TRANSFORMING HIGH-SILO, LOW-FEEDBACK ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES: USING 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK AND COACHING TO MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL IN INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND CULTURES

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology in Organization Development
Alliant International University
Marshall Goldsmith School of Management
Fresno Campus
2009
The dissertation of Shahrzad Sherry Nooravi, "Transforming High-Silo, Low-Feedback Organizational Cultures: Using 360-Degree Feedback and Coaching to Maximize Potential in Individuals, Groups, and Cultures," approved by her Committee, has been accepted and approved by the Faculty of the Marshall Goldsmith School of Management, Fresno Campus, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology in Organization Development.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid (French proverb). Little by little, the bird builds its nest.

Completing my doctoral program has been an invigorating challenge. Each time I made my way to Fresno and grew in my knowledge, I was adding another piece to my nest. You all made it happen with your love, wisdom, and encouragement—for which I will be eternally grateful.

To my dear husband, thank you for always seeing the big picture and encouraging me to pursue this dream, without giving it a second thought. Your energy, kind spirit, and loving nature bring light to every day of my life.

To my lovely family, Mom, Dad, Bobby, and Shervin, thank you so much for your love and support, particularly during these last few years. Your kind words of encouragement have made all the difference. Mom and Dad, thank you for teaching to view life from a lens of abundance.

To my lovely belle mere (mother-in-law, literal French translation: pretty mother), beau pere (handsome father), beau frere (handsome brother), and adorable and bright Zaynab and Mustafa, thank you for all the love and support you give me.

Hollie Packman, what a ride it has been. I feel so blessed that we got together that one day in the summer of 1996. Having you in my life has been such a pleasure and gift.

Erika Wendt, my first and best friend in San Diego and a true confidant, I cherish our friendship and appreciate you for being the bright star that you are. And thanks for the brilliant suggestion for taking a class in Fresno!

Dr. Carl Mack and Dr. Toni Knott, I have learned so much from your wisdom. Thank you for all you do for Alliant, and I look forward to knowing you in the years to come.
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Transforming High-Silo, Low-Feedback Organizational Cultures: Using 360-Degree Feedback and Coaching to Maximize Potential in Individuals, Groups, and Cultures

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2009

This research project explored the impact of using 360-degree feedback and coaching for 33 leaders. Each participant received feedback on his or her strengths and developmental needs and worked with a coach to create an action plan for improvement. Overall improvement was rated by the coach using feedback from the participant and feedback providers along with the coach's observations. The majority of participants (84%) were rated as demonstrating change (54% had major change and 30% had some change). The top trends for areas of strength that emerged from the data were competent (97%), likeable (48%), respected (36%), trustworthy (27%), and smart (15%). The top areas for development were communication (63%), assertiveness (24%), engaging one's team/creating a team approach (18%), and improving work/life balance and stress (18%).

The specific areas of communication were harsh communication (38%), the
need to be more open (29%), and the need to be more proactive with communication (14%).

The literature review contains an overview of the background and history of 360-degree feedback and how to connect it to organizational strategy. It also reviews the best practice for obtaining feedback and the impact that feedback has on leadership coaching. The strengths and developmental needs of all participants were examined from a team and cultural perspective. The researcher posits that leaders can propel positive organizational change by beginning with 360-degree feedback and coaching of leaders. As leaders shift their behavior, they also shift the behavior of their teams and teams change culture. Recommendations for changing tribal behavior include coaching leaders, creating an abundance mentality, and including courage as an organizational competency.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Currently, 360-degree feedback is used to further leadership development, employee development, communication, and culture change (Waldman, Atwater, & Antonioni, 1998). Many managers have not received as much honest feedback as is necessary for an accurate self-perception, and when anonymous feedback solicited from others is compared with an employee's self-evaluation, the employee may form a more realistic picture of his or her strengths and weaknesses. This may prompt behavior change, especially when such change is encouraged and supported by the organization (Waldman et al., 1998). This feedback can be particularly powerful when it is followed up with coaching. Smither, London, Flutt, Vargas, and Kucine (2003) examined the effectiveness of 360-degree feedback when participants met with a coach versus when participants did not meet with a coach. The authors found that individuals who met with a coach to discuss their feedback and their action plan were more likely to set specific goals and achieve them in the years ahead.

Although researchers have found that implementing a 360-degree feedback program has multiple benefits that promote growth of individuals and organizations, there are many caveats to manage. When a 360-degree feedback program is implemented without awareness of these challenges, it can have the opposite intended effect (low performance, low morale, skepticism, etc.).
When 360s Are Used Improperly

I have personally experienced the negative effects of when 360-degree feedback is used unethically and improperly. I once worked for a firm that used 360 data as part of a performance appraisal system, and the results ranged from being ineffective to disastrous. As the research illustrates, most people will not give downside or critical feedback if they know it may affect a person's annual salary, salary increase, or potential for promotion. In the company I was working for, those few who were honest and took the process seriously by giving constructive feedback (rather than glossing their way through and just giving positive feedback) ended up paying with low performance ratings, demotions, and undesirable projects.

These are some of the reasons most organizations limit 360 feedback to development purposes only as the alternative has many requirements, as is illustrated in the literature review. I believe if an organization wants to tie 360 feedback to performance and promotions, there should be consideration of a plethora of issues that are discussed in this research. Last, I believe that there are inherent risks with having internal consultants gather this confidential information. Although the internal person may be ethical and do all he or she can to maintain confidentiality, there is a risk of senior leadership wanting to see the data for different reasons.

Coaching Initiative for Top Leaders: 360 Feedback Followed by Coaching

I was recently involved in a large coaching initiative with a Fortune 500 firm. The firm commissioned Packman & Associates and
another firm to coach 67 of its highest level employees (director level and above). They sought the help of external consultants because they wanted to ensure that feedback providers would be honest and forthright with their feedback. They also wanted to ensure confidentiality and to prevent a conflict of interest of Human Resources possessing this confidential information. Last, they chose to have 360 feedback used strictly for development.

Both the leaders and employees of the client organization reported the existence of silos and general employee discomfort with giving feedback to one another. A silo can be defined as a lack of communication and common goals between departments in an organization and can be seen as the opposite of systems thinking in an organization (Wikipedia, 2009).

Although they had a performance management program in place, it was used minimally to give feedback to employees. The employees reported being uncomfortable giving feedback to one another. Some of the comments by executives help illustrate the culture:

1. "We're not candid and don't give feedback."
2. "There is an elephant in every room."
3. "We talk a mean game with our multiple initiatives to make us a better place to work. When it gets difficult or gets to a risky complicated conversation, we under-engage."
4. "Lack of courage is a common theme."
5. "Even when I know it's important to be candid and tell someone he or she needs to move on, I don't do it because I don't want to hurt their feelings."
They explained that their company had a low feedback culture and that people generally balked at giving feedback or, when pressed, just said all positive things. The leaders who wanted the 360s wanted each of their executives to have a piece of paper that told them what they were doing well and what they needed to work on. One leader said, "No numbers, we give hundreds of numbers to them in their bonuses." They also did not want this tied to anything but development.

The client company sought the consultants' help (Packman & Associates and another firm) with the 360 feedback and coaching process. This project was strictly for personal development and not tied to Human Resources or performance management. The client agreed that only the coach and the participant would be privy to the feedback report. The participant's supervisor was not given the report nor was the supervisor aware of the details of the coaching the employee was receiving. Some participants chose to give an overview of their feedback and their action steps to their supervisors, but it was their choice and at their discretion.

*Strengths and Development Needs and Coaching and Development*

There were 33 senior-level executives who participated in the 360-feedback process. The foundation for each participant's coaching was this 360-feedback report based on the themes of strengths and development needs that emerged after interviews with 6 to 8 feedback providers (a sample can be found in Appendix A). All of the 33 participants had an opportunity for follow-up interviews after the
coaching was completed. This research is a study of these 33 completed reports. Three people did not have follow-up interviews.

Rich Data Source to Examine Leadership and Communication

Since they all worked in the same organization, it is likely that they have experienced the organizational culture in some similar ways. As a result, it is possible that there are trends in their strengths as well as their developmental needs. These are explored in the Results section to better understand how these trends can help scholar-practitioners coach executives who work in low-feedback, high-silo cultures. My research contains a rich data source to examine the leadership and communication approaches of 30 executive-level employees where the results are likely generalizable about the impact of 360 feedback and coaching.

Purpose and Rationale

Researchers have found that 360-degree feedback is an effective tool for coaches when they need to help their clients understand their strengths and development areas as well as areas for action plans. The research questions are: What is the impact of 360 feedback and coaching on executives working in a high-silo, low-feedback organizational culture? What is the effectiveness of coaching following 360 feedback? Of participants who had some or major change, what were their areas for development? Of participants with no change, what were their areas for development? In general, what are strengths and development needs of executives who have been working in a low-feedback silo environment?
My research was built on the beliefs that individual performance contributes to overall organizational effectiveness. Thus, an organizational development (OD) consultant can improve organizational outcomes by helping link individual performance to organizational strategies and goals. Three hundred and sixty degree feedback is one of the key tools used in the field of organization development to help an employee discover his or her strengths and areas of development. My research contributes to the field of organization development because feedback and coaching are integral parts of organization effectiveness and improvement. This research also informs scholar-practitioners on how to help clients who work in organizations with silos and low-feedback cultures.

Organization of the Chapters

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 (Literature Review) gives a background and history of 360 feedback, the benefits and challenges of implementing a 360-feedback program, and how to connect 360 feedback to organizational performance. It also reviews research on best practices for obtaining feedback and the impact that the feedback has on leadership coaching. Chapter 3 (Methods) describes how the 360 process was implemented with the client as well as how the results were analyzed. I give an overview of the questions the consultants used when interviewing feedback providers about the participants' strength and development needs along with information on the entire process from the first contact with each participant to the final coaching meeting. Chapter 4 (Findings and Results) gives an overview of the findings. Chapter 5 (Discussion and Recommendations) presents the best approach
for collecting 360 feedback along with analysis of trends in strengths and development needs in this high-silo, low-feedback culture. I also discuss how to help this and other clients with high-silo, low-feedback cultures along with learnings from the use of 360s. The next chapter focuses on the literature on the history of 360s and their benefits and challenges.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides recent and relevant research on 360-degree feedback. The review is divided into five sections. The first section, Rationale, Background, and History of 360-Degree Feedback, gives the rationale behind 360s as well as their background and history. The second section, The Benefits and Challenges of 360-Degree Feedback for Development and Beyond, gives an overview of benefits and challenges that generally accompany 360-degree feedback as well as benefits and challenges of using 360 feedback for purposes beyond development (performance appraisals, promotions, etc.). The next section, Connecting 360 Feedback to Organizational Strategy and Performance, illustrates the link between 360 scores, employee engagement, and corporate performance; gives best practices for linking 360-degree feedback to organizational strategy; and demonstrates how to evaluate one's 360-degree feedback efforts. The fourth section, Best Practices for Obtaining Feedback, reviews the literature on the best methods for gathering feedback. The last section, Leadership Coaching Best Practices, demonstrates the performance leadership coaches place on obtaining 360 feedback prior to coaching their clients.

Rationale, Background, and History of 360-Degree Feedback

The Prevalence of 360s: Why 360s?

It is time-consuming, people-intensive, rife with politics, and comes with a significant price tag. Yet almost every Fortune 100
company is doing it. Why? While some firms may be attracted to the process or its sheer popularity, many companies are gaining significant organizational and individual benefits that they believe justify the investment. These companies are approaching 360-degree feedback in similar ways. (Rogers, Rogers, & Metlay, 2002, p. 45)

Keeping Up With the Competition

Waldman et al. (1998) suggested that the choice to adopt 360-degree feedback reflects a response to environmental pressures and a desire to keep up with the competition. Institutional theory suggests that organizations make attempts to imitate their competition or other firms in an organizational network. Waldman et al. stated that a similar phenomenon of imitation occurred when implementing quality circles and total Quality Management (TQM). They also stated that institutional theory and imitation become more and more relevant as organizations face uncertain situations.

Employees Are Demanding “Real” Feedback

Many organizations implement 360-feedback systems with the intent of just giving employees feedback that may help them in their development. Although most organizations have some sort of performance management system in place, employees frequently complain that they do not receive real and candid feedback from their supervisors or colleagues. Oftentimes, these employees say they want more than a Good job comment during review time. One of the reasons it works best for strictly personal development is that people are more likely to give honest feedback if they know it will not be tied to salary increases or bonuses. According to Atwater and Waldman (1998), an estimated 90% of
Fortune 1000 firms use some sort of multisource assessment where participants are rated by a whole circle of people, including supervisors, subordinates, peers, and even customers. The majority of organizations use it for development, and the ratings are not included in the manager's formal performance appraisal. Waldman et al. (1998) stated that 12% of American organizations are using full 360-degree programs, 25% are using upward appraisals, and 18% are using peer appraisals.

Background of 360 Feedback

Historically, employees received feedback from only their supervisors. Over time, as hierarchies became flattened and the need to respond to customers became more urgent, organizations employed 360-degree feedback to equip employees with the information they needed to meet the challenges of change and to leverage their individual talents to meet organizational goals (Rogers et al., 2002). The goal of 360 feedback is to obtain the views, observations, and criticisms of a person's behaviors and competencies from a representative sample of his or her stakeholders. Hence the term 360 means one's superiors, peers, direct reports, as well as vendors and external and internal clients. The purpose of seeking feedback from all stakeholders is for the participant to receive a complete picture of how he or she is perceived in terms of strengths and development needs. There are several methods for gathering the feedback, including interviews as well as standardized electronic approaches through online surveys. According to Lepsinger and Lucia (1997), feedback provides a complete portrait of behaviors on the job—one that looks at people from every angle and every
perspective. They stated that feedback is akin to having a full-length portrait, a profile, a close-up of the face, and a view from the back all in one.

*Measuring How and What*

Where past measurements typically focused on how things are accomplished, an increasing number of organizations now incorporate elements of how things are accomplished into their individual and company performance assessments (Maylett & Riboldi, 2007). Maylett and Riboldi noted that tools like 360 feedback have gained popularity in evaluating individual behaviors and overall levels of engagement, the soft side of performance that is not typically included in a company's profit and loss statement. Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) identified five guidelines for a successful 360-feedback process: (a) Link the effort to a strategic initiative or business need, (b) convince senior management to participate in and drive the effort, (c) emphasize clear and frequent communication about the initiative's purpose and implications for each member of the organization, (d) ensure that people see the behaviors that will be measured as important and relevant to their jobs, and (e) provide ongoing support and follow-up. Today, many companies fully customize the 360-feedback process to the specific competencies and values required to meet their goals, often creating multiple sets of competencies to ensure relevancy to the business. Some companies have gone further and linked the process to performance appraisal and succession planning.
Most Successful Implementation of 360s Is for Development and Coaching

In their study of 43 global organizations, Rogers et al. (2002) had many interesting and useful findings that are highlighted throughout this study. One finding was that organizations that derive the most benefit from the 360-feedback process are those who use it for individual development planning, coaching, and feedback. These organizations carefully manage every step of the process from choosing participants and coaches to investing in follow-up training.

Although 360s are in use in many organizations, the reasoning varies among the companies implementing them. Some want to keep up with other organizations who are doing it, some want to have a full portrait of the individual (beyond what the supervisor observes), and some want to measure how the person does his or her job (rather than what he or she produces). A common thread is that most organizations use 360 feedback for development purposes only. Some organizations have started exploring ways to tie 360 feedback into organizational strategy. In making progressive movements forward with the 360-feedback tool, it is also important to understand the history of how it came into use.

History of 360 Feedback

According to Rogers et al. (2002), the origins of the 360 feedback can be traced to early participant satisfaction surveys designed to improve communication and morale and to an increased understanding of the power of goal setting and feedback to inspire performance. Regular performance reviews between supervisor and participant became the norm. However, changes in the 20th century workplace have diminished a
supervisor's ability to assess fully his or her participant's performance.

**Flatter Hierarchies and Fewer Organizational Boundaries**

Organizations have streamlined their structures and flattened hierarchies to become more competitive, creating bigger jobs for managers who now have more direct reports and less time. Participants are required to communicate and work with others across organizational boundaries and out of the supervisor's reach, undermining the reliability of traditional supervisor-participant performance feedback (Rogers et al., 2002).

**Global Competition and Adaptability**

With the pressure of global competition, the focus of business has moved from the company to the customer and marketplace. For today's participants to be responsive and adapt to change, they need to know not only their bosses' views, but also the perceptions of peers and customers. The notion of subordinate feedback revolutionized the feedback process. Research demonstrated that the perceptions held by direct reports of their supervisors were not only accurate but also a motivator in changing managerial behavior. So, 360 feedback—or multisource feedback—began to sweep through organizations. Participants began to receive feedback from a variety of sources, including supervisors, peers, and customers, and were then able to compare the results with their own views. The process provided participants with information on how they manage, work with others, and
obtain results. Hoping to gain a competitive advantage, organizations in the 1990s began to align their feedback processes with overall strategies and goals. The 360-feedback process was designed around those behaviors, competencies, and individual characteristics that would lead to the accomplishment of strategic objectives. For example, many companies began the 360-feedback process by defining key organizational capabilities (Rogers et al., 2002).

Competencies Tied to 360 Feedback

Rogers et al. (2002) developed a competency model that detailed these behaviors or skills necessary to achieve those capabilities. (The competency model became the basis for measuring participant behaviors and skills during the 360-feedback process.) The reasons for beginning the 360-feedback process were varied. One company became concerned about a shrinking talent pool and placed development of leaders as its highest priority. Another defined corporate values and needs after a merger to clarify the new culture and mission. In these companies, the 360-feedback survey was fully customized to specific competencies and values.

The rise of 360 feedback can be traced to the human relations movement of the 1950s and 1960s when organizations attempted to improve organizational processes and communication through various forms of what came to be known as organization development (OD). One popular form of OD was survey feedback. These general surveys were used to collect data to examine factors such as jobs, benefits, pay, and organization communication.
The Expansion of 360 Feedback

Originally, 360 feedback was used to accelerate the growth and development of a talented participant. The belief was that understanding discrepancies between how we see ourselves and how others see us would enhance self-awareness and lead to personal development. High-potential executives received a full assessment, with support from an external psychologist who designed and followed through on a detailed development plan. Over the years, the uses of 360 feedback have expanded significantly to include not only executive development, feedback, individual development planning, and coaching, but also career development, training, and performance where the commitment to development was in question. Buy-in and support for 360 feedback among participants was affected.

According to Rogers et al. (2002), most organizations are still using 360 feedback as a development and feedback tool. Organizations that derive the most benefit from 360 feedback use it for individual development planning, coaching, and feedback much more so than do companies that derived the least benefit. These higher benefit organizations believe that with individual development as a primary goal, a development culture will emerge, resulting in higher performance for the company as a whole.

Thus, 360s evolved over time through a combination of changes in organizations. Over time, organizational structures slowly moved from hierarchies to flatter organizations with fewer boundaries. There was also an increase in global competition. In addition, many organizations sought to tie behaviors and competencies to organizational strategies.
Utilizing 360 feedback has many benefits, including improved individual performance, improved employee communication, and a more participative culture, as is illustrated in the next section. However, there are many inherent paradoxes with the use of 360s, including those of roles, group performance, measurement, and rewards. It is also important to note that 360 feedback works particularly well for certain organization cultures and brings distress to other cultures.

The Benefits and Challenges of 360-Degree Feedback for Development and Beyond

Benefits of 360s

If traditional appraisals depend on the opinion of a supervisor, who may not always be in the best position to judge and is never anonymous, Waldman et al. (1998) asked, would 360 appraisals not be an improvement even if not always totally honest? They stated that ratings from multiple sources usually provide more reliable data. In a 5-year study of upward feedback for 252 managers, Walker and Smither (1999) studied managers over five annual administrations and found that managers initially rated poor or moderately showed significant improvement in upward feedback rating over the 5-year period and that these improvements were beyond what could be expected due to regression to the mean. The researchers also found that managers who met with direct reports to discuss their upward feedback improved more than did other managers. In addition, managers improved more in years when they discussed the previous year's feedback with direct reports. These findings illustrate that what managers do with upward feedback has a positive and direct correlation to its benefits.
**A More Participatory Culture**

The current use of 360 feedback is the desire to further management of leadership development, employee development, communication, and culture change (Waldman et al., 1998). Many managers have not received as much honest feedback as is necessary for an accurate self-perception. When anonymous feedback solicited from others is compared with an employee’s self-evaluation, the employee may form a more realistic picture of his or her strengths and weaknesses.

**Increased Self-Awareness**

This may prompt behavior change, especially when such change is encouraged and supported by the organization. By increasing managerial self-awareness through formalized 360-degree or upward feedback, an organization’s culture will become more participatory and will be able to react more quickly to the needs of internal and external customers, which should ultimately lead to increasing levels of trust and communication between managers and their constituents, fewer grievances, and greater customer satisfaction (Waldman et al., 1998).

**Challenges of 360 Feedback**

One aspect of 360-degree feedback consistently stymies executives: peer appraisal. According to Peiperl (2001), 360s often exacerbate bureaucracy, heighten political tensions, and are time consuming. He studied the implementation of 360-degree feedback at 17 companies (from small firms to Fortune 500 firms) in different industries and found that there were four paradoxes imbedded in the process.
The Paradoxes of Feedback

The four paradoxes are:

1. The Paradox of Roles: One cannot be both a peer and a judge. Some people fear that providing negative feedback would damage relationships and ultimately hurt their own careers and those of their colleagues. Others resist giving 360 feedback because they prefer to give it informally rather than make it a matter of record. In this paradox, people are torn between being supportive colleagues and hard-nosed judges.

2. The Paradox of Group Performance: Focusing on individuals puts the entire group at risk. Depending on the culture and group dynamics, 360s can breed deep cynicism, suspicion, and an us-against-them mentality.

3. The Measurement Paradox: The easier feedback is to gather, the harder it is to apply. Ratings themselves do not yield the detailed, qualitative comments and insights that can help a colleague improve performance. Without specific comments, recipients are left with no information to act on and with little sense of what might help them improve their job performance.

4. The Paradox of Rewards: When peer appraisals count the most, they help the least. In this paradox, managers find themselves in a Catch-22. When rewards are on the line, peer appraisals may generate a lot of activity but usually deliver only short-term improvements in performance from feedback that may be conservative or incomplete. When not tied to rewards, feedback is likely to be more comprehensive (and
thus potentially useful) but is not seen as important by recipients, who may delay addressing it or ignore it altogether.

Feedback Can Bring More Damage Than Good

Other experts in the field also believe that 360 feedback can bring more damage than good. “You are left with nonpositive comments and you don’t know what to do with it and it damages your self-perception. The very construction is what inhibits its success” (Honeycutt, personal communication, September 12, 2009). Honeycutt saw the potential disadvantages as damaged relationships, not completely understanding the feedback and not knowing what to do with it, wasting time, and having the perception of, “Oh, it’s another one of those HR things we have to do again. We hate HR” (Honeycutt, personal communication, September 12, 2009). Valek (personal communication, September 19, 2009) believed that 360s can be damaging and prefers to help clients work on their strengths. She also believed that coaching from a manager is the best way to help employees grow and that performance management systems can be counterproductive.

The boxes of performance management systems are missing timing and culture. Good leaders fit the time and culture they are leading. We should throw out performance management systems—maybe it’s kinder to be civil. In the old days, people were valued for their eccentricities. It’s not right to be judged and it doesn’t make you better. It makes sensitive people worse. (Valek, personal communication, September 19, 2009)

Organizational Culture and 360 Success

There are three types of organizational cultures (bureaucratic, market control, and clan control), and though all three may be found in a given organization, one will dominate organizational arrangements
(Snodgrass & Szewczak, 1990). A bureaucratic system of control relies on a formal structure and rules that define appropriate behavior and performance. Responsibility is vested in the chain of command, and it is probably the organizational control system that is least conducive to 360 feedback (Jackson & Greller, 1998). A market control system uses price, competition, or market share to provide information on organizational effectiveness and individual performance. The bottom line summarizes and allows comparisons of performance.

The Relationship of Organization Systems to 360 Feedback

In these systems, 360 feedback may provide a viable method to measure interaction with customers and others outside the organization, and one’s customers can be surveyed and action planning can be done at the group level. A clan control system uses culture, values, commitment, and norms to control behavior. Clan control requires shared values and trust and, therefore, shared information and common work role perceptions (Ouchi, 1980). A 360-feedback process may be a natural part of clan control systems.

The Importance of Feedback for Task Interdependent Cultures

In high interdependent settings people must work together closely, and thus mutual feedback is critical to coordinating their efforts and knowing how other members view their performance because it allows each member to coordinate future behaviors (Jackson & Greller, 1998). There is a challenge for using 360 feedback for evaluation purposes in these settings as it could interrupt the collaborative/interdependent
environment or induce employees to not differentiate among coworkers when making their ratings (Thomas & Brentz, 1994, cited in Jackson & Greller, 1998). Where there is low interdependence, 360 feedback may offer little incremental value over traditional appraisals. Not all organizations are designed for or need as much participation that a 360-feedback process requires, and forcing participation when it is not well-suited is a quick route to failure (Thomas & Brentz, cited in Jackson & Greller, 1998). One thing that is certain is that 360 feedback can be helpful when used only for the development of employees.

Using 360 Feedback for Developmental Purposes

Rogers et al. (2002) emphasized that organizations that derive the most benefit from the 360-feedback process are those that (a) use it for individual development planning, coaching, and feedback; and (b) carefully manage every step of the process, from choosing who will participate to investing in extensive training for all involved employees. Through their in-depth study of 43 global organizations, Rogers et al. found that there were six critical best practices to help leaders acquire the most from their investment in the 360-feedback process.

1. Use 360-degree feedback primarily for individual development. Linkage to performance appraisal, compensation, and succession planning is risky unless the organization is ready and a development culture exists.

2. Link the process and align participants with strategic imperatives. Build business-focused competencies and customize to specific functions, levels, and jobs. Involve the customer.
3. Exert high administrative control over every aspect of the 360-feedback process.

4. Use senior management as role models. Invest time, money, and resources.

5. Use highly trained internal coaches to leverage your investment. This helps participants understand the feedback and follow through on an action plan. Sharing results with a supervisor can create a team approach to development.

6. Evaluate the return on investment or effectiveness of the process as you would any business endeavor. It is important to treat 360 feedback as a human resource that adds value to the business.

Challenges for 360s Beyond Development

Atwater and Waldman (1998) indicated that there are valid reasons for limiting the use of 360-degree feedback to developmental purposes and keeping it separate from the formal appraisal process. These limitations include altered and uneven ratings, anonymous ratings, and legal consequences.

Altered and Uneven Ratings

According to Atwater and Waldman (1998), researchers have demonstrated that when individuals believe the ratings will be used for performance appraisals, they may alter their ratings, generally more favorably, but occasionally lower (if they see it as a chance for retribution). Next, if ratings are used as a part of an individual’s (including supervisor’s) appraisal, supervisors may try to obtain higher ratings by catering to subordinates at the expense of meeting
organizational goals. Another tactic is when supervisors implicitly or explicitly indicate that *if you give me good ratings, I'll give you good ratings*. In some companies, the idea of subordinate or peer ratings as part of an appraisal is so taboo that many individuals boycott the process and refuse to participate. When this happens, feedback becomes less useful for both developmental and evaluation purposes.

*Employees May Sabotage the Program*

Another challenge of using 360 feedback as part of performance appraisals is that employees may rebel and try to sabotage the program (Waldman et al., 1998). London and Smither (1995) found that when ratings become evaluative rather than purely developmental, up to 35% of raters change their ratings.

*Negative Employee Attitudes*

Timmreck and Bracken (1996) found that one half of the companies surveyed in 1997 that had implemented 360 feedback for appraisal had removed it because of negative employee attitudes and inflated ratings. Frisch (2001) noted that in highly political, *out for yourself* organizational cultures, anonymous feedback becomes an opportunity to seek revenge or *take shots*. Feedback that taps into power struggles and turf disputes can be personally damaging, particularly because employees can hide behind the anonymity of the process.

*Anonymous and Open Ratings*

There are challenges to both open and anonymous ratings. In a study of UPS, the company asked employees after they had provided upward
ratings whether they would have altered the ratings if they knew they
would be used as part of their managers' formal performance evaluations. Their findings suggested that some individuals would raise and some
would even lower ratings if they were to be used for evaluations. Ratings that are not anonymous become less genuine, and some say they
would raise their ratings if the rater would be identified to the
manager.

Legal Consequences

Another drawback of anonymous ratings is if they are used as part
of documentation for a personnel action (demotion, dismissal, unattained
promotion, or pay raise) the employee being rated could potentially make
a legal case against the firm (Waldman et al., 1998). Frisch (2001)
noted that from the early days of 360s it was known that there was a
compromise, trading off the weaknesses of small samples in order to tap
peer and direct report opinions about a manager. In a sample of three
or four direct reports, one outlying high or low score can significantly
affect the calculation of averages that drive conclusions. When 360
feedback is tied to compensation or promotion decisions, these small
samples are shouldering too heavy a burden given their lack of
statistical power. More pervasive, such scores are so vulnerable to
manipulation that they inadvertently encourage a you scratch my back,
I'll scratch yours attitude, thus undermining any hopes of truthful
feedback.
Know What You Are Measuring

If a manager’s 360 ratings depend on creating a positive climate, these factors may detract from work directly geared toward bottom line results (Waldman et al., 1998). Overall, a more balanced approach is to rate managers on their results as well as on how they achieved them in different ways, including creating a communicative team culture.

Connecting 360 Feedback to Organizational Strategy and Performance

Opponents of 360 feedback feel the direct and indirect costs are too high and that it is a risky proposition that will make people uncomfortable and create rifts, thereby adversely affecting productivity. Lepsinger and Lucia’s (1997) response to these objections is that the organization should focus on the business the program will address, the link between behaviors measured and organizational effectiveness, the value of seeing yourself as others see you, and the wisdom of not waiting for a problem to be serious before taking action. The literature, accordingly, states that 360 surveys should reflect behaviors the organization values most.

What Is Measured and Rewarded Drives Behavior

Even when 360-degree feedback ratings are used strictly for development, individuals will tend to modify behaviors in ways to receive more positive ratings (Waldman et al., 1998). Therefore, it is extremely important that 360-degree surveys reflect those behaviors that the organization values most highly. It is important to note that an advantage of 360-degree feedback is that it measures the how of
performance. This means how the person interacts with others and how the person accomplishes his or her job responsibilities. When one only measures the results (the what) you can miss the fact that some high performers also exhibit poor behavior that results in high turnover and potential lawsuits. On the positive side, high 360 scores have been shown to correlate with high employee engagement scores, which research shows positively affect a company's bottom line.

The Relationship Between Performance and 360-Degree Feedback

Maylett and Riboldi (2007) conducted a 3-year study with several hundred employees in various industries to analyze the results of performance evaluations, production performance, and 360-degree feedback. This study showed that there was no correlation between 360-degree feedback scores and performance evaluations. Maylett and Riboldi found that some of the employees with poor feedback scores were hitting their production and financial targets, which resulted in good performance evaluations, raises, and promotions. However, these managers' departments also experienced high levels of employee turnover and had difficulty attracting and retaining talent. "It soon became clear that these managers were meeting short-term targets at the expense of long-term profitability. They were pulling out all the stops to achieve these short-term revenue targets" (p. 50).

Feedback Can be a Predictor of Success

Ricklefs (as cited in Maylett & Riboldi, 2007) found that 360 feedback not only provided an understanding of a manager's past
behavior, it also acted as a predictor of future success. Ricklefs found these managers' 360 results were directly correlated with their employee survey results. This led to the discovery that 360-feedback results have a direct relationship with employee engagement results. Numerous studies (Byrnes, 2009; Gallup Consulting, 2009) have suggested that engaged employees provide better customer service, have lower rates of attrition and absenteeism, and demonstrate improved quality and increased productivity.

High Manager 360 Scores Correlate With High Employee Engagement

Maylett and Riboldi (2007) found a direct relationship between a manager's individual behavior, the overall engagement of that manager's team, and its general success. Managers scoring highest on their individual 360-degree reports typically logged similarly high marks on the employee engagement scores for their immediate departments. The researchers also found that solid individual 360-feedback scores had a strong correlation with team engagement scores. The authors referred to a number of studies that have shown that the level of employee engagement influences operational performance as measured by turnover, financial profitability, efficiency, quality, customer satisfaction, return on investment (ROI), and stock price.

Accountability

Atwater and Waldman (1998) stated that leaders of organizations are increasingly asking how they can hold individuals accountable for making improvements if they are the only ones who see the data. Atwater and Waldman agreed that this is a reasonable question, particularly when
companies are spending a good deal of time and money on the 360-degree feedback process.

Considerations for Using 360 Feedback With Performance Appraisals

Waldman et al. (1998) found that there are pressures to make 360-degree feedback evaluative because companies want to see a return on their investment. The researchers stated that in theory this seems logical but is fraught with issues. Based on their research experience, Atwater and Waldman offered five recommendations for companies that want to include 360-degree feedback in their performance management system.

First, in the beginning, only introduce 360-degree feedback for development and collect ratings anonymously and provide confidentiality to participants. Next, it is important to ensure the roles of anonymity and confidentiality. Introductory sessions should be conducted with all employees who will be involved in the process, including raters. Research has shown that even a 30-minute training session instructing potential raters on how to avoid possible rating errors can be useful. These trainings can help raters avoid central tendency error when only the middle values of the scale are used. Raters can also be taught to make constructive and behaviorally oriented comments. Third, before 360-degree feedback can be successfully incorporated into appraisals, individuals need to feel comfortable with the process, and they need to believe they will be rated honestly and treated fairly. This can be done through a survey or focus groups. An organization that has recently experienced layoffs or reduction in force is not a good candidate for this as skepticism will already be rampant. If 360
feedback is used for decisions on raises or promotions, grievances or lawsuits may be filed; it is important to take measures to avoid these types of repercussions. In addition, dissatisfaction with the process may take a toll on morale. Fourth, if the organization passes the readiness test, a first step could have employees share developmental areas/action plans with their supervisors without sharing specific ratings or comments. Companies like Nortel and Texaco use this process to promote accountability. Last, it is important to examine several criteria: (a) Which criteria in the appraisal will be addressed with the 360-degree feedback; (b) which rater group is in the best position to provide accurate feedback; (c) how will we handle the situation of an employee receiving conflicting ratings from different people; (d) how will employees who have too few peers or subordinates be rated or if raters did not participate; (e) what are the legal ramifications when a negative decision concerning a manager was influenced in whole, or in part, by a 360-degree feedback rating; (f) will extreme scores or outlier be dropped before averages are computed?

Although 360 feedback has been seen as useful, follow-up action on the areas for improvement was found to be the most critical factor in actually improving performance of evaluated participants (London & Beatty, 1993). It is vital that leaders consider multiple factors prior to implementing this type of program.

Avoiding the Pitfalls of 360s

According to Goodge and Watts (2000), when 360-feedback efforts fail, it is often a result of the way they are set up and managed. The
Whitbread Group offers a six-step plan for avoiding the pitfalls and ensuring that the process will be successful.

1. What is your strategy? How do people need to change to meet that strategy?

2. Carry out a formal review of the feasibility of a project before any work is undertaken. During this review, ask three questions:
   a. Are there significant differences between strong and weak performers? (If every individual is performing poorly, then inadequate resources, impossible objectives, or widespread mismanagement may explain the problem, but 360-degree feedback cannot solve these. If poor management is the reason for the difference between good and poor performers, then it is the managers who need the 360 feedback, not their staff.)
   b. Does each individual involved have six customers who are good judges of their performance?
   c. Can you support people's development with training, coaching, projects, and other development processes?

3. Organizations should spend 20% of the project's budget on the assessment and 80% on the subsequent development support. If you chose to use competencies and desired behaviors, it is important to link them to the company's current and future strategy.

4. When gathering the data, avoid long questions and qualifiers, or double negatives. Do not ask questions that ask about
results rather than behavior. Make sure to ask for some critical feedback. It is helpful to pilot the feedback process through a small group of participants (representing different parts of the business) and feedback providers to address practical problems, how well respondents answer, which questions do not work, and how helpful the feedback reports are.

5. Start where it is easy, like with parts of the business that are accustomed to discussing and improving personal performance. Another option is to incorporate it into a training course.

6. Tie the feedback to an agreed-upon action plan that is supported by the manager and the company. A best practice is for the participant and the manager to work through the feedback together.

Frisch (2001) recommended that organization leaders ask themselves three questions before implementing a 360-feedback program:

1. Is the organization mature enough to support the integrity of the collection and use of 360 feedback?

2. Are managers able and motivated to support the development of those who will receive 360 feedback? Their own coaching skills and a reward structure that recognizes their ability to reward others are important elements.

3. Are the recipients of 360-feedback data able and motivated to interpret the results and create actionable development plans that they will feel excited about implementing?
Even if one is current on the literature on 360-degree feedback and does all he or she can to avoid the pitfalls, there is still a need to evaluate the 360-feedback efforts.

_Evaluating 360-Feedback Efforts_

According to Waldman et al. (1998), there is little known about the effects of 360-degree feedback programs in organizations. In their telephone interviews with individuals who had spearheaded the implementation of 360 feedback at Fortune 500 firms, the only data available were employee and manager perceptions of the process, random anecdotes, or on rare occasions, changes in employee ratings of managers before and after upward feedback.

Nowack and Hartley (1999) recommended four steps for evaluating 360-feedback efforts:

1. Define what to evaluate and measure. The intervention should be tied to specific business needs and strategic objectives. Examples of questions to ask include:
   a. Were participants expected to have increased awareness about their strengths and development needs?
   b. Were participants expected to become more proficient in one or more competencies?
   c. Were participants expected to have more trusting, collaborative, or effective relationships with their bosses, staff, or peers?
   d. Were participants expected to create and implement a professional development plan?
   e. Once you have clarified what you want to evaluate, you can
design a set of questions that can be used for assessments.

2. Designing the survey: Select a target audience with different perspectives of a person's competencies. Once the audience is chosen to survey, define what level of evaluation you are most interested in. The next step is to generate survey questions, determine an appropriate response scale, and pilot test the survey.

3. Gathering data: After gathering the data, provide feedback and specific findings to all respondents through a company newsletter, e-mail, or the Intranet. Insert survey questions into a broad annual employee satisfaction survey. Maximize anonymity and confidentiality for all respondents and minimize the use of multiple, open-ended questions to ensure that the survey is brief, yet comprehensive.

4. Analyzing the data and summarizing results: Summarize your evaluation results in a simple, straightforward manner.

According to Waldman et al. (1998), one can measure effectiveness of a 360-feedback program by measuring a variety of items, including but not limited to ratee and rater reactions to the program; response rates, grievance rates, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, absenteeism/turnover; recruiting success, work behaviors, work performance and positive image with clients, customers, competitors, and suppliers. The authors also recommended assessing the program impact by using a pre-post control group design. In this scenario, behaviors and outcomes can be measured prior to feedback, as well as after feedback,
and some individuals should be selected to take part while others are not.

It is important to note that after implementing and evaluating a 360-degree feedback program, it is likely that members of the organization will slowly acquire the habit of giving and receiving feedback throughout the year and informally. It is thus important for an OD practitioner to be aware of the best practices for obtaining and giving feedback.

Best Practices for Obtaining Feedback

Giving feedback is central to good leadership and is one of the most difficult conversations leaders must have, as well as the one with the most potential for things to go wrong. Any organization that wants to improve its people's performance could do well just making sure there is enough positive feedback flowing between its employees (Rock, 2006). Without positive feedback, one does not know how he or she is doing nor how to perform to one's best.

A study of 4 million people by the Gallup organization found that people who receive regular recognition and praise increased their individual productivity, increased engagement among their colleagues, and were more likely to stay with the organization (Rath, 2004). When giving feedback, Rock (2006) suggested being specific, generous (choosing your words carefully), using permission and placement ("I have some positive feedback for you, is now a good time for me to share it?")", and striving for self-directed learning (helping the person identify what she or he did well).
Feedback provides information that lets you know how you are doing, and if you have a developmental goal, it reinforces the changes you are making, boosts self-confidence, and encourages you to continue (Kirkland & Manoogian, 1998). Three things must be considered when seeking feedback: who to ask, when to ask, and how to ask:

1. Who to ask: Ask someone whose opinion you respect and who will encourage you to improve effectiveness. It is important that this person has had enough time to observe your behavior and can give you honest and specific feedback.

2. When to ask for it: Select one goal you want to focus upon and obtain feedback on it, and seek feedback frequently on how you are doing.

3. How to ask for it: The authors recommended using the situation-behavior-impact (SBI) model to elicit relevant and forthcoming feedback because it gives people a framework for structuring their information and perceptions of you. It gives a way for the receiver to obtain specific and helpful feedback while it is safe for the feedback provider.

When evaluating feedback, you can use the self-management model of feedback by (a) evaluating accuracy (who is giving the feedback and how much do you respect their opinion), (b) value (is this feedback helpful to you), and (c) importance (what are you going to do about it?). Successful people only have two problems dealing with negative feedback: They do not want to hear it from us, and we do not want to give it to them (Goldsmith, 2007). Goldsmith stated that we accept feedback that is consistent with our self-image and reject feedback that is
inconsistent. Another challenge that Goldsmith saw with feedback is that it focuses on the past and not a positive future. "Negative feedback exists to prove us wrong (or at least many of us take it that way)" (p. 113).

When interviewing feedback providers, Goldsmith (2007) presented them with four requests (The Four Commitments): (a) Let go of the past, (b) tell the truth, (c) be supportive and helpful (not cynical or negative), and (d) pick something to improve yourself. He suggested a four-step technique, feedforward, for seeking feedback: (a) Pick a behavior that you would like to change which you believe would make a significant, positive difference in your life; (b) describe this objective in a one-on-one conversation with someone; (c) ask that person for two suggestions for the future that might help you achieve this positive change (these two ideas represent feedforward), and (d) listen attentively to the suggestions. The only response you can give is thank you, and you cannot judge, criticize, or praise the suggestion in any way.

The best thing about feedforward is that it overcomes the two biggest obstacles we face with negative feedback--the fact that successful people in dominant positions do not want to hear it and that their subordinates rarely want to give it (criticizing the boss, no matter how ardently he or she tells you to "bring it on," is rarely a great career move). "If feedback is past tense, feedforward is future perfect" (Goldsmith, 2007, p. 173).

Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) stated that facilitators need to turn recipients' attention toward examining what they are doing to cause
people to see them differently from the way they see themselves. Raters commit different errors, such as rating too highly or too leniently (Landy & Farr, 1980). Other errors include halo effects (generalizing from doing well in one area to doing well in all areas) and recency effects (weighing recently observed behavior highly versus behavior that was observed over the course of many months). Waldman et al. (1998) suggested training raters on how to complete forms and how to avoid rating errors.

Rock (2006) believed that we need to find a new model for giving feedback in the workplace.

Currently, the main way of giving feedback is to explore "what you did well, and what you could do better". . . . There are nifty ways of trying to pretend that you're doing something else, called a "feedback sandwich" in which you hide the "meat" (what they did wrong) inside of two bits of positive feedback, hoping it won't hurt as much. I propose this is just a manipulative way of trying to disguise that we're going to talk about what people did wrong. Of course, compared to blurting out negative feedback, a feedback sandwich is an improvement. But so is putting the deck chairs in neat rows on a boat about to sink. (p. 63)

Rock suggested that a better approach would be to ask the following types of questions: (a) What did you do well and what did you discover about yourself as a result, (b) what were the highlights of this project and what did you learn, (c) what went well and would you like to talk about how to do more of this, and (d) what did you do well and what impact do you think this had on everyone else?

Rock (2006) found this a better approach because people are already tough on themselves and because it works better to focus on creating new wiring than solving problems and that overall, we will be better at improving performance if we accentuate the positive and let people handle the negative on their own. It is essential for
organizational members to become comfortable with both giving and receiving feedback over time. This will improve performance as well as create an open and more collaborative culture. Using 360-degree feedback is, in fact, a best practice among leading business coaches.

The Use of 360 Feedback: Leadership Coaching Best Practices

Giber (2005) is a leadership coach who used 360-degree feedback in his practice in conjunction with a personality profile such as the NEO-PIR or the Hogan Personality assessment because he found that connecting personality feedback to the behaviors rated in a 360-degree instrument is essential. In addition, he encouraged coaches to go beyond looking at 360 feedback as data by talking to people to turn the 360 feedback into real information.

Smither et al. (2003) examined the effectiveness of 360-degree feedback when participants met with a coach versus when participants did not meet with a coach. The researchers found that individuals who met with a coach to discuss their feedback and their action plan were more likely to set specific goals and achieve them in the years ahead.

The Linkage Best Practices in Coaching Survey was completed by 235 organizations from various sized organizations around the world. When asked, "What leading-edge coaching models, tools, techniques, methods and approaches does your organization use?" 62% reported using 360-degree feedback, with action learning (48%) and supervisor interviews (48%) as the next two most used methods. They also found that 360-degree feedback in the coaching process plays the biggest role in
setting up the relationship, as well as in assessing the success of the coaching intervention (Linkage, 2005).

Coaching Models and Methodologies

Organizational leaders have been increasingly hiring coaches in the last decades, and the majority of research demonstrates the positive impact coaching can make on individuals and organizations (Fegetter, 2007; Kombarakaran, Baker, Yang, & Fernandes, 2008). According to Coutu and Kauffman (2009), 10 years ago most companies engaged a coach to fix toxic behavior at the top while today most companies hire coaches to develop the capabilities of high-potential performers. Charan (cited in Coutu & Kauffman, 2009) stated that as coaching has become more common, any stigma attached to receiving it has disappeared, and now it is often seen as a badge of honor. This growing field also has a large body of literature with many models and methodologies on coaching best practices. For the sake of brevity and focus, I discuss a few of them in this paper. Kilburg (1996) is frequently cited in the coaching literature, with the definition of executive coaching as:

a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p. 142)

Kilburg’s (2001) eight component model addressed the components for effective coaching as follows: (a) client’s commitment to the path of progressive development, (b) coach’s commitment to the path of progressive development, (c) characteristics of the client’s problems
and issues, (d) structure of the coaching containment, (e) client-coach relationship, (f) quality of coaching interventions, (g) adherence protocol, and (h) client's-coach's organizational setting.

Although this model has key components of success such as commitment by both parties, a relationship and a protocol for adherence, it does not address the important role of feedback. In an empirical study of coaching effectiveness, Smither et al. (2003) found that, after receiving multisource feedback, managers who worked with an executive coach were more likely to set specific goals than were managers who did not work with an executive coach.

Saporito (1996) believed a coaching model needs to help ensure the highest possible degree of relevance to the challenges facing executives and follows a four-step model:

1. Stage 1: Defining the context. This involves finding out the key challenges facing the organization and the behavioral competencies the client needs to fulfill the expectations for success.

2. Stage 2: Assessment of individual. This includes an interview of the client to learn how he or she views challenges in his or her current role and a 360-degree assessment.

3. Stage 3: Development planning. Feedback to individual and creating a plan. In this stage, the client receives the feedback and, with the coach, creates a developmental plan.

4. Stage 4: Implementation: Executive coaching. In this stage the developed plan serves as a point of reference for both the client and the coach.
These models emphasize the importance of gathering feedback as part of the coaching process. According to Gregory, Levy, and Jeffers (2008), an organization should not only support the use of coaching and feedback, but also genuinely emphasize the importance of both. "It is a responsibility of the organization to create a supportive, approachable environment that provides an arena for open and honest communication" (p. 48). This can be done by endorsing the executive coaching and helping kick off the coaching intervention (Gregory et al., 2008). Their model has five steps:

1. Stage 1: A catalyst or coaching. An event typically occurs that signals the need for coaching. At this time, the client's issue is evaluated and a coach is selected who has an area of expertise that fits. Personal chemistry is also important in this phase as things like gender, ethnicity, and life experience between the coach and client are essential for a productive outcome (Hodgetts, 2002).

2. Stage 2: Establishing the relationship. Both the role of the coach as a source of feedback and the client's feedback orientation play roles in the success of this stage and can dictate the nature of the relationship. The executive may have an immediate emotional reaction to the feedback, and it is important for the coach to use careful observation and discretion as they may affect the client's openness.

3. Stage 3: Data gathering. The data should be harvested from a variety of individuals, and the coach should take care to draw information that will help the client. When the coach gives the feedback, he or she must maintain an environment where the client can
express strong emotions of fear, anxiety, and resistance and take steps to manage these feelings (Giglio, Diamante, & Urban, 1998).

4. Stage 4: Utilizing feedback. The purpose of this stage is to take action, and goal setting is a major component. This stage will be the longest in duration since behavior change takes time. Initial feedback should be used throughout this stage to benchmark progress.

5. Stage 5: Outcomes. This stage may occur at the same time as Stage 4. Satisfaction can be gauged by gathering additional feedback from all parties.

The researchers also talked about the importance of understanding the participant's feedback orientation. Jules (2009) described a four-step coaching model that has an emphasis on feedback.

1. Step 1: Assessing what is. This step focuses on how the coach and client will work together. The coach describes the coaching process so details such as outcomes, expectations, confidentiality, and length of coaching are agreed to before moving on. This phase also encompasses analyzing the variance between the individual's aspirations and current reality as well as the 360 feedback and personality assessments.

2. Step 2: Choosing what to attend to. In this phase, the client identifies the top few developmental opportunities that will enhance his or her performance as a leader.

3. Step 3: Acting on the choice. In this phase, the client chooses and commits to take action on behaviors he or she would like to start, stop, and continue and the goals are captured in his or her development plan.
4. Step 4: Closing out the activity. The coach brings the work to a close by asking the client to describe what has changed as a result of receiving coaching. A confirmation is made between the coach and the individual leader about the areas requiring development that are relevant to the client's role in leading change.

Another model by Goldsmith (2005, cited in Giber, 2005) has eight steps: (a) Involve the leaders being coached in determining the desired behavior in their leadership roles, (b) involve the leaders being coached in determining key stakeholders, (c) collect feedback, (d) determine key behaviors for change, (e) have the coaching clients respond to key stakeholders, (f) review what has been learned with clients and help them develop an action plan, (g) develop an ongoing follow-up process, and (h) review results and start again. Of the five models that I reviewed (Goldsmith, 2005; Gregory et al., 2008; Jules, 2009; Kilburg, 2001; Saporito, 1996), four of them emphasize collecting feedback as a component.

The field of coaching will continue to expand as long as powerful, dynamic individuals are hired to bring results to organizations. The executive clients' strengths are also what make them so challenging and sometimes frustrating to work. According to Ludeman and Erlandson (2004), the modern organization has alpha leaders in the top ranks because they are natural leaders and comfortable with responsibility in a way nonalphas can never be. It is their strengths that are also their challenges. Early in life, alphas realize that they are smarter than most people so they put complete faith in their instincts, and because their intuitions are often proven right, they feel justified in focusing
on the flaws of other people's ideas or arguments. As a result, coworkers become intimated, which makes working and learning from them difficult. The more pressure an alpha feels to perform, the more he or she tends to shift his or her leadership style from constructive and challenging to intimidating or even abusing (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2004).

Alphas require skilled coaches because they are typically stubborn and resistant to feedback. The coach's challenge is to preserve an alpha's strengths while correcting his or her weaknesses. In addition, coaches should not undermine the alpha's focus on results and should instead help improve the process or achieving them. Ludeman and Erlandson (2004) stated that coaches can fall into three traps when working with alpha clients:

1. Some coaches make the mistake of playing loose and light and coming across as too passive. The client will see this behavior as lacking credibility.

2. If a coach falls into the trap of excessive secrecy and promises the client that no one will find out about his or her vulnerabilities, he or she can unwittingly create a black hole where the client continues to work in a vacuum. Coworkers need to be included in the coaching so the client can share his or her goals, and the coworkers can make sense of behavior changes that ensue.

3. Coaches should not show deference to this type of client as he or she will lose respect for the coach.

The authors suggested five tips for coaching an alpha client:

1. Elicit his or her attention with data including 360-degree feedback so he or she has a wake-up call.
2. Demand his or her commitment. Ask “Do you want to change?” “Are you willing to do what it takes, including allowing me to help you?”

3. Speak his or her language. Since alphas think in charts, graphs, and metrics, the authors presented the 360 feedback in this manner.

4. Hit him or her hard enough to hurt. Review the verbatim comments to help the person see the consequences of his or her behavior. Since alphas believe in no pain, no gain, they will respond well to hard-hitting language.

5. Engage his or her curiosity and competitive instincts. Point out signs of defensiveness. The defensiveness-openness scale has also proven effective in engaging the competitive instincts of alpha leaders.

Motivational Leaders Are in Touch With Their Emotions and Motivations

Ludeman and Erlandson (2004) stated that in order to change, leaders must become more aware of their motivations, more open to peers’ contrary opinions, and more open to public challenge. The authors offered five ways for leaders to become more motivational leaders of high-performing teams:

1. Admit vulnerabilities. When a leader admits he or she needs help it can have a profound impact on his or her team because disclosing imperfections humanizes leaders and makes them more inspirational to the members of the organization.

2. Accept accountability. Leaders sometimes pin a pejorative label on a skill they do not possess to sidestep accountability.
3. Connect with underlying emotions. Alpha leaders do not always like emotions because they cannot be controlled. The authors suggested helping clients recognize underlying emotions when they are still at the nigging, flurry-in-the-gut level, long before an emotional eruption. If a leader can tell when his or her feelings are beginning to intensify, he or she can channel them constructively to avoid a temper tantrum.

4. Balance positive and critical feedback. According to the authors, about 80% of the conversations an alpha leader has with his or her team contain critical comments. Since many alphas, themselves, do not require or respond as much to positive feedback, they are reluctant to express appreciation to others.

5. Become aware of patterns. The authors advised their clients that any extreme behavior or recurring pattern signifies that he or she has fallen into a persona (dramatic, predictable role that may spring from the family/school dynamics the client grew up with). They help clients recognize these behaviors and advise them to give names to these personas so they become more conscious of them.

Critical Learnings About Feedback and Coaching

In general, it appears that what managers do with upward feedback has a positive and direct correlation to its benefits (Walker & Smither, 1999). The two main research questions of this study aimed to learn (a) the impact of 360-degree feedback and coaching on executives who work in high-silo, low-feedback cultures; and (b) the effects of coaching following 360-degree feedback. This literature review demonstrated there are many benefits in having a 360-degree feedback.
Specific to the first research question, it was learned that 360-degree feedback (a) makes cultures more participatory (Waldman et al., 1998), (b) is helpful for task interdependent cultures (Jackson & Greller, 1998), (c) works best when it is used for developmental planning (Rogers et al., 2002), and (d) should connect to organizational strategy (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997). In terms of the second question regarding the effects of coaching following 360-degree feedback, several authors found that the best outcomes result from coupling 360-degree feedback with coaching (Gregory et al., 2008; Jules, 2008; Ludeman & Erlandson, 2004; Saporito, 1996; Smither et al., 2003).

When Packman & Associates wrote the proposal, they described the coaching process as a process that would first help clients understand their strengths and development needs and then to have the support and expertise of a coach to make improvements. As much of the literature has demonstrated, 360-degree feedback is most effective when used strictly for development purposes (Rogers et al., 2002), and this is what we did with the client. The coaches were the primary contacts to the participants, and they met over the course of 4 hours (2 hours for the first meeting to receive their feedback reports) and two 1-hour meetings. Participation was voluntary and, as a result, 3 people chose not to engage. Those who did engage set development goals with their coaches. It is critical that senior managers encourage and support the 360-feedback and coaching process (Rogers et al., 2002), and the executives of this company did support it fully. Although the research has found that 360-degree feedback is most useful when it connects to organizational strategy (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1997), we were not able to
do that with this client at this point. Having external coaches is a best practice (Rogers et al., 2002) when confidentiality is a concern, and it worked well with this client as the client had reported having many issues in its HR department and at the time wanted to separate the interviewers and coaches from the organization.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Coaching Initiative for Top Leaders: 360 Feedback Followed by Coaching

The primary focus for my research is the impact of a 360-degree feedback strategy in a high-silo, low-feedback organizational culture. I obtained my archival data from a large coaching initiative with a Fortune 500 firm. The firm commissioned Packman & Associates and another firm to gather feedback for (360-degree feedback) and coach 67 of its highest level employees (director level and above). The firm sought the help of external consultants because it wanted to ensure that feedback providers would be honest and forthright with their feedback. The firm also wanted to ensure confidentiality and to prevent a conflict of interest of Human Resources processing this confidential information. Last, it chose to have 360 feedback used strictly for development.

The sample for this research subject originated from these archival data of 30 director-level and above employees who chose to participate in an executive coaching program in 2008. The coach of the 30 participants, Hollie Packman, approved the use of the client data for research purposes with the understanding and contingency that the name of the organization and all clients would be concealed and kept confidential.

Anonymized, Archival Data

Ms. Packman gave the data to me after anonymizing it. The use of anonymized data means that the investigator cannot identify the
individuals to whom the data pertain. Since I obtained the data from a colleague (Packman) who was not collaborating with me on the research, I was not able to link any of the research results to identifiable individuals. Packman has the names of the clients stored in a locked drawer in her office.

The study did not involve human subjects because the two criteria for anonymized data were met: (a) The private information or specimens were not collected specifically for the current research project through an interaction or intervention with living individuals, and (b) as the investigator, I could not readily ascertain the identity of the individual(s) to whom the coded private information or specimens pertain.

The data were given to me electronically on an Excel spreadsheet, and participants were only identified by a number in the first left-hand column. Hollie Packman holds the names of the participants in a separate physical location. Both the anonymizing of the data and the securing of participants' names in a separate location were done to ensure confidentiality. The subjects were male and female executives between the ages of 30 and 70. Most had been working for the organization for several years, and some were long-term employees. The exact figures were not available as they were not a pertinent part of the coaching work that the coach did with the participant.

**Apparatus**

In order to obtain feedback, each participant (coachee) identified 6 to 7 feedback providers (including supervisors, colleagues, direct reports, etc.). This list was approved by his or her supervisor. The
360-degree interviews of these feedback providers were conducted by interviewers (consultants hired by the coach) who received questions to guide the interview (Appendix B). The interviewers were also told to probe and ask more questions of the feedback providers as appropriate. The questions provided a place to start. Oftentimes, feedback providers gave many examples of behaviors that illustrated their feedback. The interviewers generally used probing techniques to obtain a higher level of detail from participants. Some probing questions included: (a) That is interesting, can you describe the behavior you observed, (b) so when you say the person is unfriendly, can you describe for me what that looks like; (c) if I were in a room with this person, what would I observe; (d) can you please describe an example of a time he or she was difficult; (e) can you tell me of a time when he or she could have been more confrontational? In essence, the interviewer's ability to probe could be considered part of the apparatus for this study.

Procedures

The following outlines two procedures. The first is the procedures for coding and analyzing the data, and the second is procedures for implementing the 360-degree feedback program. Despite the fact that the data were not gathered for the purposes of this research, knowing the procedures the practitioners used for implementing a 360-feedback program can help practitioners increase their knowledge of the components and necessary steps for the successful implementation of a 360-degree feedback program.
Description of Archival Data

The spreadsheet containing the archival data has four columns:

1. The bottom line statement (as shared with client) that sums up the person's strengths and developments, per the 360 feedback using one sentence that encapsulates the summary of feedback.

2. The agreed-upon steps. These are three goals the person and coach set together.

3. Progress report statement. This statement is a summary of the follow-up feedback interview(s).

4. Rate of change.

Coach's Ratings

The coach rated the participant's level of change based on several criteria: observations in the four coaching sessions with the participant, the client's self-report of the progress to the coach, and follow-up feedback. The ratings were: Major Change, Some Change, and No Change Observed. A person who was rated Major Change typically reported changed relationships with his or her colleagues after working on the three goals. Some colleagues reported others being more collaborative with them. Often, this was a reaction to the participant's changed ways of interacting and communicating with others.

Analyzing and Coding the Data

Individual Feedback, Goals, Progress, and Rate of Change

I analyzed the data from three lenses: (a) individual participants, (b) group trends, and (c) themes in the organizational
culture. The findings contain four areas of information for each participant: the bottom-line statement, the agreed-upon steps, progress report, and rating of change.

**Group Lens**

The rate of improvement was calculated to understand the overall impact of 360-degree feedback followed by coaching by calculating the number of participants in each category (Major Change, Some Change, or No Change). Participants’ strengths and development needs were analyzed by coding the bottom-line statements. Since the area of communication was a common development need, the development area of communication was further coded to better understand the areas of communication. Last, the major areas for development and corresponds it with the rated levels of improvement (Major Change, Some Change, No Change).

**Cultural Lens**

The data were examined to better understand what behaviors the organization was reinforcing, whether on a conscious or subconscious level. These trends were compared to a thematic report Packman & Associates (by coding the themes of 500 feedback interviews) created to help the client view its strengths and development needs from a cultural level.
Procedure for Implementing 360-Feedback Program

The client created communication pieces that outlined the procedure for participants (Appendix C) and the organization. This communication was distributed to participants via e-mail with the help of the organization’s Human Resources (HR) department. The HR team was briefed on the project so they could answer basic questions. Supervisors were encouraged to share and clarify the process with the employees.

There were two coaches for this project. These coaches sought the help of other consultants for the purpose of conducting phone interviews with feedback providers. The qualifications they sought in these consultants included degrees in communication, organization development, human resources or a related field, and at least 8 years of experience. These consultants, also known as interviewers, were trained over a period of 2 weeks via conference calls. They first received general training as a group for a 2-hour time period. They then received one-on-one training where the consultant/coach roleplayed different types of feedback providers (difficult, evasive, not talkative, suspicious, etc.) to help prepare them for their roles. Interviewers were told to encourage questions about the process. They were also told to ask feedback providers to be candid and to thank them when they took risks.

The consultants selected 7 consultants (subcontractors) to conduct the interviews. There were 67 participants total, and each had an average of 6 feedback providers. Once the interviewing consultants completed the interviews, they developed reports based on the themes that emerged for strengths and development areas.
Because it was such a low-feedback culture, interviewers were coached to acknowledge the feedback providers on their discomfort. Some of the phrases they used to coax employees to give honest feedback were: "At the end, this is still a choice for you to make a difference in this executive's life."

Interviewers were given a list of questions to ask feedback providers (Appendix B) and were told to probe as appropriate. Once an interviewer completed all interviews for a participant, she would read through the notes and group the comments into themes. For the most part, there were direct comments in the report. Occasionally, comments were revised if they could identify the feedback provider or if they were not constructive.

Application of 360-Best Practices to the Client

Rogers et al. (2002) conducted extensive research on the best practices and methodologies for implementing 360s. Their recommendations are outlined in Table 1 in the left column. The column on the right illustrates how the procedures Packman & Associates followed correspond to Rogers et al.'s recommendations.

Summary

The archival data for this research were analyzed from three lenses: the individual, groups, and the organizational culture. The best practices for using 360 feedback from Rogers et al. (2002) were compared to the application of the client, and it was determined that overall, the best practices for 360 feedback and coaching were used when
Table 1

**Best Practices for 360s and Link to Client Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations from Rogers et al. (2002)</th>
<th>Application to the client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Use 360-degree feedback primarily for individual development.</td>
<td>The 360-degree feedback was used strictly for development purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage to performance appraisal, compensation, succession planning is risky unless the organization is</td>
<td>Participants received their feedback reports by their coaches. The reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>ready and a development culture exists.</td>
<td>were not given to the supervisors of the participant’s or HR. Participants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>had the option of sharing their feedback or goals with their supervisors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>at their own discretion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Link the process and align participants with strategic imperatives.</td>
<td>Although we believe this is important, strategic imperatives and competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build business-focused competencies and customize to specific functions, levels, and jobs.</td>
<td>were not a focus of this phase. This was recommended to the client for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve the customer.</td>
<td>future phases. The client did however receive a report of organizational</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>themes that we observed in interviews as well as in feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Exert high administrative control over every aspect of the 360-feedback process.</td>
<td>The 67 participants were selected by the president and participation was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose the participants and manage the feedback process closely, approving the raters.</td>
<td>voluntary. There were 3 people who chose not to engage. The supervisor of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train everybody involved in advance.</td>
<td>each participant approved his or her list of feedback providers. The</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interviewers were trained. In the future, we recommend training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>participants on how to give and receive feedback. The Johari Window would</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be a good model to help participants learn about their blind spots.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The importance of increasing one’s Emotional Quotient (EQ) could be an</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important component for this proposed training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Use senior management as role models.</td>
<td>Senior managers encouraged and supported the process. They invested time,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest time, money, and resources.</td>
<td>money, and resources to ensure its success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from Rogers et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Application to the client</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Use highly trained internal coaches to leverage your investment.</strong> Participants need help understanding the feedback and following through on an action plan. Sharing results with the supervisor and customer can create a team approach to development.</td>
<td>The client reported having many issues in their HR department and at the time wanted to separate the interviewers and coaches from the organization. As a result, they used external coaches. One had 15 years of experience and the other had 20. They helped participants “digest” the feedback with a “nutshell” overview before sharing the 360 report with them. They then collaborated with participants to develop an action plan. Some participants chose to share their action plans with their supervisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Evaluate the return on investment or effectiveness of the process as you would any business endeavor.</strong> Identify individual and organizational trends. Treat 360 feedback as a human resource system that adds value to the business.</td>
<td>In this research, the coach of 30 participants rated the effectiveness of the coaching (major change, some change, no change) based on follow-up feedback and reports from the client. Organizational trends were identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the program was implemented with this client. Chapter 4 contains an overview of the findings and results.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The following tables contain the archival data and results of this study. Table 2 is organized as follows: (a) The participant indicated by a number, (b) agreed-upon steps that are goals the participant and coach created together and the participant agreed to complete, (c) progress report statements that were from the feedback interviews of 1 to 2 feedback providers, and (d) rate of change as determined by the coach.

Table 3 contains the coach’s rating of participant improvement. Of the 33 participants who engaged in the 360 feedback and coaching process, 84% were rated by the coach as having some (30%) or major change (54%), while 6% (n = 2) were rated as having no change. Three participants chose not to follow-up so their rate of change could not be determined by the coach.

Table 4 contains the areas of strength that emerged from the data. The top trends were competent (97%), likeable (48%), respected (36%), trustworthy (27%), and smart (15%).

Table 5 contains the areas of development that emerged from the data. The trends that were noted included communication (63%), assertiveness (24%), engaging one’s team/creating a team approach (18%), and improving work/life balance and stress (18%).

Table 6 contains the designated development area of communication and the specific need for development. The top trends that were
Table 2

Participant Data: Strengths and Development Areas, Goals, Progress, and Rate of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</th>
<th>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</th>
<th>Progress report statement</th>
<th>Change:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Major,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>some, no</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>change</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>observed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Extremely competent leader with the likeability and smarts but needs to fine tune follow-through and focus to give people more confidence that things are handled.
   - Communicate your leadership philosophy.
   - Coach and mentor directly with direct feedback.
   - Use assistant more productively.
   - More proactive and more open communication style with a need to improve follow-up skills.

2. Extremely competent, knowledgeable and open but intimidating because of your harsh communication style and needs to look at developing more effective relationships and better managing stress.
   - Warm up
   - Slow down
   - Listen more
   - More approachable, flexible approach. Should continue to engage with others through dialogue and listening rather than telling/directing.

3. Competent and trustworthy respected leader but has lack of energy, need to delegate and more proactive communication.
   - Delegate in order to transition to more coaching and leadership.
   - Regular coaching with direct reports, monthly discussion.
   - Communicate with enthusiasm.
   - Well-balanced individual who is working on the evolving nature of his staff and be more proactive.

4. Excellent at building relationships and trust, competent, and well-respected but need more open and direct communication.
   - Main homework is to develop your relationship with your counterpart.
   - When things go work with your counterpart, ask "what happened?"
   - Communicate your vision for the department widely.
   - Open and more personable team player who needs to work on goal setting for his department, sharing his thoughts with management and embracing technology in terms of scheduling and workflow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</th>
<th>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</th>
<th>Progress report statement</th>
<th>Change: Major, some, no change observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Extremely competent but extremely harsh and defensive communication style.</td>
<td>Ask for ongoing feedback. Translate your behavior. Check your filter on how negative feedback is received.</td>
<td>She has become inclusive, trusting, sensitive, and committed to growth and just needs to keep this up.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Extremely competent and well-liked but a lack of confidence can lead to defensive, closed, and even harsh communication.</td>
<td>Let people know what you are working on. More socially authentic, let them know who you are. Listen longer.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Extremely competent, trustworthy, and likable but needs more open communication. More warmth and open-mindedness will increase overall credibility.</td>
<td>Slow down in meetings. Use a facilitative approach. Echo back what you hear. More socially authentic at work. More light hearted.</td>
<td>Competent and trusted individual who needs to be more open-minded and strategic in terms of the business. He has an aggressive communication approach and not enough of a team approach.</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Extremely competent, smart, liked leader needs to rise above the detail and the drama.</td>
<td>Let people know what you are working on. Translate your behavior. Reassess meeting attendance. No more gossip.</td>
<td>Competent individual who needs to develop his delegation skills.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</td>
<td>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</td>
<td>Progress report statement</td>
<td>Change: Major, some, no change observed</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Extremely competent but harsh and fast communicator.</td>
<td>Manage the harsh edge but relying more heavily on your social strength. Probe for more information in order style. Communicate a little more warmth to junior people.</td>
<td>Has made significant progress about the value of his likeability. Still working to develop skills for getting what he needs that don’t involve harsh slow down.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Extremely competent but needs to speak up more and be more engaged with your team.</td>
<td>Speak up in meetings. Give feedback one on one. Initiate monthly office lunch.</td>
<td>Proactive and focused individual who needs to work on being more flexible and obtaining buy-in.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Extremely competent but needs to synthesize messages and build trust with his new boss.</td>
<td>Communicate the bottom line first. Give your candid take on things. Ask new boss how you can put him at ease, how you can help.</td>
<td>He has made progress and still needs to work on having a less professorial communication style, taking more ownership on projects and being prompt.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Extremely competent, well-respected, liked collaborative leader but needs to work on executive presence, more visibility, and more assertive and engaging communication.</td>
<td>Look for opportunities to be a trusted advisor to the business. When listening, you tend to look distracted. Let people know what you are doing, i.e., “I’m thinking about what you are saying . . . I need some time to digest, etc.”</td>
<td>A competent individual who needs to be more focused and set the right tone for his employees.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</td>
<td>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</td>
<td>Progress report statement</td>
<td>Change: Major, some, no change observed</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage by probing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Tell me more.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What else?&quot; &quot;What am I missing?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Extremely competent, likeable, and respected for his openness to learn, needs to work on long-windedness, detail orientation, and work-life balance.</td>
<td>Use assistant to help with organization. Communicate bottom line first. Make sure you have regular dates with grandchildren.</td>
<td>No follow-up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Extremely competent and well-liked but needs to shore up relationships with peers, mentor and coach others and be more open with insights.</td>
<td>Give your take on things more often. Develop relationships with peers, involve them more. Slow down and ask more questions.</td>
<td>A competent individual who continues to grow. He needs to leverage his relationships, communicate his point of view to Talent and create boundaries for Talent.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Extremely competent, trustworthy, well-respected leader but needs to be more assertive with your point of view, managing conflict, and supporting and defending your people.</td>
<td>Give your perspective earlier. Explain your philosophy about the long view. Give your point of view on company strategy.</td>
<td>A competent, trusted, and diplomatic individual who needs to be more outspoken in his views.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Extremely competent, well-liked, and well-respected, effective communicator but needs to work on listening, being more open to others' views, and networking.</td>
<td>Add empathy to legal advice, “I know this sucks but...” Look for opportunities to collaborate with and involve legal.</td>
<td>She is competent, needs to improve, and there are no suggestions for change.</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</th>
<th>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</th>
<th>Progress report statement</th>
<th>Change:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look for creative ideas to keep life/work in balance.</td>
<td>Institute monthly feedback and coaching.</td>
<td>She is an individual who dedicated to self-improvement and has become an employee advocate. She needs to work on toning down her harsh, demanding, and condescending communication style.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Extremely well-respected and liked but rigid and all business approach may affect leadership ability.

- Institute monthly feedback and coaching.
- Consider monthly all staff strategy sessions.
- No directives.
- "Interesting idea" "Tell me more."

18. Extremely competent, likeable, and trusted but needs to shore up executive presence in communication style, use of humor, and speed. All risk credibility and ultimately may impact trust.

- Your main homework is to develop trust with Richard.
  - 1-Let him talk first.
  - 2-Discuss the undiscussable, "How did we get here?" "why don’t we trust each other?"
- Be aware of the impact of your humor. .. tone it down a bit. (Just a bit, I don’t want you to quit J).
- Ask, “what’s the big picture implication of this?”

19. Extremely competent and well-respected leader but needs to communicate more proactively and assertively around strategy, developmental feedback, and getting buy-in from others.

- Remember input = persuasion.
  - Ask for input and let people know what you did.
  - Calendar connections with people you need to develop
- Has made significant progress in communicating more intentionally. Started regular staff meetings, gathering input from staff meetings, gathering input from staff and asking for feedback. Focused on
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</th>
<th>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</th>
<th>Progress report statement</th>
<th>Change:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs to watch work-life balance.</td>
<td>reducing stress for his team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Extremely competent and well-liked, candid, and trustworthy but can come across as too harsh, takes on too much, and needs to delegate.</td>
<td>A competent, diplomatic, and well-respected individual who knows how to motivate people and is invested in self-development.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Extremely competent, likeable, leader and direct communicator needs to work on a more structured approach to communication (when and how) and add a little diplomacy.</td>
<td>A dedicated and competent leader who needs to soften her communication style and express her concerns and advocate for the company, regardless of her personal feelings.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Extremely competent, and well-liked, team player and leader but needs to be more assertive with his point of view and more open in sharing information and in seeking to understand other points of view.</td>
<td>A competent and confident individual who needs to improve his nonverbal and verbal communication in terms of empathy and sharing his point of view.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</td>
<td>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</td>
<td>Progress report statement</td>
<td>Change:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. Extremely competent and well-liked and respected needs to delegate more and take ownership of the business.</td>
<td>Reassess opportunities to delegate. Communicate your vision for the division.</td>
<td>Significant steps to take control of her role and assert her vision. Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24. Extremely competent and well-liked leader. Needs to give her perspective more freely and candidly.</td>
<td>Weekly updates with supervisor. Give her input earlier and more often. Play the devil’s advocate with diplomacy, “I might be crazy here, but..”</td>
<td>A proactive and competent individual who has started understanding the bigger picture and working toward the common good. Some change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. Extremely competent, trustworthy, personable leader but his quick, direct style can come across as harsh and not listening. Needs to delegate and build your team and watch work life balance.</td>
<td>Team strategy sessions Probe, ask, “Tell me more.” Apologize quickly when you make a mistake.</td>
<td>A competent and proactive individual who continues to make progress. Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26. Competent, dedicated, well-respected and liked but needs to develop a stronger sense of team and a more assertive approach.</td>
<td>Pay attention to self-talk. Strategy sessions with team. More consistent team communication.</td>
<td>A competent and assertive individual who has become more communicative with her group. Some change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. Extremely competent trusted team player and leader but too deep in the detail. Needs to look for ways to manage the workload by prioritizing, delegating, and managing stress.</td>
<td>Look for ways to synthesize messages. Create a sense of safety for your team to reduce stress. Let people know how you are feeling.</td>
<td>A competent individual who has become less mired in detail and still needs to work on delegating, better managing his boss, focusing on the big picture and giving more information to senior. Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</td>
<td>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</td>
<td>Progress report statement</td>
<td>Change:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also needs to watch work/life balance.</td>
<td>Look for opportunities to coach and advise. This will translate directly into a track record that reflects good leadership. Slower and warmer with direct reports. Add the niceties. Look for creative ideas to manage life/work balance, i.e., lunch at home, home for dinner, and then back to work, 3-day weekends every 5 weeks or so, etc.</td>
<td>He has made progress in terms of being more team oriented and he still needs to work on collaborating with others and emerging as a leader.</td>
<td>Some change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Extremely competent, hard working, effective communicator and leader but needs more of a team approach, more respectful and patient communication with subordinates and look for ways to reduce stress.</td>
<td>29. Competent, strategic, and smart but a harsh communication style and leadership approach could affect credibility. Slower and warmer. More casual interpersonally, including dress. Look for opportunities to be a trusted advisor, earn the right to advise.</td>
<td>No follow-up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Competent, smart, produces excellent work but needs to apply that competence to creating a strong team. Team currently works in silos. Discuss development during your one on ones regularly (every other meeting). “Here are a couple things that are going well and a couple things to keep in mind.”</td>
<td>He has improved communication with the staff, advocates for them, and is open to growth. He needs to work on empowering employees and building morale.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom-line statement (as shared with client)</th>
<th>Agreed-upon steps (confidential notes)</th>
<th>Progress report statement</th>
<th>Change: Major, some, no change observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>working on.” Move out from behind your computer for one on one meetings. Regularly ask Leah about your leadership approach, “How’s it going?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Extremely competent, trusted, clear communicator but too quick and your style comes across as harsh as a result.</td>
<td>Slow down. Listen longer. Before you speak ask yourself, “What is everyone here feeling right now?”</td>
<td>Competent, confident, and open individual who needs to build her confidence as an executive.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Extremely smart, well-respected, competent leader and problem solver but needs to create a more strategic approach to work and developing work. Stop gossip.</td>
<td>Weekly coaching sessions. Take a ruthless look at the meetings and other opportunities to delegate. Translate your behavior.</td>
<td>A competent, collaborative individual who is dedicated to self-improvement. She needs to work on being less reactive and defensive. She can also work on delegating more to her staff and supporting them.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Extremely competent, well-networked and well-liked and trusted manager but needs more proactive communication and people development and needs to create a more unified team.</td>
<td>Let your team know where you are going and why. Ruthlessly assess your travel. Start monthly development meetings with all of your 9 direct reports.</td>
<td>He is an engaged individual who has made positive progress and mentors his staff.</td>
<td>Major change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Coach’s Rating of Participant Improvement (33 Participants Total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of change</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Some change</th>
<th>Major change</th>
<th>No follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of change</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Trends by Areas of Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of strength</th>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Total participants/ strength area</th>
<th>Percentage of total (33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builds relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates effectively</td>
<td>16, 22, 28, 31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>97.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated/hardworking</td>
<td>26, 28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeable/liked</td>
<td>1, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to learning/ seeks to learn</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open/candid</td>
<td>2, 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personable</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solver</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respected</td>
<td>3, 4, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26, 32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart/bright/intelligent</td>
<td>1, 8, 29, 30, 32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team player</td>
<td>21, 27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy/trusted</td>
<td>3, 7, 15, 16, 20, 25, 27, 31, 33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-networked</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Trends by Areas for Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for development</th>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Total participants/development area</th>
<th>Percentage of total (33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>6, 10, 12, 15, 19,</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21, 24, 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-minded/rigid</td>
<td>7, 14, 16, 17, 21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach staff</td>
<td>14, 19, 32, 33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 21, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 29, 31, 33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td>3, 8, 20, 23, 25, 27, 32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-orientation (improve)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop relationships/trust</td>
<td>2, 11, 14, 16, 19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage team/approach</td>
<td>10, 25, 26, 28, 30, 33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive presence</td>
<td>7, 12, 18, 32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-through</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/life balance/stress</td>
<td>2, 13, 19, 25, 27, 28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Trends by Areas of Development of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication area for development</th>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Total participants/development area</th>
<th>Percentage of total (21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed (be more open)</td>
<td>4, 6, 7, 14, 16, 21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic (be more diplomatic and patient)</td>
<td>22, 28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct (too direct)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging (be more engaging)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsh</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 9, 20, 25, 29, 31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>16, 25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive (be more proactive)</td>
<td>3, 19, 33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize (messages)</td>
<td>11, 13, 22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
identified were harsh communication (38%), the need to be more open (29%), and the need to be more proactive with communication (14%).

Table 7 contains the level of improvement by the area of development. This table helps in viewing the rate of improvement by the type of development need each of the individual clients had. Many clients had more than one development need, and their overall rate of improvement is reflected by their particular developmental need. For example, if a person had a developmental need to be more assertive and less close-minded and his or her overall rate of improvement was major, it is reflected in this table. Since the follow-up interview only contained one or two interviews, it was impossible to break down the level of improvement per development area; rather, it made more sense to judge the client's overall improvement. This table gives a sense of overall improvement per development area.

This chapter contained an overview of the participant data from an individual and group perspective. The next chapter contains a discussion of the findings, recommendations for how to use 360 feedback and coaching to transform individuals (so they can shift teams and cultures), implications for scholar-practitioners, and areas for future research.
Table 7

Level of Improvement and Areas of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of development</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>No follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-minded/rigid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(improve)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop relationships/trust</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage team/approach</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive presence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/life balance/stress</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter is outlined in several sections. First, there is an overview of the findings and elements that may have caused improvement. Next, a discussion of the implications for clients who work in high-silo, low-feedback organizational cultures is given. I then expand on how these organizations can improve their culture through the use of coaching and development for their leaders. Following the discussion section, I provide recommendations on how to assist clients in creating team-based cultures, sharing implications for OD scholar-practitioners, with a discussion for possible future research.

Findings

The impact of 360-degree feedback and coaching had on executives who were working in a high-silo, low-feedback environment was a positive one. Of the 33 participants who engaged in the 360 feedback and coaching program, 84% were rated by the coach as having major change (54%) or some change (30%), while only 6% (n = 2) were rated as having no change. Three participants chose not to have follow-up interviews, so their rate of change could not be determined by the coach. Overall, the participants had strengths such as competence, likeability, respect, trustworthiness, and intelligence. Their areas for development centered on communication (specifically harsh and closed communication) and lack of assertiveness, team engagement, and work/life balance. The majority of participants had major or some change. The 2 participants who were
rated as having no change had the developmental areas of close-minded/rigid (1), communication (3), developing relationships/trust (1), and executive presence (1). Those participants who did not choose to have follow-up interviews had the developmental areas of lack of assertiveness, communication, detail-orientation, and work/life balance and stress (as identified in the 360-degree feedback).

Impact of Individual Development to Group and Culture Change

One executive (Participant 5 in Table 2) was rated as having major change and had a bottom-line statement that described the leader as being an extremely competent executive who had a harsh and defensive communication style. The agreed-upon steps were to ask others for ongoing feedback on her behavior, explaining her behavior to others, and checking the filter for how she receives negative feedback. Three months later, the feedback she had received was that she had become inclusive, trusting, sensitive, and committed to growth, and all she needed to do was continue this behavior. It appears that she not only utilized the feedback she received by creating goals for improvement with her coach, but that she may have had a paradigm shift in terms of her leadership approach. As a result of her behavior change, it is likely that she will improve communication in her group by modeling and rewarding this improved communication style, thus possibly changing the dynamics of the group.

An example of an executive who had some change (Participant 26 in Table 2) is a leader who had a bottom-line statement of being competent, dedicated, well-respected and liked, but needed to develop a stronger
sense of team and a more assertive approach. This person's agreed-upon steps were to pay attention to self-talk, create strategy sessions with team members, and to create more consistent team communication. Three months later, this person was rated as being more assertive and communicative with his group. Perhaps the reason for having demonstrated some change rather than major change is that he began demonstrating some actions, but not all of them, or that he could be more assertive and communicative. This may happen slowly over time. Perhaps the behavior will continue to increase as he sees the positive impact his more assertive and communicative behavior has on others.

These two examples demonstrate behavior change on an individual level, but it is not immediately clear how this program affected the company on a team and organizational level at this point. It is possible that the continued demonstration of the new behaviors can impact groups and later, the culture, particularly if multiple leaders continue demonstrating and living their new behaviors. The silo behaviors will remain until that happens, and thus it is important to understand the reasons why employees form silos and display tribal behaviors.

*High Rates of Improvement*

I believe that the participants had high rates of improvement for several reasons:

1. They had received little feedback over the years and receiving it from multiple raters gave them an understanding of their strengths and developmental areas.
2. The coach was effective at first building a relationship of unconditional positive regard with the participants and then giving them actionable things to do to improve.

3. The senior leaders chose the top 70 executives to go through the 360 feedback and coaching process. It is possible that these participants realized that this was an important initiative and were motivated to create positive results.

Organizational Strategies, Structures, and Systems Reinforce Behavior

According to Folkman (2006), a critical step in personal change is to change the strategy, structures, and systems that support or reinforce the behavior one desires to change. I studied the trends of strengths and developmental needs from an organizational level to better understand how certain behaviors (positive and negative) were being reinforced by the organization (consciously and unconsciously). Why were these overall bright, likeable, and trusted people communicating harshly, not engaging their teams, and experiencing stress and a lack of work/life balance? One reason may be that they were unaware of the impact of their behavior because the performance review meetings did not contain real feedback, merely a statement of the amount of bonus/raise the person was going to receive. Since a lack of assertiveness was one of the development areas that was identified, the participants' colleagues may also have been reticent to give feedback. The theme of lack of courageous conversations emerged in the data (Table 8) as an ongoing issue. Another reason for the paradoxical behavior may be that
### Table 8

Comparison of Development Needs Cited by Kombarakaran et al. (2008) and Client Organization Development needs as cited by Kombarakaran et al. (2008) needs (themes of 500 interviews) of 33 participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development needs as cited</th>
<th>Client organization development needs</th>
<th>Themes from 360 feedback of 33 participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective people management</td>
<td>More regular feedback and performance assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better relationship with managers</td>
<td>More strategic input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved goal-setting and prioritization</td>
<td>More dialogue with staff</td>
<td>Need team engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased engagement and productivity</td>
<td>Harsh communication style</td>
<td>Communication (specifically harsh and closed communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective dialogue and communication</td>
<td>More dialogue with staff</td>
<td>Improving work/life balance and stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harsh communication style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High work intensity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of collaboration across the functions</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the organization is task-focused and tends to reward performance and results (what is achieved) while giving less attention to relationships (how the work is achieved). It is possible that these behaviors may have contributed to the high-silo behavior between departments.

Implications for Clients in High-Silo, Low-Feedback Organizational Cultures

In the course of conducting 360 interviews, feedback providers also shared their thoughts about how the organization could improve. Viewed collectively, the feedback providers' information (collected over the course of 500 feedback interviews) clarified the developmental themes across the organization and validated the coaching data in this study. The themes that emerged from the 500 interviews were: (a) Need for More Regular Feedback and Performance Assessment, (b) High Work Intensity, (c) More Dialogue With Staff, (d) Lack of Collaboration Across the Functions, (e) Harsh Communication Style, and (f) More Strategic Input.

Even though the developmental themes seem to be unique to this organization, many of these issues also emerge in other companies. In a study of 114 executives and 42 coaches who were involved in an executive coaching program in a large multinational firm, Kombarakaran et al. (2008) found that clients needed coaching around five areas: (a) effective people management, (b) better relationships with managers, (c) improved goal setting and prioritization, (d) increased engagement and productivity, and (e) more effective dialogue and communication. When compared to this client's development needs, there is overlap in four of the five areas (effective people management, improved goal
setting and prioritization, employee engagement, and more effective dialogue and communication). The two areas that were unique to this organization were high work intensity and the lack of collaboration across the functions (silos).

As a result of having 360 feedback and coaching, the participants were rated as having major and some change. If their behavior reverberates down to the rest of the organization, it is likely that there will be increased engagement and more effective communication among some teams. It is not certain, however, that the issue of high work intensity will be improved through this process or if senior leaders would want to require less of their staff. Although the intervening variable of coaching and asking feedback has helped to improve individuals and some teams, it will take much more time and effort to transform the organization as a whole into a collaborative one.

Recommendations

When an executive contacts an OD consultant, there is often some pain that the organization is experiencing. If this pain is reported to be some sort of challenge with the culture of the organization, I believe the best way to shift and improve the culture is through its leaders. Examined from a systems perspective, individuals affect groups of people and groups of people affect organizational culture. If leaders want to shift culture, it is important for them to start the process with the leaders of the organization. In general, employees will perform the tasks they are rewarded for, so if the senior leaders of an organization want to shift the culture, they need to reexamine
what they are paying attention to and rewarding as well as the behavior
they, themselves, are modeling. I believe the optimal way for these
leaders to examine their present working styles, strengths, and
development needs is through 360-degree feedback and coaching. In the
specific case of organizational cultures that have silos and tribal
behavior, there are three methods for creating team cultures:
acknowledging and overcoming tribal mindsets, creating a culture of
abundance, and building courage as a competency.

Change Begins With Leaders

Leaders Reinforce and
Embed Culture

According to Schein (1985), there are five primary mechanisms by
which a leader can embed and reinforce aspects of an organization
(attention, reactions to crises, role modeling, allocation of rewards,
and criteria for selection and dismissal). Although we do not know for
certain, when examining the data from this lens, there are some distinct
posibilities for the developmental trends reported in this
organization. If we view the data from this research from a group and
cultural lens (Tables 4, 5, 6, and 8) there appear to be some
interesting trends. It appears that the organization paid attention to
results from the individual executives and not from a team level since
the participants reported a lack of team approach (Table 5) and a lack
of collaboration (Table 8). It is possible that the employees were also
rewarded in this same manner. In terms of role modeling, it is possible
that the communication from the senior leaders was not assertive (Table
6). As a result, it is likely that most of the leaders did not give
feedback (Table 8). The leaders may have also role modeled negative communication by being closed and harsh (Tables 6, 8). Last, the participants reported a lack of work/life balance (Tables 5, 8), and this could have developed by the role modeling and allocation of rewards for this type of behavior.

*Leaders Who Receive 360 Feedback and Coaching Can Shape Cultures*

The results of this and other research in the field demonstrate the effectiveness of 360 feedback when coupled with coaching. One can only help high-silo organizations transform into collaborative, team-based cultures by starting with the individuals. According to Ludeman and Erlandson (2004), the goal of coaching is to change the entire team dynamic, not simply to treat an executive as an individual problem. "After two years, an organization can be well on its way to transformation, with a dysfunctional and combative executive team turning into a collaborative and trusting one" (p. 67). As the leader begins to see the results of his or her behavioral changes, he or she can initiate a powerful cycle that reverberates throughout the entire organization. People in organizations form silos, which are also known as tribes for several reasons. There will be an overview of the reasons why employees form silos in an organization followed by what consultants can do to assist an organization's transition to a more team-based approach.
Creating Team Cultures

Overcoming A Tribal Mindset

Silos are barriers that surface between departments or divisions of an organization that cause people who are supposed to be on the same team to work against each other (Lencioni, 2006). According to McGee-Cooper (2005), competition drives the marketplace, and many people believe it is the only way to motivate themselves and others. They are not aware that the downside to such practices is high levels of burnout and turf warfare inside a corporation—behaviors that are not beneficial to synergistic teamwork, profit margins, customers, or employees. McGee-Cooper further stated that a curious form of *tribalism* has emerged as mergers and acquisitions have become a popular growth strategy, noting that people form tribes for several reasons: (a) The impulse to join others is universal and natural; (b) Americans do not have a lot of familial and community ties, yet the desire to belong is still there; and (c) when people are anxious and fearful about the future, they often bond against the enemy, whether it is the boss, the field, new talent hired at higher wages, or new technology. “Silos—and the turf wars they create—devastate organizations. They waste resources, kill productivity and jeopardize goals. And, they exact a high human toll, causing frustration, stress and disillusionment by forcing people to fight bloody, losing battles with teammates” (Lencioni, 2006, p. 3).

Lencioni (2006) also believed that “Silos usually arise not because of what executives are doing, but rather because of what they are failing to do—provide people with a compelling context for working together” (p. 3). If a consultant or coach is hired to help transform
the organization to be more team based with fewer silos, he or she can consider the following recommendations from the individual, team, and organizational levels.

*Shifting From A Scarcity Mentality to an Abundance Mentality*

McGee-Cooper (2005) stated that the behavior of running away from a fear (of not winning) rarely matches the behavior or performance of those running toward a vision or dream. She supported the notion of creating a culture with an abundance mentality rather than a scarcity mentality and suggested that companies can overcome this scarcity mentality by doing what Southwest Airlines did. Herb Kelleher, the chairman, confronted tribalism in his *Messages to the Field* to alert his people to a silent, yet deadly internal enemy. Part of his message was, if we fall into the trap of internal tribalism, with one station or city competing for resources against another, or with reservations team sparring with marketing, or any other of the many internal points of potential conflict, we will lose our collective focus and can easily join the dozens of airlines no longer in business. (p. 13)

One example of how the employees followed Kelleher’s message was they formed an action team of representatives to explore creative solutions to a problem they were having between flight crews and schedulers. Their solution was to set up an exchange where flight crew members substituted for schedulers while schedulers flew with replacement crew to acquire an idea of what it was like dealing with the pressures and complexities of each others’ jobs.
Building Courage as an Organizational Competency

Furnham (2002) believed that there were three things that determine the success of a change-focused manager: (a) their level of courage, (b) their skill in dealing with underperformers, and (c) their sensitivity in managing their customer-facing staff, noting that there are few organizations that think of courage as a competency and finds that it can be an effective way to change a risk-averse, blame-storming culture. Courage starts from the top, and that may be part of the reason people did not give feedback or had challenges with sharing their views assertively. The top leaders may not have been having courageous conversations with their leaders, which may have had a trickle-down effect.

Implications for OD Scholar-Practitioners

There are several implications from this study for OD scholar-practitioners: (a) defining the best practices for 360-degree feedback and coaching, (b) recognizing the link between 360-degree feedback and employee engagement, and (c) understanding that organizational change starts with individuals. An OD consultant can improve organizational outcomes by helping to link individual performance to organizational strategies and goals. Practitioners can face this challenge in high-silo organizations by understanding the link between how individual behavior impacts organizational results.

It is vital for practitioners to understand the benefits and best practices of 360-degree feedback. It makes cultures more participatory, is good for task interdependent cultures, works best when it is used for
developmental planning, should connect to organizational strategy, and should be coupled with coaching.

Ricklefs (as cited in Maylett & Riboldi, 2007) found that low 360 scores are a warning that employee engagement is likely to decrease unless something changes. Poor engagement scores are a signal that team performance will no doubt suffer later on. The use of 360-feedback scores and employee engagement assessments promises to be an important part of the human metrics process as they have connections to the bottom line.

It is important for practitioners to remember that much of the time the reason for unproductive behavior is that it is an overplayed strength. Ludeman and Erlandson (2004) gave examples of the strengths that can become weaknesses and are thus risks to the organization: (a) self-confidence and opinionated becomes close minded, domineering, and intimidating; (b) highly intelligent becomes dismissive and demeaning to those who disagree with him or her; (c) action oriented becomes impatient and resists change processes; (d) high-performance expectations for self and others becomes constant dissatisfaction and a failure to appreciate and motivate others; (e) a direct communication style turns into a culture of compliance, fear, and gossip; (f) highly disciplined becomes unreasonable expectations of self and others and misses signs of burnout; and (g) unemotional becomes difficult to connect with and does not inspire teams.

Leaders can be coached to create and share a vision of an abundance mentality with their employees. As this research illustrated,
coaching was a critical step to changing overplayed strengths and silo behavior into team behavior.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that there were 6 to 7 different feedback providers for the first set of interviews (precoaching), while the follow-up interviews (postcoaching) typically only had 1 or 2 different feedback providers. It is more difficult to measure growth when there are fewer feedback providers.

Another potential limitation is that the coach determined the final rating for how much the participant had changed following coaching (major change, some change, no change). The coach utilized feedback from the participant on his or her improvement, feedback from others, and her experience to formulate an overall rating for improvement. Although she based the final rating on several factors, it is important to note that with qualitative research, there is always a chance for rater bias. It seems, however, that it is minimized in this research because the coach’s assessment was multifactorial. Realistically, it seems that the coach would be the best person to assess the change since she had worked with the participant over the course of several months, during a time when the participant had frequently shared his or her personal information, challenges, and dreams.

Future Research

There continue to be many areas for research in the areas of multirater feedback and coaching, including understanding a person’s ability to receive feedback, the long-term impact of coaching, the
elements that help clients change, and a model for shifting silo cultures.

Gregory et al. (2008) believed that it is important to understand a client’s feedback orientation before giving him or her the results of a 360-degree feedback report. By doing this, a coach can anticipate a certain degree of resistance or skepticism and tailor his or her program to meet the client’s needs. It appears that the stronger an organization’s feedback environment (how much it encourages, implements, provides, and utilizes feedback), the more likely the individual is to be receptive to receiving feedback. If a model was developed that helped coaches understand how receptive a client is to feedback, that coach would be better able to manage the client’s emotional reactions.

A future area of research would be to interview people from the organization in this research project in another 2 years to determine the progress toward long-term change. The top layer of this organization (15 people) did not receive 360-degree feedback followed by coaching. If the goal is to change an organization’s culture, it is important to start at the top level.

The coach was effective at first building a relationship of unconditional positive regard with participants and then giving them actionable things to do. It would be interesting to learn more about the elements that actually resulted in successful change among participants.

Since many employees form silos and tribes, practitioners could better help transform these high-silo organizations into team-based ones if there was a model that could be followed for this type of change.
This model can perhaps have a foundation in the existing change models that are used in the field of OD.

Summary and Closing

If leaders are to be seen as the captains of the ship whose goal it is to lead and move energy in the same productive and positive direction, it is vital that these leaders become aware of their own behaviors and the behaviors that they are consciously or unconsciously reinforcing among their teams. If leaders want to change the culture of their organizations, they can begin by receiving 360 feedback and coaching to understand the behaviors that they are modeling, paying attention to, and rewarding. Individuals change teams and teams change culture. In the age of virtual teams, there are more opportunities for employees who do not see each other to form tribes or silos. These barriers decrease productivity and morale and only tend to become worse over time. The results of this research project demonstrated that 360 feedback followed by coaching can have a positive impact on executives.

I highly encourage leaders who want to improve their organizational cultures to implement 360-degree feedback and coaching for their high-level leaders. OD practitioners can also assist leaders in changing their communication and behaviors to help employees overcome tribal mindsets by creating an abundance model and building courage as an organizational competency. Hollie Packman, the executive coach for the 33 participants engaged in the 360-degree feedback and coaching (the complete interview can be found in Appendix D) summarized the impact that coaching and feedback can make:
When a leader transforms (through feedback and coaching) there is a natural link to the team because if the leader becomes less likely to disagree and more likely to listen, people on the team will be more open to give their points of view. This is where you automatically see where the rubber meets the road: Better decision-making and stronger relationships. If a person changes, it always affects their relationship— it's a relationship dynamic. (Packman, personal communication, November 18, 2009)

This research provides the best practices in the field for obtaining and utilizing 360-degree feedback. When coupled with coaching, these tools can have a tremendous impact on individuals, teams, and organizational cultures.
REFERENCES
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE REPORT
Feedback Summary Report

September 2008
Strengths

- Well respected
- Competent
- Strategic
- Dedicated
- Motivated to learn and improve
- Positive
- Collaborative
- Communication style
Well respected

- Overall, his heart is in the right place
- He is not a ladder climber
- His intentions are good
- I enjoy collaborating with him
- He is a lovely person
- He's there for me
- He is such a nice man
- He is well-liked and respected
- I trust him
- He is always friendly and approachable
- He has humble graciousness
- Most people like him
- He is very personable
- He creates a bubble of maturity around him
- I've never seen him blow off steam
- He is conscious. He will never fry out against somebocy
- He is one of my favorite people
- He is well liked and well respected
- He is the only boss I would work for a second time
- His management style is pretty open and available to everyone
- He is well liked and trusted
- He is well respected
- He is well liked and trusted
- People like his manner
- He is well respected
Competent

- I think he is the very best I've ever worked with in this business
- He makes sure the company is well positioned and unharmed by the rumors that swirl
- He is a strong leader
- I think he is good at his job and knows what he is doing
- He is a strong writer
- The content of his material he creates is great
- The quality of his work is fantastic
- Don is an optimistic wordsmith who is able to generate a conscious way for us to generate things better
- He can rally people around a central theme. He is a great marketing guy
- He has tremendous rapport with the press and marketing
- Don and his group took care of a press event in a flawless way. He does an unbelievable job
- He is organized
- He gets things done
Strategic

- He is an excellent strategic communicator
- He has a very broad view of our business
- He has got a really good overall view. It is a “think outside of the box” view
- He can take a situation and think it through thoroughly to see if there are opportunities
- He is able to approach things in ways that the rest of us would never think of
- He can present bad news as an opportunity and not blow up good news to the point of puffery
Dedicated

- I look at him as a member of my senior team. He is one of us. He has never reported to me but I know he always watches my back and has the best interests of the company.
- He is such a company guy and he is so dedicated.
- He is hardworking.
- He is dedicated.
- He is pretty self-motivated.
- He makes himself available to me when I need it.
- He is always available.
Motivated to learn and improve

- He should continue the self improvement. I lead by example. I want to follow him
- He is an inspiration to me in that he is always willing to learn
- He is constantly in self improvement [mode]
- He knows his flaws
- He has gotten better at running meetings; coming on time and staying on time
Positive

- His enthusiasm and dedication are positive attributes.
- It's in his nature to be the cheerleader. He gets excited about what we are doing which is important and helps set a positive tone.
- He always smiles.
He is able to focus on helping others.

We're able to banter things back and forth and come up with a great solution.

We've had great and rotten moments and he has kept the communication line open to a point that people feel like he is telling them something and keeping them in the loop.

Communication is really important in our department and he works hard to make sure everyone is talking to each other.

I get my information from the horse's mouth, which is great.
Communication style

- He is really great at communication
- He is articulate
- He gives suggestions in meetings and helps steer the conversation
- It is clear what he wants from you
- He explains his point of view in a constructive way
- He is open to feedback, changes and criticisms
- He is open to listening to what's going on so he could fully understand the situation
- I really appreciate that he is a great listener
Development needs

- Confidence
- Speak up
- Non-confrontational
- Delegate
- Responsiveness
- Communication approach
- Time management
- Management approach
- Longwinded
- Miscellaneous
Confidence

- For Don's own psyche, he is every bit as a good as the people in the room. I want him to be more confident that he is as good as everybody else in the company. I don't know if it's something that Don needs to change or if it's something that the company needs to change. I don't know if he is doing anything wrong. I want to make sure he is fully aware of how great he is
- I think he should have confidence in himself. He really is the best. It looks like modesty but I think it's a lack of confidence
- He will be the last person in the room to raise his hand to say he was responsible for something. I want him to take a bow
- I would like to see more respect for him
Speak up

- He should say "Hey I have an idea!"
- In bigger meetings, he doesn't say a lot until the end. I value his input and he could speak up more from his angle earlier on rather than waiting
- I'd like it if he took things to the next level and made recommendations for the next step
- In meetings there is an opportunity for him to step up and share his ideas and suggestions
- He always has great ideas once you give him something. He should be proactive in giving suggestions and ideas
- He should be out and about the town more and constantly finding opportunities and pushing the company's agenda in a proactive way
- He should feel free to be proactive and bring ideas rather than waiting for someone to ask him
- He should look for opportunities
Non-confrontational

- Because he wants to have a broad perspective, he sometimes waits to see how people are going to react and he sometimes does not take a stand
- He never wants to say no to anyone
- He may be so crazed in his schedule because he rarely says no
- It is better to say no than to say yes and not do the best job. This hurts his credibility
- He takes on a lot. A lot of random things fall into the marketing department that may not be our responsibility. We just don't say no. It might be hard to get all the information from him and clear direction
- He doesn't like to say no to things. He can earn respect by saying no
Delegate

- People who work for him don't get all the information from him because he is so busy
- Try to delegate more
- Focus on what is immediately important for accomplishing a major task and let your staff take on the details
- Focus on the big picture
- His time at events would be better spent relaxing and networking. He can trust that the team he has put together will take care of the details
- Sometimes he will have too much caretaking during events. This could give others the impression that we are under-prepared
- He gets stressed when there is a lot of stuff going on and will micromanage during big projects
Responsiveness

- Figure out a way to respond to emails in a timely manner
- People will send an email and not hear back from Don for a week
- Sometimes he doesn’t always respond to emails
- It takes a long time to get to a yes or no answer from Don
- It’s a long process to get answers from him
- He can make decisions sooner and more effectively
- He can be more responsive
- He takes on way too many projects so that the things he should be focusing on may not get all his attention
- It would be great if I received material from him sooner so I can have more time to to prepare
- I need to get as much information from his office as early as possible so I can be prepared and knowledgeable and responsive in an appropriate fashion
- I would appreciate it if he gave more information and context for the projects I need to work on
- He can be more proactive in terms of getting things to us
- It would be great if I received FYI’s for events so I can be prepared
- He puts in an awful lot of hours at work. As a result, he gets answers to people outside of business hours. Sometimes this holds up the process
- Some people feel that they don’t get the respect or attention from him that they would like. They are not aware that he is so busy
- When he is in a meeting, it would help if he gave his full attention to the conversation. This would improve future recall
Communication approach

- Don likes to ruminate and think on things a lot. He doesn't always give a direct answer. A lot of the people in our department are younger and are not used to the "Let me think about it" answer.
- Don likes to process things and he is aware. He just needs to let people know that he is processing information and that he will get back to them.
- Don chooses his words well and he is thoughtful. He sometimes has a tendency to think too long before he speaks and you want him to get to the point.
- Sometimes he is a little vague and I have to ask him again.
Time management

- He is perennially late – about 20 minutes late for everything. This is a problem because he doesn’t delegate well because his desire to get things right is higher than the execution of those beneath him. More often than not, he is not wrong. It’s a hard business and many of the youngsters don’t understand that the first impression is so important. There are 1000+ things that will go wrong and you can’t figure out what those things will be
- He should know his schedule because he sometimes runs late to meetings
- Take more responsibility for his schedule so he can arrive on time to meetings
- People feel disrespected when he is late to meetings or when he doesn’t respond to them
- He could improve his time management
- His time management and work management can be improved
- He is not on time
- He picks up his cell phone during one-on-one and group meetings. This makes people feel like they are not important
Management approach

- If there is an issue, he comes to his team like a family and lets us sort it out. I think he needs to make a direct decision and take direct action. Otherwise, his style can be confusing.
- He tends to take too much of everybody's thoughts into consideration. He should stand up and draw a line in the stand. This also helps create a way for us to manage things.
- It would be great if Don could enforce the structure he has set for his employees' responsibilities. This would help reduce redundancy and confusion.
- It would be helpful if Don would sit down with his employees for 15-30 minutes a week to understand what each person is doing. This would help him understand if people are meeting their responsibilities. It would also be a learning tool for the employees to encapsulate what they are doing in 15 minutes.
- He is very good at giving feedback initially. Sometimes he needs to do a smaller version of "You made a mistake" if the person is a repeat offender.
- When something comes up that is going to keep his attention focused away from the team, he should let us know that he is not going to be as available. He doesn't need to give us details, just a little check-in would be great.
Longwinded

- He has great ideas and he can be more effective if he packages his message better and quicker
- It would be great if he could garner the respect of senior executives and fellow coworkers because he is very smart. Being concise would help tremendously with this
- He would be more respected for his ideas if he was more concise
- People believe that Don can be long-winded
- He can be longwinded and most people don't have the attention span
- He's a talker
- He can go on and on about things
- Sometimes he goes off in several directions when he is talking
- He is such a smart guy and he has so much in his head and he loves to share it all. The point is there but it sometimes takes a long time to get there
Miscellaneous

- He could be more willing to address his blind spots. He does consciously work at improving. He teaches and speaks well in crowds. He tries to learn through the Energy Project and takes it to heart
- His strength can be his weakness
- Deep down, he is the biggest pessimist I know. He won't give his pessimism up
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK PROVIDERS
Questions for Feedback Providers

1. Please tell me about _________'s strengths.
2. Can you give me some examples?
3. Tell me about a time when you saw this person shine?
4. What do you think this person needs to work on?
5. Can you give me some examples?
6. What else can you share with me that we have not discussed today?
7. Anything else?
APPENDIX C

360 SCHEDULING PROCESS
360 Scheduling Process

Terms:
Participant: One of the 67 people chosen to receive 360 degree feedback and coaching.
Interviewer: Phone interview team
Coach: Hollie and Jim*
Feedback Provider: People chosen by the participant to give them feedback
Introductory Interview: A one hour interview between participant and interviewer
Feedback Interviews: ½ hour interviews between feedback providers and interviewer

Process:
1. Email to participants from two top leaders kicking off and endorsing the project
2. Email from Sanjay* sent the following day detailing process and requesting feedback provider list.
3. Louisa* creates a spreadsheet of feedback provider lists and contact information
4. Louisa* groups participants based on common feedback providers to avoid multiple calls to senior people.
5. Groups are sent to Hollie as soon as they are complete
6. Hollie assigns groups of participants to interviewers
7. List of participant/interviewer assignments sent to M&OD
8. All participants are assigned to coaches before calls are made by interviewers so they can use the coach’s name.
9. List of participant/coach assignments is sent to M&OD
10. Interviewer calls participant / participant assistant to arrange for a one hour phone conference which is the introductory interview. The introductory interview will accomplish the following:
   a. Overview of process
   b. Answer questions
   c. Identify participants goals
   d. Describe process including need for admin to schedule interviews
   e. Get admin contact information (email and phone)
11. Follow up from interview
   a. Email participant with a list of agreed upon next steps (see Email after First Call).
      Attach a sample email for requesting feedback from their feedback providers (see Sample email inviting people to give you feedback).
   b. Call admin to ask for assistance with interviewing. Follow up the call with the following email:
   c. Email assistant with cc to participant to kick off the scheduling. (See Email 1 to assistant). Attach the feedback provider list, your available appointments (we could use an online calendar to smooth this process), and the script for how to explain the interview (See Script for Admin for Explaining to Feedback Providers).
12. Conduct Interviews
13. Each interviewer will send M&OD weekly updates detailing all completed calls, no shows, and reschedules.
14. Interviewers will contact M&OD for assistance on difficult scheduling issues, i.e. multiple reschedules or internal logistical issues. (Policy for rescheduling: After two no shows or reschedules, request new feedback provider from participant. Each participant has a limit of 2 replacement feedback providers due to reschedules).
15. Complete interviews on each participant
17. Coach contacts participant to schedule 2 hour feedback session
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH EXECUTIVE COACH
Interview with Executive Coach Hollie Packman

What caused the change in the Major and Some change clients?
The single most important piece of it is that awareness and helping client see how they are seen in a confidential setting. As a client, if you get the feedback in a non-confidential setting, you will be defensive. If it is confidential and you feel safe, you can honestly look and digest the feedback. EQ is knowing what you are feeling and when you are feeling it and responding. When most people have clarity on what’s happening, they want to change. You need to have a safe place to know what you are feeling when you are feeling it and that leads to wanting to change. A much lower down second for what causes change among clients is the accountability of ongoing coaching.

What do you suspect happened with the NO change clients?
They did not feel safe and were in defense mode across the board. For anyone who did not change, they were in defense mode and not ready or not feeling safe to see the feedback.

How do you help clients deal with their unpleasant 360 feedback?
It’s a dance of grace and candor. I make explicit the heading of “no judgment here” and I’ll let them know the best kind of people can come across this way. Another method is to let them know that this may just be impression-based, but that doesn’t mean we don’t need to deal with it. A third way is approaching it as issue control and this is an idea of the way you propose it. In this case, I could propose that it’s the small thing they need to change and not the huge thing (the high level impression). For example, the small thing is stop doing this little thing. This is akin to lowering the stakes and the difference between describing something as a racial tension or describing something as these two people are having different communication styles and they happen to be of different backgrounds or these two people are having communication issues and it might be related to their background and it might be related to racial tension. I let them know that this is a “safe war room.”

Are some clients more open to advice? If yes, what does that look like?
Yes, some are much more open. There are two kinds of people. First, are people who have organizational/environmental high stakes where they must fix the problem and change their behavior or lose their jobs. Then there are those with personal high stakes. These people cannot tolerate imperfection in themselves so they make it their mission and vision to improve. Some are insanely invigorated in this way because they rarely hear feedback and want to work that muscle.
What literature in the coaching leads to your coaching style?
Probably the most significant for me is the Trusted Advisor by David H. Maister. This is about doing good by doing well for others. The premise is that you need to do what's right for the client in spite of how it affects you. You need to say what needs to be said, in spite of how it affects you. It is other focused.

What behaviors/techniques do you use that helps your clients achieve success?
I really try to start off the page of the 360 degree feedback report. I never go straight to a report. I give them a “nutshell” overview of their feedback that I'll have it memorized ahead of time. That has been a really important tactic to get people leaning in, thinking “she knows about me even though it's the first time we have met.” It's a quick way to connect. Also, I try to be lighthearted in times there is something uncomfortable to share. I'll share the message in an informal style. To be too buttoned up is sad in this situation.

How would you give feedback to a competent leader who is getting feedback that he is basically acting like a jerk?
The headline “nutshell” statement for the competent person who has negative feedback about his leadership style would be: You are an extremely competent leader, however, your communication approach and harsh style gets in the way of your credibility. The quicker you get them talking, the better. I'll ask: Does that sound right to you? When we need to get down to business, it is important to have an informal conversational tone. You have to be able to discuss the undiscussable.

How to get them to stick to and be accountable for their goals?
Immediately after a meeting, I email a quick follow-up on with specific tactical things they can do. For example, do this, stop doing this and start doing this. Then I'll have regular touch points with them and I'll say “here's what I need you to do in the next few weeks.” Regular follow-up is important. If I still see no follow-up on their goals, I'll give more candor and ask, “Are you on the right track? Are you not into this process? Let's talk next week.” I'll raise the sense of accountability by scheduling a meeting earlier (next week versus next month). I'll remind them about their high level impressions. Also, I'll try to raise the stakes and tell them, “I'm really concerned about this.” If I don't get movement, it is because they don't get the importance of the process. They are either not bought in to how important it is or not bought in to how to do it. If they resist, I'll compromise and I'll say, “I get it, you don't want to do it. I hear you loud and clear, how about this?” and I'll recommend something else.
Can you describe a time when you coached a leader and the results of the coaching lead to a transformation that positively and permanently affected the person's team?

It is inevitable that a leader will change the team positively when he or she develops an open communication style. If the person listens more, you get more buy in and more of a feeling of being heard and possibly more contribution and engagement from team members. When you identify a harsh communication style, chances are that it's a blind spot and has consequences on the team. The downside for the individual is the impressions that are formed when people think the person does not care. There downside for teams is that in response to this impression, they choose not to disclose their perspectives. When the leader changes, there is a natural link to the team because if the leader becomes less likely to disagree and more likely to listen, people on the team will be more open to give their point of views. This is where you automatically see where the rubber meets the road: Better decision-making and stronger relationships. If a person changes, it always affects their relationship – it's a relationship dynamic.

When I work with clients, I help them change their behaviors so they change the impressions they have on people. A natural outcome is that their relationships change too. For example, I had a client who was very closed interpersonally. She was very down to business, task-focused and rarely shared anything about her personal life at work. She was doing it in the name of professionalism. When she received her 360 feedback, she learned that this behavior affected people in adverse ways. They reported that they felt nervous around her and were not sure if she was trustworthy. For her it was a blind spot – not a skill issue. She just needed to open up about her life. She did not know people cared before that. When she opened up, people felt safer. To know her was to trust her and so the trust went up and their ability to discuss tough business issues changed. When a leader has this transformation, you have better business outcomes and stronger relationships.

Do you believe that organizational culture transformation begins with individuals? Please describe.

Yes, but it is with certain individuals. It begins with the leadership team. You cannot institutionalize change through slogans and videos. When you are able to change the way your leaders see the world, it changes everything. In daily work life, everybody is marching toward their goals and trying to do what their boss’ expect. If their boss changes, there is a radical change on the team. This radical change goes far beyond changing the vision of the organization because it begins with individuals.