

# The 360° Investment

*7 Steps to Getting the Feedback that will  
Maximize Your Talent,  
Improve Your Effectiveness and  
Increase Your Results*



**Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D., MCC, CPCC.**  
*executive and leadership coach*



**© 2009 Pillar Consulting, LLC**  
All rights reserved.  
[www.pillar-consulting.com](http://www.pillar-consulting.com)

The use of any part of this publication reproduced, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or stored in a retrieval system, without the prior consent of the publisher is an infringement of copyright law.

# Table of Contents

<b>THE eBOOK</b>	7
<b>Welcome!</b>	8
Your Vision of Leadership	10
Action Item	10
<b>The 360 Investment</b>	11
The 360 Investment	11
Mistakes in Leadership	11
Mistakes in Learning	12
A Solution for Leadership and Learning	13
<b>The Seven Investments: Seven Steps to a 360 Degree Profile</b>	14
An Investment in Time	14
An Investment in Strategy	14
An Investment in Your Team	14
An Investment in Relationships	14
An Investment in Process	15
An Investment in Reflection	15
An Investment in Action	15
<b>The Return on Your Investment</b>	16
The Returns on a Great 360	16
360 Reasons and Results	16
Action Item	16
<b>Using The Program</b>	20
How to Use this Program	20
Get Organized	20
Know Your Materials	20
Making the Most of Your Time	21
Action Item	22
<b>Step 1 - Create Your Timeline</b>	26
Timing the Steps	26
Action Item	27
<b>Step 2 - Prepare Your Questionnaire</b>	28
Collecting Your Ideas	28
Action Item	30
Creating the Questionnaire	30
Action Item	31
<b>Step 3 - Choose Your Participants</b>	32
Action Item	33

<b>Step 4 - Request Participation</b>	34
Action Item	34
<b>Step 5 - Distribute Your Questionnaires</b>	35
Action Item	36
<b>Step 6 - Explore Your Feedback</b>	37
Receiving Your Feedback	37
Gathering Your Feedback	38
Reading Your Feedback	38
Summarizing Your Feedback	38
Reflecting on Your Feedback	39
Action Item	39
<b>Step 7 - Create an Action Plan</b>	40
Action Item	41
<b>Following Up</b>	42
Action Item	42
<b>Raising Your ROI</b>	43
<b>Support</b>	46
How We Can Help	48
360 Services	48
Action Item	49
<b>Congratulations!</b>	50

<b>eBook</b>	<b>support</b>	<b>feedback</b>	<b>samples</b>	<b>workbook</b>
--------------	----------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------

# *The eBook* *(Audio Script)*



# Welcome!

Welcome to *The 360 Investment: 7 Steps to Getting the Feedback that will Maximize Your Talent, Improve Your Effectiveness and Increase Your Results.*

## **A Word from the Author**

If you want to tap into a wealth of knowledge that makes you truly excel as a leader, you'll be glad to know it's yours for the asking.

Literally.

In this program, you will learn how to ask the right questions, get the right answers, and take the kinds of actions that define true leadership...without spending a lot of time doing it. You will be taught how to combine the most valuable kind of Feedback with *your* personal and professional goals so that you can meet them more easily, more quickly, and with better results.

By listening to this Audio, you show yourself to be someone committed to your own excellence. That alone is contributing to your success everyday. It's gotten you where you are now. Now you're ready for the next step – to stretch yourself to be even better and find out what's really possible.

You're about to learn how to do that using a top quality 360 Degree Profile that's custom made for you. I've conducted dozens of these 360s for high-level leaders, and every time I do, I am more convinced of their value and importance. I've seen leaders, even at the top of their game, positively transform their leadership through this process, so that they end up raising their revenues, meeting higher goals, feeling newly invigorated, using their time much more wisely, lowering their stress and enhancing their quality of life both on and off the job. You don't get that by maintaining the status quo; you get it by asking for the kind of feedback that leads to a breakthrough!

I'm impressed by your courage, and I know that you will be paid back in dividends what you are investing in yourself. Congratulations.

## Your Leadership Coach - Dr. Joelle Jay

I'm Dr. Joelle Jay. As an executive and leadership coach, I work one-on-one with business leaders, executives, professionals and entrepreneurs to help them be their best - to help them bring out the very best in themselves (their talents, their strengths, their skills and abilities) to reach their goals and achieve their visions. As we go through this program, I'll be your coach, as well. Together, we're going to be getting you the feedback you need to find out what you're doing well and what you need to do better to be the kind of leader you were meant to be.



### *Everyone is a Leader*

I say "leader," because I believe that you are a leader. You might be the leader of a group of people or an entire organization. That's leadership in a traditional sense. But let's expand our definition. You might be on the leading edge in terms of the way you think or leading a charge – some big idea you want to see take off. You might be leading the people around you with your behavior or your attitude, so you're setting an example. You might be expressing leadership in your family or your church. And every single one of us is leading a life, which might be the most important kind of leadership of all. So whether you're a corporate CEO, the president of your own company, a business up-and-comer, or just someone who wants to be your best, this program is for you. In your Workbook, you'll find a list of the kinds of people who have participated in this program in the past and who this program is for now. I'm glad you're adding your name to that list.

# *Your Vision of Leadership*

In this program, you are going to learn how to use a proven strategy to getting feedback on your leadership. You will be asking the people around you for their perspective on you, then reflecting and acting on that information in a way that brings out your personal best.

Let's get an image now of how that might look for you. If possible, close your eyes. Envision yourself being the kind of leader you really want to be – relaxed, confident, respected by the people around you, setting the bar high and achieving goals with ease, tackling new challenges with enthusiasm, and being recognized for your efforts. That's what we're after.

By envisioning your Vision of Leadership, you allow it to guide you. As we go through this process, I want you to maintain this vision of yourself as the future you're moving toward. We're going to get into some pretty granular details of getting good feedback - things like choosing questions, completing forms, and sending e-mails...those practical logistics that will get you the kind of input you're looking for. You want to be able to hold the bigger, more inspiring vision of the leader you're becoming in the process.

For my part, I'm going to share with you the secrets of getting great feedback, coaching you to get the most out of this process. You are challenging yourself by taking on this task; I will honor that by helping you in every way I can to get results with the utmost value. When you're through, I want you not just to be able to say, "I did a 360." I want you to say, "I've transformed my leadership."

## **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and develop this image of yourself in your mind – the next edition of yourself as an excelling leader. Take some notes on Page 13 of your Workbook, where there's a space to record your Vision of Leadership. Flag this page so you can return back to it later. Use the Sample Vision on Page 47 of the Workbook if it helps. When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

# *The 360° Investment*

In my work coaching leaders, I often witness bright, achieving people doing problematic, self-limiting things. Statistics show that 70% of all leaders fail within two years of their assignment. That can happen whether your “assignment” is taking on a new project or becoming the next president of your organization.

## **Mistakes in Leadership**

Despite their good intentions, a lot of leaders are failing in ways they don't even know.

**Behaviors.** Some leaders fail because of their behavior. Take Travis, a vice president in the banking industry. He had always been a structured person, but found it harder and harder to maintain his personal systems as he got higher and higher on the corporate ladder. There was simply too much to do for him to continue working in the thorough, detailed manner he preferred. He was working too hard and getting too far behind. He started to feel frazzled and disconnected. His need for structure was slowing him way down. He had no idea that he was being left behind because of it. He needed a new course of action – to actually roll down his sleeves, stop working so hard, and become more strategic.

**Self-Perception.** Other leaders fail due to a skewed self-perception. Nick was a rising star in the Human Resources department at a large corporation. In his own mind, he was a people person who got things done. In the minds of everyone else, he was a manipulator who left a path of destruction in his wake. He needed to learn the truth about his image and adjust his style so that how he intended to be was also how people perceived him.

**Impressions.** Many leaders fail because of the impression they're making. Paula was a financial analyst who was so compassionate and warm that she got a reputation for being the “office mom.” She enjoyed the nickname, but not the implication. She could see that people believed she was all about taking care of people and not enough about the bottom line. She just didn't know how to combat that impression or really even understand its impact. Meanwhile, she got passed over for several promotions.

These are just a few examples. Other contributors to leadership failure include a lack of skills, a lack of clarity on goals, or an incomplete plan for achieving those goals – to name just a few.

What you don't know can hurt you. It can limit your opportunities and even stall your career.

## **Mistakes in Learning**

The mistakes leaders make are often completely avoidable with the right feedback at the right time. Enter the 360 Degree Profile. A 360 is a proven strategy for getting feedback on your leadership. It involves asking the people around you for their perspective, then reflecting and acting on that information in a way that brings out your personal best. It allows you to ask the hard questions and get honest answers that are so critical to advancing as a leader.

But the wrong kind of 360 can be another leadership mistake.

**Not Doing a 360.** Unfortunately, too many leaders don't ever do a 360 at all, whether they're not aware of them, just haven't gotten around to it, or haven't understood their importance.

**Doing a Hasty 360.** Even leaders who do a 360 sometimes miss the point. They go through the motions by rote and read their feedback in haste.

**Doing a 360 Only Once.** Some leaders do a 360 once in a lifetime – often quite early on in their careers. They don't realize that over time they've changed, people change, the situation has changed, or their questions have changed, and they need to do it again.

**Ending the 360 Too Soon.** Many leaders put their 360 feedback on the shelf, promising to get back it ...someday. Of course they never do. No matter how many 360s a leader does, they're useless if they don't lead to positive change.

**Choosing the Wrong 360.** But perhaps the worst mistake of a 360 is putting in a lot of time and effort and expense only to find that the feedback misses the mark. Even some of the best 360s fail to get leaders the information they need, simply because they're designed for every leader instead of designed for you.

This last reason is the most difficult to recognize, and it's the motivation behind this program.

## **A Solution for Leadership and Learning**

Most 360s sold to HR departments and available online tell you what you need to know and provide the questions for you. But the 360 you're learning in this program is custom tailored specifically to what you want to know.

To be fair, the reason other 360s do this – the credible ones, anyway – is because they are based on research about what counts as good leadership. For that reason, they can be extremely beneficial and yield a comprehensive, detailed view of performance. So it's not that there's something inherently wrong with an ordinary 360. What's wrong is when you choose the wrong one for you and end up knowing less than when you began.

So if you want a 360 off the rack, you can find them by the dozens online. If you want a 360 that's cut to fit your unique strengths, skills, and circumstances, you need to make a different kind of investment.

When it became clear to me that the mistakes people were making in their leadership were being compounded by the mistakes they were making with their 360s, I created this program. I wanted to teach leaders how to take control of their own success, learn how to overcome their challenges, and embrace their opportunities in the best possible way. I wanted to show them how a fairly common but often poorly executed strategy, the 360, could help them do that. My intention is to help leaders understand how they can better themselves by using a 360 Degree Profile that truly helps them excel.

Leadership really is learning. Only the best leaders get that. Soon you'll see how getting regular feedback through a self-propelled 360 can become not just an event but a state of mind.

# *The Seven Investments*

*The 360 Investment* is a process for doing a high quality, customized 360 Degree Profile on yourself. It's designed for busy leaders like you, and it teaches you to get the best quality feedback in an efficient way that you can use again and again to keep bettering yourself for continuous improvement. As a result, you gain a wealth of knowledge that helps you be your best. You gain clarity on the questions you need to ask yourself and what you need to learn. You gain awareness about things like how you come across, what your flaws are and what your strengths are, and how you can capitalize on your potential, your talent, and opportunities. And you gain specific instructions for what you need to do in order to be more effective and more successful. When you commit to improving your leadership with a customized 360, you are truly making an investment in yourself. This program makes sure you get the highest return.

## **The Seven Investments**

There are Seven Investments you can make to get the greatest benefit from your 360. Each of these investments corresponds to a step in the 360 process described in this program. You can find these on Page 14 of the Workbook, *The Seven Investments*. Let me introduce you to them now.

**An Investment in Time.** Putting in the time will get you the best 360; getting the timing right will make it efficient. The step you take here is to create a Timeline for completing the process that works best for you.

**An Investment in Strategy.** Strategy is knowing what you want and how to get it. Choosing the right strategy for your 360 is critical in making sure you get what you want. The step you take here is to decide what you want to know and why, then put that into a Questionnaire you can use to get relevant feedback.

**An Investment in Team.** A 360 depends on other people to provide valuable information for you. The investment here is choosing the people to put on your 360 team who have the most and best insight to offer.

**An Investment in Relationships.** Your participants are more than people filling out a form; they are the team that will support you in advancing your leadership today and into the future. It's important to invest in these relationships by treating your participants well throughout the whole process, with courtesy, respect, and gratitude. The step you take here is to bring them on board by asking them to participate in your 360.

**An Investment in Process.** Attention to the process will allow it to run smoothly and bring you the best results. The step you take here is to choose the best way to collect the Feedback, taking into consideration things like confidentiality, quality, and efficiency – and then to go out and get it.

**An Investment in Reflection.** Reflection is how you get the learning from your 360. The more you invest in reflection, the more robust the learning will be. The step you take here is to explore your Feedback and find the valuable information that will direct your efforts and improvement.

**An Investment in Action.** Action without reflection is foolish; reflection without action is pointless. The step you take here is to create an Action Plan that sets you up to make concrete, practical changes and get powerful results.

In the Conclusion of this program, we talk about Raising the ROI of your 360. As with any investment, your goal is to get the highest return for the least amount of effort. Your 360 should yield you the kind of information that will pay you dividends for years to come.

# *The Return on Your Investment*

Again, in any investment, the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. Investing time and effort into your 360 can lead to exponential growth as a leader and the rewards of success as you define it.

## **The Returns on a Great 360**

When you take part in a high quality 360 like the one you will find in this program, you gain a tremendous advantage. By seeing yourself as others see you, suddenly you realize where, why and how you can improve. You understand where you're holding yourself back and where you have the opportunity to surge ahead. You become much more thoughtful about what you're doing and why. You learn to focus your energy, maximize your efforts and get better, more predictable results. The Returns on a Great 360 go on and on. I've listed them for you on Page 15 of your Workbook.

## **360 Reasons and Results**

The specific returns you will reap absolutely depend on the way your 360 is designed. We call these your 360 Reasons and Results, because the results you get will be tied to the reasons you do your 360. It's imperative to think about that carefully for your 360 to be meaningful. I will teach you how you to design your 360 based on what you want to know and why.

To give you a sense of how this works, let me give you a few reasons you might want to do a 360, along with some examples from real-life leaders. You can refer to these 360 - Reasons and Results on the handout on Page 16 of your Workbook. As you go through these examples, give some thought to your primary reasons for your 360 and the results you'd like to achieve.

**Identifying Your Strengths.** You might want to do a 360 because you want to maximize your natural strengths and reach your full potential. This is a good idea anytime, but especially when you're secure in your skills and competence and want to truly excel. This was true for Charles, the CEO at a manufacturing company. Charles did a 360, because he wanted to lead more naturally and easily. He wanted to lead with his strengths. Authors Clifton and Buckingham, in their book *Now Discover Your Strengths*, assert that we grow in the direction of our strengths, which are the unique and enduring talents given to us by Mother Nature. Charles knew that if he could align his leadership with his strengths, he could go further, faster and with less effort. He learned in his 360 that one of his strengths was being reflective; he also learned that his colleagues wanted him to be more visible and assertive in networking in the community. Taking this information, he started a series of private lunches with key community leaders to develop the kinds of relationships that would enhance his business while honoring his

natural strengths, combining his natural strengths in relating to people with his goal to gain greater visibility in the community. The strongest leaders lead with their strengths. A 360 can help you identify them.

**Seeing Into Your Blind Spots.** You might want to do a 360 because you want to improve your leadership and see into your blind spots. This is particularly important when you have been newly promoted or are in the throes of a new endeavor. This was the case with Sean. Sean was a senior accountant and the newly appointed Director of Finance at his firm. From his boss and his colleagues, he had a vague sense that, compared to his predecessor, he wasn't measuring up. People seemed somewhat disengaged when he spoke, they didn't always follow through on his direction, and even though they were cordial, they didn't necessarily treat him as their leader. He chose to do a 360 to see into those blind spots. What he learned was that people saw him as disorganized and a somewhat ineffective communicator. Armed with this information, he was able to put together an Action Plan to learn the skills of organization and communication. Without his 360, he would not have known where to focus his efforts at improvement. We don't know what we don't know; a 360 can help you see into those blind spots.

**Meeting Your Goals.** You might want to do a 360 to get specific direction on how to meet your goals. This approach works best when you are already clear on what your goals are; you don't need information about what to do, but rather how you are to do it. Toni was the General Manager for a Silicon Valley software company. She already knew her challenges, which came to light as part of a strategic planning initiative in her department. What she didn't know was how to overcome them. She set up a 360 in which she was able to ask respected leaders to give her specific behaviors that she could enact and actions she could take to overcome those challenges and meet her goals. Renowned leadership coach and author Marshall Goldsmith calls this approach "feedforward" instead of "feedback," because it gives you the information you need to progress. With this approach, a 360 can give you your marching orders for improvement.

**Preparing for Advancement.** You might want to do a 360 to prepare yourself for advancement. This method is best when you are seeking less self-awareness and more advice and direction. Janelle and Randy took a 360 together for this purpose. They were new marketing associates who wanted their firm to grow into a thriving agency. They were young, energetic, and talented, but they lacked the experience and expertise of their counterparts in competing firms. Through their 360, Janelle and Randy gathered wisdom, insight and advice as to what their strengths were and what they needed to learn to build the successful business they had in mind. A 360 can be an important step in discovering what it will take for you to succeed.

**Becoming More Effective.** You might want to do a 360 to become more effective in your current job, which is helpful at any time, and in fact is a strategy you might want to use over and over. A 360 can even give you a sense of what your clients want and need. By asking questions not just about yourself but about your clients and customers, you can better serve their needs and therefore increase your value to them. Ann does this annually with her clients. In addition to requesting feedback on her worth to her customers, she asks questions about their top challenges, their needs, and their suggestions for her to be better able to serve them. By using a 360 in this way, Ann creates the kinds of customers author Tom Rath calls “Raving Fans.”

### **The Risks and Rewards**

As you can see from these examples, a 360 can help you in a variety of ways. It can help you gain greater self-awareness so you can build on your strengths, manage your weaknesses, decrease your chances of being surprised, increase your chances of being promoted, and maintain a discipline of learning that cultivates leadership and success.

But as strongly as I believe in the advantages of a good 360 for reflective leaders, I would be remiss if I didn't caution you on a couple of points.

First, be sure when you do a 360, that you do it strictly for developmental purposes. This program, and this particular kind of 360, is meant to help you get the information you want to improve yourself. It is not designed to be scaled for a large group of people, and it is not designed to be used for any other purpose, such as a performance review, or God forbid, a penalty of some kind. This process can be adapted for such purposes, but you would absolutely want to work with a coach who can build an appropriate program around the process. The 360 you're learning in this program is really meant for one person: you.

Second, know that when you do a customized 360 on yourself, you gain certain advantages, and you also lose certain advantages. For instance, by designing and choosing your own questions, you get to make the 360 extremely personal. That is perhaps this program's greatest advantage – you get to find out exactly what you want to know. One drawback to that advantage is that you may neglect to ask certain questions that would be important for someone in your shoes to ask. Another drawback is that you might not have the emotional currency with your participants that will get the most honest answers. For this reason, it's important for you that your 360 is one tool of many that you employ to get the most well-rounded view of yourself.

Third, recognize that all feedback is subjective. No 360, no matter how well designed, can give you objective feedback on yourself; the feedback is entirely based on other people's opinions. Be sure to weigh them against your own.

The program you are listening to now is an ideal alternative for leaders who want more feedback, more often – they want it to be more personal, and they want more control over the information they get. It differs from other 360s in the marketplace, because it is less formal, more flexible, and perfectly suited to you and only you. In many ways, that’s what makes it so valuable.

### **Action Item**

What are your reasons for a 360? What results do you want to achieve?

Turn off the Audio now and think about your reasons for a 360 and the results you want to achieve. Here are a few different ways to do that.

First, jot down your thoughts in response to these two questions in your Workbook on Page 16, at the bottom of the page called 360s - Reasons and Results.

What are my reasons for a 360? And what results do I want to achieve?

Then take it a step further. Turn the page to get to Page 17 of your Workbook, called My Reasons and Results: What Do I Want to Know and Why? This page gives you a list of some more ideas about what you can achieve with a 360. Put a checkmark by the statements that most resonate with you as you think about doing a 360 at this time. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later. Use the Sample version of this What Do I Want to Know? page completed on Page 48 of the Sample 360 Process if it helps.

When you’re ready, turn the Audio back on.

# *How to Use this Program*

I created the process in this program to show leaders like you how to get the kind of transformative feedback that can propel you to new heights in your leadership. Those kinds of results come from using the program as it's designed, with a specific set of directions. I'll describe them now, and I really encourage you to follow them as closely as you can. Otherwise, the process can get confusing and stall. You'll end up with incomplete, watered down feedback that is no use to anyone, least of all you.

## **Get Organized**

To stay organized throughout this process you may find it useful to print the eBook (Audio Transcript) and Workbook and keep it all in a binder.

I encourage you to take this step. This binder will not only help you to stay organized throughout the 360 process, but it will also be a useful resource to keep in your professional library. You can refer back to it for reflection, to track your leadership development process or to go through the process again in the future.

## **Know Your Materials**

Once you're organized, get to know your materials. Here's what you've got.

**The Script.** To start, you have the entire transcript of this Audio as an eBook in case you prefer to have it as a printed document.

**The Workbook.** Next, you have your Workbook. It contains reference materials and worksheets to guide you all throughout the process. Many of these pages are important documents that you will fill out and return to often. These are marked in your Workbook for easy reference, and I suggest you flag them with self-sticking notes so you can find them whenever you need them. I'll be sure to let you know when to do that.

**Samples.** There are two important sections of Samples in your Workbook:

**A Sample 360 Degree Process.** In the Sample 360 Degree Process, you have a complete set of documents from one leader's 360 that are filled out as samples to illustrate the different steps you'll be going through.

**Sample 360 Degree Questionnaires.** You also have Sample 360 Degree Questionnaires, including a variety of different kinds of 360s that you can use as models.

**Participant Feedback.** Notice that there's a placeholder in your Workbook for your Participant Feedback, which you will collect as part of your 360.

**Support.** This program is easy enough to do entirely on your own. Still, sometimes it just helps to talk to a live person if you need a little help or a few good ideas. For that reason, we've included a section in the back of the Workbook that describes all of the different ways we can support you. We want you to be successful with this, so just for purchasing the program, we're giving you free email support as well as 20 minutes of free consultation whenever you need it. There are a number of other ways we can help listed in this last section of your Workbook.

All of these materials are meant to support you, and I will refer to them throughout the process so can keep them straight and find what you need at just the right time.

### **Make the Most of Your Time**

As a busy leader who wants good feedback, you're going to want to complete this program in the most efficient, most effective way. Here are a few more suggestions for doing that.

**Listen and Learn.** To get the most out of this program, listen to the Audio once all the way through. Ideally, do this with your materials in front of you; we'll be referring to them along the way. If you can't do that, for instance if you're listening to the Audio while you're driving or walking, then leaf through the Workbook ahead of time to get an idea of what's there before and after listening to the Audio.

This will give you a sense of the process in its entirety.

Then listen a second time, pausing step by step to complete your 360. You can always return to the Audio and the Workbook as many times as you need for support.

**Use the Examples.** Throughout the program, I will share examples from the leaders I've worked with on their 360s. All of their names and details of their situations have been changed, but they all represent real life people who went through the very same process you're starting. Using their experiences as a way to get ideas about what and what not to do.

**Give Yourself Time.** A good 360 isn't difficult, but it does take a little time. The Audio itself lasts about an hour, which we've broken into chunks that you can easily find as you stop and start to complete the steps. The whole process of completing a 360 usually takes about a month from start to finish.

By getting organized, knowing your materials, and making the most of your time, you set yourself up to be successful with this program from the beginning.

**Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and prepare yourself for your 360.

Print your materials. Use the Getting Organized pages of your Workbook, which includes a diagram and directions on pages 19-20, to create a binder complete with everything you need.

Browse through the Table of Contents on Pages 4-5 and familiarize yourself with the contents.

Then leaf through the pages so you can easily follow the process as we continue.

Be sure to look over the very last section of the Workbook, Pages 71-72 called Getting the Support You Need. That way, you know what help is available to you along the way to make this process go smoothly. We're here to help! Flag this page so you can refer back to it later.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Let's Get Started!*

You now have a sense of the benefits of a 360 Degree Profile. You have an idea about the different reasons people go through this process and the results they have experienced, you have thought about your reasons for a 360, and you have gained a sense of the process. You're ready to get started!





# Step 1 - Create Your Timeline

Your first investment is an Investment in Time – putting in the time and organizing your time to be sure your 360 runs smoothly and efficiently. You make this investment by Creating Your Timeline.

This is the chance to get a sense of what lies ahead and get yourself organized for starting the process. I've seen leaders jump into their 360 with tons of energy and verve, then peter out as things get going, and before you know it, their whole process has dribbled out of existence. Then they'll call me two years later and wonder why they're still stuck in the same old rut. You can avoid that by just being very planful in the beginning; and then you go along completing the steps as you've sketched them in your Timeline, and before you know it you're on your way into a whole new league.

As I've mentioned before, your 360 will take about a month. Before you do anything else, you will want to spend some time mapping out the process on your calendar, how much time each step will take, and when you will be able to complete the steps in your schedule.

## Timing the Steps

To help you with this, I will go back through the seven steps of the process now in more detail. You'll find that these correspond to the Seven Investments we discussed earlier, but we'll go through them again anyway to actually flesh out some more detail about the actions you'll be taking.

**Step 1: Create Your Timeline.** In Step 1 – this step - you are Creating Your Timeline. Your job is to really understand the tasks involved in this process so you can schedule them in a way that keeps things moving. I will provide you with a Timeline to use to map out the steps. You will sit down with your calendar and - taking into account how busy you are, any upcoming projects, vacations, holidays, and the like – you'll fill in the Timeline so it works best for you. Your time is important; give yourself twenty minutes to do this and get it right.

**Step 2 - Prepare Your Questionnaire.** In Step 2, you will Prepare Your Questionnaire. I will provide you questions to consider, ideas for creating a Questionnaire, and sample Questionnaires that you can use as models. You will consider your goals for your 360 and create a Questionnaire that will help you learn what you most want to know. This process could take as little as ten to fifteen minutes, but you might want to set aside thirty if you can.

**Step 3 - Choose Your Participants.** In Step 3, you will Choose Your Participants. This is a selection process in which you choose seven to ten people whose feedback you would like to receive. These will be people in your personal and professional life who have

insight into your style and behaviors, people who have worked with you closely, whose opinion you respect, or who might have a unique perspective. Thoughtfully choosing your participants will probably take you twenty minutes.

**Step 4 - Request Participation.** In Step 4, you will Request Participation from the people you have chosen. Most people can easily cover this in just a few minutes, but give yourself a few days to get everyone's response.

**Step 5 - Distribute Your Questionnaires.** In Step 5, you Distribute Your Questionnaires. There are a couple of different ways to do this, again depending on your goals, which we'll talk about later. But know that even if it only takes a few minutes to send out the forms, it could take up to two weeks to get them back.

**Step 6 - Explore Your Feedback.** Step 6 is the point in the process in which you Explore Your Feedback. You will want plenty of time to read, summarize and reflect on the information. To do it justice, plan at least an hour. It might not take that long, but then you'll have it if you need it.

**Step 7 - Create an Action Plan.** Finally, in Step 7 you Create an Action Plan. This will also take some time; I suggest at least a half an hour. You will choose one or two things to work on and then figure out exactly what you need to do to improve in those areas.

Now that you know the details of the steps ahead, you can plan your 360!

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and find Page 23 of your Workbook, called My Timeline. Consider the steps while looking at your calendar. Also take a peek at Page 49, the Sample Timeline, to see how your Timeline will look when it's complete.

Then fill out the Timeline and map those dates into your calendar. Be sure to make a deadline for receiving all of your Feedback. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 2 - Prepare Your Questionnaire*

Your next investment is an Investment in Strategy – designing your 360 to get the information you want.

Since a 360 is about asking people around you to give you feedback, you start by deciding what kind of feedback you want - by Preparing Your Questionnaire. In this step, you think of what would be most useful to know, given your chosen reasons and desired results. This ensures that you will get what you're looking for. We'll do this in two phases - Collecting your Ideas first, then Creating the Questionnaire that you will send to the people who will be giving you feedback.

### **Collecting Your Ideas**

I want to assure you here that even though this process of Preparing Your Questionnaire is quite structured, the Questionnaire itself is 100% customizable and flexible to accommodate any situation. I've used this process to do everything from a formal, quantitative analysis of a large corporate department, to a values assessment for a small leadership team, to an on-going multi-year process with rotating groups of dozens of leaders in a whole company, to a seemingly limitless array of unique individualized 360s for leaders of every shape and size. The trick is to continue to stay focused on what you really want to know and trust that you will find a way to work that into a useful Questionnaire.

If you don't do this step carefully, you can hinder your results. This happened to Phyllis. She was the senior managing partner at a management consulting firm, and her 360 questions were all pretty vague. As a result, so was her feedback. For instance, when she asked, "How can I help the firm improve its results?" she got responses like, "Develop better metrics." Okay, it's a start, but listen to this difference. In a coaching conversation with me, she said what she had really wanted to know was how to attract more multi-million dollar clients. We made a plan for her to have a follow-up discussion with her participants and ask that question. That's when she got the real answers – specific suggestions for evolving her clientele to a whole new level. It's nice to get feedback; it's priceless to get specific, targeted suggestions. You get it from asking the right questions.

In a moment, I will share some questions that are commonly asked in 360 Degree Profiles. Some of these may be perfect for you. Some won't apply at all, and some will give you ideas for other questions you could ask. As I go through these questions, make a mental note of which ones would be most helpful for you. Allow your creativity to come up with some additional questions, as well.

### **Common Questions for 360s**

At the end of this section of the Audio, you will have the chance to work on the questions for your 360. For now, though, just listen and see what strikes you as the most interesting and useful questions to ask.

One common question is,

- What are my strengths?

Knowing your strengths tells you what to build on so you can get better and better in the areas in which you naturally excel.

Another common question is,

- “How can I improve?”

Here are some more potential questions:

- What is it like to work with me?
- Give me three words that describe me.
- What do you think I need to know about myself?
- What do you think I need to know about other people?
- What perspectives do I need to understand?
- How do I hold myself back?
- If you were to give me your one piece of advice for how I can better myself, what would it be?

You could also tell people some of your goals and ask,

- What do you think I might do better to reach these goals?

Many people like to see some numbers, so you might design a chart in which each of your questions can be answered on a scale of 1-10. You might say something like this:

- It’s a goal of mine to be, let’s say, more approachable. On a scale of 1-10, how approachable do you think I am? And then give them a line to explain.

These are the kinds of questions commonly asked in 360s. Are there other questions that also come to mind? Take a moment to jot those down.

Now that your juices are flowing, you’re going to see if you can pin your questions down - the five to seven questions that are the right ones for you. Be selective and keep it brief; your participants will be doing you a favor in filling this out, so be considerate of the time it will take.

Make sure the questions you’re choosing will drive you to what you really want to know. Remember that image of yourself as an excelling leader from the beginning of this program? Revisit it now, and ask the questions that will help you learn how to become that. Otherwise your feedback will be deficient.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and look now in your Workbook on Page 24, Choosing Your Questions. (Notice that these roughly correspond to the survey you completed earlier in this program, Page 17, “My Reasons and Results.” You might want to refer back to the ideas on that page before completing this one.) Put a checkmark next to the questions that suit you. Add the new ones you’ve come up with in the blanks. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later. Use the Sample page of Choosing Your Questions on Page 50 to get a visual.

Remember right now you’re just collecting ideas; we’ll talk about creating the actual Questionnaire in a few minutes.

When you’re ready, turn the Audio back on.

### **Creating the Questionnaire**

Once you’ve collected some ideas for your questions and gotten clear about what you want to know, you’re going to gather all of that information on one short, clear, easy-to-use form.

Before you actually draw this up, it might be helpful to see a few samples, which are provided for you in the Sample Questionnaires section of your Workbook.

**Questions Only.** For instance, on Page 60, you’ll see a Sample Questionnaire that is a simple list of Questions Only - very straightforward, easily e-mailable, no fuss.

**Survey.** On Page 61, you’ll see a Sample Questionnaire that is a Survey. This is especially good for you if you like numbers, and also if you’d like to rerun your survey in the future to track your progress.

**Analysis.** On Page 62, you’ll see a Sample Questionnaire that is what I call an Analysis. This one lists the values of importance to this person and asks for feedback on how well he or she lives up to those values.

**Goals.** On Page 63, you’ll see a Sample Questionnaire that shows a way to get help with your Goals. You can see that this one actually lists the goals of the person and asks his or her participants for advice on how to reach them.

You don’t have to reinvent the wheel when you Create Your Questionnaire. These Samples are included to serve as models you can adapt for your own use.

### **Action Item**

When you’re ready, turn off the Audio and Create the Questionnaire that you will distribute

to your participants. Use the “What Do I want to Know?” page (p. 17) in your Workbook, the page called Choosing Your Questions (p. 24), any additional notes you’ve made about the questions you want to ask, and the Sample 360s to pull together your ideas. You have a blank page in the Workbook on Page 25, My Questionnaire, to map this out. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later.

If you need help or want to check to be sure your Questionnaire is as powerful as it can be, give us a call and we’ll help you power it up. You’ll find information about how to do that on Page 71 in the Support section of your Workbook.

When you’re ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 3 - Choose Your Participants*

Your next investment is an Investment in Your Team – deciding who will provide the feedback that is the basis for your growth and learning.

The third step is to Choose Your Participants. Seven to ten people is a good number, where you can get a range of perspectives and yet not so many that the feedback becomes redundant or overwhelming.

Before we go any further, I'd better state the obvious that it does you no good to choose participants without much to offer. It can be tempting, because it's so safe. But this is a case of the greater the risk, the greater the reward. One of the least effective 360s I've seen illustrates this mistake, because the leader set it up from the beginning to be so futile. Mark, an elected official, decided to poll his staff before a new campaign. He was afraid of the feedback, he was afraid of bad news, he was afraid it would get out, he was sure he'd stir up gossip about himself. He insisted that he was going to face his fears and get some good feedback, but then he proceeded to choose only the people around him who would pander to him or were too afraid of him to give good feedback. He ended up with feedback that falsely elevated his confidence. Pointless.

Now contrast that approach with Andre's. He was preparing for a big promotion and did a 360 to see what gaps he needed to fill to be successful. His participants included someone who had fired him from a previous company, the president of his current company and also his wife! He gobbled up the feedback like it was made of chocolate, and the learning and the confidence he gained made him a whole new man. So be brave, and choose good participants. It makes a huge difference.

Let's think about this now.

I'm going to ask you some questions, and as I do, go through the people in your life and see who might be good candidates. At this point, don't worry about choosing your final participants. Just notice the names that come to mind. If you have a pen, you can write them down as we go.

Start with people you respect.

Think about people who know you very very well.

Think about people who don't know you well, who just might have an impression.

Think about people you report to.

Think about people who report to you.

From your business life, think about

- your vendors,
- your suppliers,
- your contractors,
- your colleagues,
- your boss,
- your customers and clients.

In your family, think about

- your parents,
- your sisters,
- your brothers,
- cousins,
- your kids.

In your community, think about people who know you from

- your church,
- your professional organization,
- the organization you volunteer for,
- or your neighborhood.

Don't forget to include yourself! Responding to your own Questionnaire is a valuable form of reflection.

Once you have a good working list of people who may give you feedback, you're going to choose the seven to ten whose opinions will matter most, trying to get a variety of different perspectives.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and write down the names of all the people you can think of whose opinion you respect or who might have some interesting perspective on you. Use Page 26 of your Workbook, Potential Participants to help you.

Then choose the seven to ten people you want to actually participate in your 360.

Finally, complete the chart on Page 27, which is your Chart of Participants, so you will have all the information you need for the next step. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later.

Use the Sample pages of the Potential Participants and Chart of Participants on Pages 52 and 53 as a model. When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 4 - Request Participation*

Your next investment is an Investment in Relationships – reaching out to people in such a way that you start building the kind of on-going support that will elevate you for years to come.

The fourth step in the process is to Request Participation. Just let people know what you're up to, and do it in a way that shows them why it's important. You might say something like this,

*"I am going through a professional development process. I am looking for feedback on the perceptions that other people have of me, so that I can learn how to better myself. I have a short list of questions, and I'm wondering if you would be willing to fill it out."*

You can do this however you prefer - by e-mail, by phone, at a meeting, or in person. Just remember that this is an opportunity to develop these relationships, so make it personal as well as efficient. Jack, was a lobbyist, who actually carried around a notecard with the names of his participants for a week and asked each one when he bumped into them outside senate sessions and in restaurants. By the end of the week, he'd crossed everyone off but one, so he gave her a call. Getting everyone on board didn't take him any extra time at all, and yet it still developed the relationships. Great idea.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio and choose your words and your strategy for requesting participants. If you wish, use the sample on Page 54, which is a model Letter for Requesting Participants. You can adapt it to your own needs to complete this step. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later. Also look at the Sample Letter to Participants on Page 55 to see how one leader just changed this letter a little bit before sending it so it reflected the kind of 360 she had set up for herself.

Then go ahead and make your requests. As you talk to your participants, keep track of the people who have said "yes" on your Chart of Participants and use alternates to replace anyone who says "no." Give yourself no more than a week to do this process.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 5 - Distribute Your Questionnaires*

Your next investment is an Investment in the Process – being conscientious about the way you go about collecting information so that it brings you the most benefit.

Step 5 is to Distribute Your Questionnaires to your participants. The most obvious way to do this is to just start mailing it out. But let's talk a little bit about some different options that might work even better.

When you do a 360 with a third party like a coach or an HR representative or some other private company, you have the advantage of having the feedback be anonymous. The third party sends out the Questionnaires, the participants send their comments back to the third party, and you receive your Feedback with the names of the participants removed. The advantage is that your participants can say whatever they think you need to know without fearing your reaction, and you get to receive the Feedback without the noise that's created when you know who said what.

With your own 360, as you distribute your Questionnaires, think about how you might build this advantage in.

For example, Frank, an entrepreneur, wanted his feedback to be anonymous. He mailed his Questionnaire to everyone on his list with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and asked them to send it back by U.S. mail. That way, he didn't know which answers came from who. Another businessman who wanted anonymous feedback did it differently. He used his assistant as a go-between to receive feedback via e-mail, remove the names of the participants, and pass the Feedback on to him. You could do the same thing with a friend or a colleague. The process is a little more cumbersome, but it can be worth it to get very honest information from people who know their responses will be confidential.

On the other hand, you may decide to forgo confidentiality and ask people to respond to you directly. One CEO I coach does this. She does regular 360s to find out how she can run her operation better. She wants the feedback to be completely open and part of an ongoing public dialogue. She simply e-mails her questions to everyone on her list and asks them to send her back their responses. This process could discourage some people from being as forthcoming as they might be in an anonymous format, but it simplifies the process of requesting and receiving feedback.

Thinking about the different ways you can manage your Questionnaire to get feedback can help ensure it's the best quality feedback in the most efficient way. This is also a place where you might want to bring a coach or an HR representative to do some of the work for you. If they have 360 experience, they can even pull your data together into a single report that makes it easier to read. They can also conduct in-person interviews with your participants and convey the information back to you. We do these all the time for leaders like you. When you're short

on time, concerned about confidentiality or want very personal, detailed information with specific examples and details, this is an option worth the extra expense.

Once you've decided how your 360 will work, you can write up a description of it in a short Cover Letter that lets your participants know what to do, include a deadline so they know when to do it, attach the Cover Letter to your Questionnaire, and send it on its way.

One more thing. After you've distributed your Questionnaire, make a note to yourself to remind your participants to send back their feedback a few days before your deadline. You might even add that idea to your Timeline or your calendar before you send out your Questionnaires so you have the best chance at getting all the feedback you've requested through your questionnaires. The last thing you want is to float them out there and then forget about them or have them get lost in the shuffle.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and decide your strategy for distributing and receiving back your Questionnaire. Use Page 30, Choosing Your Strategy, to think it through.

Then design a Cover Letter – again, with a deadline - for your Questionnaire. You can use the template in your Workbook for a Cover Letter on Page 31 as a foundation and use the blank page after it, Page 32 titled My Cover Letter, to draft your ideas. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later.

Use the Sample Cover Letter and Questionnaire on Page 55 if you'd like a model.

Attach your Cover Letter to the Questionnaire you created earlier, and send it out!

Be sure to make a note in your calendar to send a reminder a few days before the deadline.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 6 - Explore Your Feedback*

Your next investment is an Investment in Reflection. This is where you get the learning.

Step 6 is to Explore Your Feedback. In order to keep you on the right track, I'm going to divide this step into five phases. Listen to the rest of the information for this step all the way through, then turn off the Audio to complete the steps.

### **Receiving Your Feedback**

In the space between Steps 5 and 6, which ideally will be a couple of weeks, your Feedback will be coming in. This is the part where you need to get tough with yourself, so I'm going to get tough with you. There are particular Dos and Don'ts when it comes to receiving your Feedback, and you can see these on Page 33 of your Workbook. There's one in particular that I want to discuss with you now, and that is to do the steps of Exploring Your Feedback and Creating Your Action Plan exactly as I've designed them.

I've seen people ignore this and sabotage the whole process. One leader I know, who ironically was a vice president of a corporate HR department, had set up a very thoughtful plan to reflect on her feedback and she had scheduled time to do the Action Planning with me. As her feedback came in, she just couldn't resist looking at it, which as you'll see is a big no-no in my opinion. Unfortunately, she received some pretty scornful comments about being difficult to work with. From my perspective, it was exactly what she needed to hear; but she never did get the learning. Instead, she got angry and upset. It created distance between her and her participants who happened to be her direct reports, and she ended up just reinforcing the perception people had of her of being difficult to work with! If she could have just allowed herself to be patient and follow the process I've laid out, she would have been able to digest the feedback much more easily and allow it to change her for the better. It could have been humbling instead of harmful, powerful instead of painful.

So please, if you're not going to do this conscientiously, don't bother doing it at all – it really could do you more harm than good.

If you choose to be open and curious, you will find the gems in your Feedback. That's going to leap-frog you to the front as a leader. That's what you're here for.

So let's actually take a moment right now to get the right mindset for the rest of this process. Decide right now: do you want to be an open-minded learner and use the information that's coming to you to power up your career? Or do you just want to get the dirt on yourself and walk away bitter and confused?

A negative knee-jerk reaction is more common than you might think. It's best to guard against it in advance, in case a comment catches you by surprise. You might want to actually say to yourself what your intention is before continuing on with Step 6. If you're at all nervous about

your reaction to the data, it might even help to prepare a kind of verbal reminder that you can repeat anytime you feel yourself slipping into defensiveness, like “I am open and curious” or “I am ready to listen and learn.”

### **Gathering Your Feedback**

Phase one is to Receive Your Feedback – to just gather the Questionnaires your participants have completed. Again: do not be tempted to look at your Questionnaires as they come in. That distorts your perception of the data and can close you off to the learning where you really get the most benefit. Just create a place to keep the Feedback until it’s all in - a computer file for electronic feedback or a manila folder for hard copies. When you’ve gotten all of the reports that you think you’re going to get, hopefully by your deadline, then you’re ready to read it.

### **Reading Your Feedback**

And that’s the next phase: to Read Your Feedback. For many people, this is the most difficult step. Even though you have undertaken your 360 because you want that feedback, actually receiving the information can be a challenge.

The bad news can be a challenge, because it can be hard to understand and swallow.

The good news can be a challenge, because you might dismiss the praise you get.

Before you read your Feedback, give yourself a pep talk and remind yourself to receive it in the spirit in which it was intended, and the spirit in which you requested it. Your Feedback is for learning. You do not have to accept everything you hear, and you do not get to reject everything, either. It is all just information.

Once you’ve collected your data, find yourself a quiet place and read through the data once straight through, just to see what’s there.

Then read it a second time with a highlighter and a pen, making notes as you go along.

Reading your Feedback is a superficial step – a precursor to the real inquiry that comes next.

### **Summarizing Your Feedback**

The third phase in this step is to Summarize Your Feedback, to cull through it and pull out the most important points.

First, find the most positive comments - the ones that build you up. Don’t skip this step and be tempted to just focus on your weaknesses; your strengths are a tremendous asset. This is where you excel.

Then find three of the more negative comments. These may sting, but they're valuable, so write them down.

Finally, collect some of the ideas that you most want to remember, along with any other questions and ideas that come up.

### **Reflecting on Your Feedback**

The last phase of this step is to Reflect on Your Feedback. After you have read your data and collected the most important information, actually put it away and think about the Feedback as a whole to see what you've learned. Are there recurring themes? Surprising trends? Obvious issues? Results to celebrate? You may choose to journal about this in writing, but some people would rather just mull the questions over. This is also a great time to pull in a coach or a mentor and start discussing the answers to your questions and your learning from the Feedback.

The goal of this step of Exploring Your Feedback is to take a thoughtful, thorough approach that helps you internalize what you've learned.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and go through the process of Exploring Your Feedback.

Refresh yourself on the Dos and Don'ts of this process on Page 33 of your Workbook.

Make a conscious effort to determine the frame of mind that will be most productive as you prepare to Explore Your Feedback. Use Page 34 of your Workbook, The Leader-Learner's Mindset, for ideas.

Collect your Feedback in one place, and read it using the system I've suggested, which you can find on Page 35 of your Workbook, Reading the Feedback.

Be sure to complete your 360 Summary on Page 36 in your Workbook, as well as your Questions for Reflection on Page 37. Flag these pages so you can refer back to them later. Use the Sample Summary and Reflection pages, Pages 56 and 57 of your Workbook, as a reference.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

## *Step 7 - Create an Action Plan*

Your last investment is an Investment in Action – making the plan that you will execute to improve your effectiveness and get better results. Your 360 becomes most valuable when you apply the learning.

Step 7 is to Create an Action Plan that lists all of the steps you will take to actually improve yourself based on what you have learned.

Now, you know how to create an Action Plan. You make lists and set priorities and take action every day. You wouldn't have gotten this far as a leader if you didn't. This is different. You're about to identify your true catalysts – the one or two compelling actions you can take to propel yourself way beyond who you are now to who you want to be. These actions will rise above the rest of the things you do every day to maintain your current status; they are the things that can fundamentally impact your leadership in the most powerful and positive way.

To do this, you're going to choose ONE or TWO areas, based on your Feedback, that you want to focus on and improve. Then brainstorm some ideas for how you're going to do that.

Let me give you an example or two. Kim was a bright, upwardly mobile new leader in her company who wanted to continue accelerating her career. She saw a theme in her Feedback that she wasn't receptive enough to other people's ideas. In short, she was a control freak. She chose delegation as her area for improvement, recognizing that if she could learn to let go a little more, she would be able to empower the people she worked with to be more independent and try out their ideas. Then she could free up some time to be more strategic – which was truly essential for her to move up in the ranks of leadership. In her coaching, Kim and I brainstormed eight to ten specific actionable steps she could take to improve her delegation skills – things like choosing two people to develop as project managers and setting up regular meetings to coach them.

Another example of an Action Plan that worked well comes from Devon, a legal advisor whose job was at risk when there was a change in leadership at the very top of the organization – one level above him. He didn't really realize until he got his Feedback how tenuous his position had become. Devon's Action Plan was basically a career survival guide. His area of improvement was to become more connected to his new boss after getting off to a rocky start. His actionable steps included things like meeting with his new boss to find out how he could better serve him and to refresh himself on the goals and objectives of the company.

Of course, there are as many different Action Plans as there are leaders listening to this program. Finding the right area for improvement and choosing your action steps sometimes takes a little time and collaboration. You might again want to seek the expertise of a coach, a mentor, your boss, a good friend or colleague, or even your team or direct reports. The questions you're asking are, one, what is the most significant thing I can do to improve my

leadership, and two, if I want to improve in this area...what should I do?

The answers you get should be specific, actionable steps. There might be things you need to learn, skills you need to gain, behaviors you might need to change. There might be activities you need to start doing or some you need to stop doing. You might need to schedule think time or appointments with other people. You might need to do some research, talk to a spouse, make some decisions, change some patterns, adopt new habits, try new things. You might need to get more suggestions for how to improve, or maybe you need to find a role model. Whatever you choose to put in your Action Plan should be specific, and preferably linked to a timeline. You might give yourself six weeks to make these improvements, or six months. You will know your Action Plan is done when you can look at it and see a roadmap from where you are now to where you want to be.

### **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and complete your Action Plan using the template on Page 39 of your Workbook. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later. Use Page 38 in your Workbook, Ideas for Action Planning, as well as the completed Sample Action Plan on Page 58 of your Workbook to get ideas. Use whatever other resources and people will help you get the best possible plan – and remember, we're here to help, too, if you need us.

# Following Up

There are two important follow up steps to take at this time: Communicate Your Action Plan and Thank Your Participants.

Once you've chosen your Action Plan, go back and communicate the changes you'll be making to the people who participated in your 360, along with a sincere simple thank you. Asking people for feedback is significant. When people give feedback, they're doing so out of love and respect for you and your process of personal growth. Honor that by letting them know not just that you appreciate their participation, but specifically what you learned from the whole process. Let them know that you heard their praise, and share what you've learned that you want to improve. They will respect you for your commitment to your leadership, and they will feel respected and heard. They will also become part of your ongoing support network as you continue to develop as a leader.

## **Action Item**

Turn off the Audio now and complete the follow up steps to your 360 – that is, Communicate Your Action Plan and Thank Your Participants.

Use the model on Page 40 of your Workbook, Following Up, for ideas on how to do this, then jot down any ideas on the blank page entitled My Follow Up Plan on Page 41. Flag this page so you can refer back to it later. Use the Sample Follow Up Plan on Page 59 if it's useful.

Implement your ideas to communicate your Action Plan to your participants and thank them for being a part of it.

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

# *Raising Your ROI*

Congratulations! You have come to the end of the 360 process, and the beginning of a new adventure in improving yourself! When you've completed your 360...

You've made an Investment in Time by conscientiously Creating Your Timeline.

You've made an Investment in Strategy by smartly Preparing Your Questionnaire.

You've made an Investment in Your Team by carefully Choosing Your Participants.

You've made an Investment in Relationships by respectfully Requesting Participation.

You've made an Investment in Process by Distributing Your Questionnaires.

You've made an Investment in Reflection by thoughtfully Exploring Your Feedback.

You've made an Investment in Action by Creating an Action Plan.

Best of all, you've invested in your own growth and potential.

With the Feedback you receive, you can avoid some of the risks of leadership – risks like losing credibility, becoming complacent, and being held back by your limitations. Instead, you can reap the rewards: you can learn where to improve, and you can identify what it is about you that is truly powerful – and leverage those ideas to achieve the results you want.

But you only get those kinds of results if you make the right kinds of investments in the smartest possible way. Before we close, let me share with you some of my techniques for making your 360 as easy, positive and meaningful as possible. You can find these on Page 43 of the Workbook called Raising Your ROI: Top Ten Ways to Succeed with a 360.

## **1. Be curious**

James Stephens wrote, "Curiosity will conquer fear even more than bravery will." If you know you want to do a 360 but are afraid to get this kind of feedback, get curious. Fear says, "Oh my gosh, I wonder what people will say?" Curiosity says, "Hmm. I wonder what people will say?" Focus on the learning, and the courage will take care of itself.

## **2. Ask for What You Really Want**

Weak 360s ask weak questions. Spend time getting really clear about what's possible to discover through your 360 and ask for what you really want to know. Be specific. If what you want is to have shorter meetings, don't use business jargon that you want to be a more effective meeting planner. Ask how you can do shorter meetings. Be courageous. If what you really want to know is what makes you the best salesperson in the company, ask for people to tell you that without making yourself small or backing away from your past success in any way.

### **3. Ask Open-Ended Questions**

Avoid questions that have yes or no answers; otherwise that's all you might get. If you must ask a closed-ended question, follow it up with a request to "explain." Note that most open-ended questions start with the words How or What.

### **4. Stay Organized**

Between your list of participants, their contact information, your Questionnaire, the Feedback you receive, and the seven steps to completing your 360, you have a lot to think about. Rely on the Workbook and documents included with this program to help you stay organized. Marcel is a leader who routinely has her staff do 360s, and she's created a great system in which every focus person gets an accordion file to keep their Timeline, their Questionnaire, their Participant Feedback, their Reflection and their Action Plan. Great idea; you could do the same.

### **5. Give Yourself Time**

When you receive your Feedback, prepare yourself by setting aside those hours of distraction-free Reflection in which you can read your Feedback. Over the years, I've seen leaders do this a number of ways: one went to the beach; one went on a retreat in the mountains, one came in with a bagel and coffee on a Saturday morning. Clear your head and put yourself in the mindset of openness. Do not rush this process or read the Feedback as it comes in haphazardly and on the fly. Give yourself time to read, digest, reflect on the Feedback and create an Action Plan as part of the 360 process.

### **6. Get Honest with Yourself**

As you receive your Feedback, allow yourself to be humble and very, very honest about what your participants are trying to tell you. Jim, one of the most reflective leaders I know, has actually asked me to read his comments aloud while he closed his eyes and listened. You started this process to learn about yourself and improve, not to lie to yourself and hide from the truth.

### **7. Go Easy on Yourself**

At the same time as you get honest with yourself, go easy on yourself. I like to start my 360s with a soothing beverage and end them with a massage. Weak spots are so tender; allow yourself to be vulnerable, to feel hurt, to be confused, to get angry, or to have any other reaction that comes up. By the same token, you may find that it isn't the weak spots that challenge you but the possibilities. You may feel overwhelmed at the task ahead simply because there's so much you can do to improve – no matter how good you are! Additionally, allow yourself to really absorb the good news. Don't be so hard on yourself that you neglect the confirmation in your Feedback about what makes you remarkable. It's important to know your assets and you can leverage them and allow them to lead you. To do that, you need to be confident and vulnerable at once.

The balance here is to ask for the hard news and be ready to receive it; be open to the Feedback but gentle with yourself. This is all just information. It's learning. Sift through the information to find the pearls of wisdom. "Information is not wisdom, it's just knowledge." The wisdom comes from applying that knowledge fairly and bravely.

### **8. Celebrate What's Right with the World**

One motto at National Geographic, one of the most beloved publications worldwide, is "celebrate what's right with the world." As you read your Feedback, remember to focus on what's RIGHT – not just what's wrong. At one company where I regularly coach leaders through their 360s, we write their top five strengths right at the top page of their reports. You gain just as much learning from what's working as what isn't – probably more. Remember, you grow in the direction of your strengths; be sure to mine your Feedback so you know what they are.

### **9. Treat Participants Kindly**

It's hard to give candid feedback. It's also a favor you've asked of some very special people. Participants can be just as shy about offering their feedback as you might feel about receiving it; assure them that their time has been well-spent and that their insight has been valuable by following up with them after your 360. It's not uncommon to take your participants to lunch to follow up with them and express your gratitude.

### **10. Get Into Action!**

Your 360 is the means to an end; it is not an end in itself. Remember the purpose you set out to achieve when you began this process. Now go out and put it to use! You might create your own little scorecard to keep track of progress or set up some accountability with a coach or a colleague to make sure you stay the course.

Remember, as you embark upon your 360, you may wish to keep the list of Top Ten Ways to Be Successful as a reminder of how to get the most out of your Feedback.

As an executive coach, it is my mission to help leaders like you truly be their best. You have made an investment in yourself, and I want to support you in that in any way I can.

### **360 Services**

If you get stuck at any point throughout your 360, if you want a second opinion, a little advice, some guidance or a bit of coaching along the way, call us. We're here to help.





# *How We Can Help*

## **FREE 20 Minute Consultation**

As a gift for listening to this program, we are giving you a free 20 minute consultation with any of our associates. In this session, we can

- answer questions about the process
- help you define your purpose for your 360
- spot check your Questionnaire
- help you make your list of participants as powerful as possible
- guide you in designing your reflective process and help you in creating your Action Plan.

Your 360 will be enhanced by pulling a coach into the process, so please take advantage of this opportunity.

## **FREE Email Questions**

You also have free e-mail access to us if we can answer any question for you at all at [info@the360investment.com](mailto:info@the360investment.com).

## **Just-in-Time Coaching and Assistance**

For those of you who would like more consistent support throughout the entire process, we offer a weekly 60 minute conference call to get your questions answered, hear how other leaders are designing their 360s, learn strategies for taking powerful action, and taking next steps.

## **360 Management**

We can also partner with you more closely. We can serve as a third party to distribute and collect your Questionnaires. We can even put together a report for you so you have all of your data collected in one place for easy reference.

## **Questionnaire Design**

We can help you design your Questionnaire and consult with you until it feels like you've really achieved what you want to achieve.

## **Reflection and Action Planning**

We can help you review your results and provide intensive coaching in the Reflection and Action Planning phase of your 360, and support you as you put your plan into place.

## **Coaching for Leadership**

And if you really want to sustain the learning from your 360 and make powerful, lasting changes to achieve your goals, we offer ongoing coaching and interview-based assessments.

**Send us your feedback!**

Whether we can help you a lot or a little, know you don't have to go through this 360 process alone. And we love feedback, too! So please send us your thoughts, share your 360 experiences, let us know how we can better support you! It's our intention to help you preserve and enhance the investment you've made.

**Action Item**

Turn off the Audio and review again the different support options for Getting the Support You Need on Page 71. There may be a way to leverage the investment you've made and work with us to multiply it many times over. Flag this page so you can refer to it whenever you need to. Use us as a resource!

When you're ready, turn the Audio back on.

By listening to this program, you show yourself to be someone who cares deeply about your personal leadership and your professional growth. It's so courageous of you and so inspiring that you are this committed to being your best. I applaud you for that, and I wish you much success as you continue to wow people with your dedication and drive. A report put out by the McKinsey Company and the Society for Organizational Learning asserts that the most important tool for leading in the 21st century is the leader's self. Congratulations on taking the steps to make your self the best it can be.

*Congratulations!*