 360° FEEDBACK FOR EMPLOYEES

360° feedback brings many advantages and benefits, both for the employee and for the company.

For the employee, 360° appraisal is an ideal opportunity to receive feedback. It allows them to benefit from the perspective of others and thus take stock of where they stand in relation to the expectations of those around them (managers and peers, for example). 360° feedback also allows them to discover how well they know themselves and how well they know their strengths and the areas they need to develop.

Feedback from various respondents makes them aware of their strengths and qualities so that they can then work on these and on the areas needing to be developed in order to be able to perform their duties better.

For example, someone who is a nitpicking perfectionist may sometimes communicate in an abrupt manner, or fail to listen or pay attention to others. These personality traits are difficult to change, even if the 360°feedback recipient wishes to do so. Nevertheless, they can choose to work on how they come across to their peers or managers, and verbalize their decisions and reactions so that they can understand the mechanisms governing these behaviors, such as, for example, wanting to improve performance. This appraisal method allows employees to understand that their communication style ultimately undermines their objectives and take a step back to work on how they talk to others.

BENEFITS FOR THE COMPANY

For the company, 360° feedback strengthens feedback culture within the organization thanks to its credibility and legitimacy as a an opinion-based feedback system that takes into account the opinions of several people who interact with the recipient. This appraisal method is a way for the organization to clearly communicate to managers and employees its expectations regarding behavioral competencies.

360° feedback is part of a process to develop individual and collective skills. It requires the implementation of robust individual development plans that have a real impact on the recipient's perceptions and overall performance, thereby improving management. The final benefit comes from consolidated

analysis of the 360° appraisals. When 360°feedback is aggregated at the population level (for example, Executive Committee members or the Top 300), the company obtains an extremely precise overview of the demonstrated competencies, as well as those that need to be developed. The HRM and the organization then have clear and specific courses of action to improve the required competencies, which may feed into investment and HR development programs.

Didier Burgaud, Head of Consulting at Qualintra

