



A 360 Model for measuring the impact of training on managers

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Data from a 360 collection method was designed to provide information about the effectiveness or otherwise of a particular training intervention for senior managers. The 360 was to include perceptions from each stakeholder based upon 12 behavioural measures both before and again, after, the training course.

Introduction

In training it is proposed (Bedingham, 1997) that behavioural change on the job is most important when considering the effectiveness of the intervention. One way to measure behavioural change at work is to use a 360 degree model to get specific third-party data on the training effect on participants (Silverman et al., 2005). Although the approach has not been widely researched, there are commercial enterprises offering such services. The 360 degree methodology has also been applied (Passmore, 2007) to the measurement of effectiveness of coaching.

Although this study is not yet complete, having recorded over 2,900 data points we thought it worth while sharing initial figures and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses in the approach to date. The training intervention comprised three separate training days to introduce senior managers to the use of coaching skills in their day-to-day interactions with all other staff. The training days were separated by 4-6 weeks with co-coaching work going on in addition to practical application of their learning on the job. The two separate cohorts of managers undertaking training were all very senior and having a wealth of training and experience behind them. For example, using the twelve measurands (from our 360), we established their pre-course approval ratings between, 63% and 97% with a mean approval rating of 79%.

Each manager was asked to nominate 12 stakeholders in the organisation who would be answering 12 questions about them, both before their training course and between six and 12 weeks following the end of the course as well. Differences between the two sets of data were to be established and analysed. The data-collection was collected externally and on a confidential basis. The 360 was not used for feedback to managers, simply as a data-collection methodology.

The 12 questions were to be scored by stakeholders from zero to five. The actual questions were:

1. This person supports others in reaching all their goals
2. This person does NOT over-manage And does NOT under-manage
3. This person is genuinely interested in all stakeholders and their welfare
4. This person is flexible when necessary
5. I feel I have been truly heard by this person when I have spoken with them
6. This person understands individual motivations
7. This person gets on well with almost everybody
8. This person values my feedback

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9. I invariably learn when getting feedback from them
10. I always understand what has been said to me and know what is expected
11. This person is invariably calm in all situations
12. This person motivates themselves and others without inappropriate stress

Data Handling

We only included data for managers where a minimum of five stakeholders had provided us with both pre-course and post-course feedback. This left us with data for ten managers from the 21 in the study for whom data was included in this study. This comprised therefore just 1444 data-points from the original 2,905.

Early Findings

Of the twelve questions, eleven stimulated improvements in the scores with question 3 showing an insignificant degree of change (0.1%). These improvements were the actual difference in scores from the two sets of data; those before the training and those after the training. The four questions provoking the most obvious behavioural change in managers were questions 2, 4, & 7. This may reflect the emphasis in the course to understanding differences in people and then responding to those differences appropriately. The improvement in the scores for these three areas were between 6.1 and 7.4%.

The remaining questions all provided positive impacts in the scores between 1.8 and 4.7%.

Strengths & Weakness in the Approach

With hindsight, the range of scores would be wider, perhaps between zero and 20 since a single unit change represented almost a 17% change in the score in this preliminary study. The collection of data is tedious and there was a great deal of individual need among over two hundred stakeholders. It is envisaged that a web-based approach with auto-responders would collect and collate data more effectively. This approach could also ensure that the second recording of data would be on a screen showing the original data as well; in some cases, using digitalized forms and email, we found that stakeholders did not always refer to the previous data. It is our intent to conduct future work on a double-blind basis so that the data can be compared with a similar cohort of managers who are not being trained during the data-collection period.

Conclusions

Behavioural change as a result of training was observed by stakeholders. As a test for the methodology, we would have been better advised to take cohorts of more junior managers as the senior people in this study already had high approval ratings for their behaviours with one being 97% before the course (as judged by five different stakeholders). The method shows promise but the data-collection needs to be



web-based to improve the quality of scoring and to reduce administrative load. Ideally, a double-blind study would be carried out to provide normalized data.

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