

## EQ 360 Planning



This page provides EQ 360-specific best practices and recommendations aimed to reduce the administrative complexity of the EQ 360 process. Although many online features have been added to streamline the setup and administration of the EQ 360, you should take the time to properly plan the EQ 360 process before you even reach the setup stage to greatly reduce the chance of any logistical issues popping up later in the process.

Due to the complexity of a multi-rater assessment, prepare to be faced with different schedules, several correspondences, and many questions. Some questions need to be addressed early in the assessment process, long before the participants fill out the actual inventory. Common questions asked by participants include (but are not limited to):

- Why have we been chosen to participate?
- How will the results be used?
- How will confidentiality be ensured?
- How will the raters be chosen?
- How many raters need to be chosen?
- When does the inventory need to be completed by?
- Will there be any follow-up once the inventory has been completed?

Addressing these questions early in the EQ 360 initiative will help the participants, the administrator, and the organisation get the most out of the process and the results by fostering a climate of trust and shared understanding. Since not all people invited to take part in the EQ 360 will actually follow through with the assessment due to work demands or other reasons, 100% participation is sometimes not possible. Low response rates, however, invariably denote problems with the survey process, poor timing, or respondent attitudes towards the survey.

The best practices provided on this page can help you implement an effective EQ 360 administration with maximum participation.

### **Gaining Buy-in**

When possible, share the details of the EQ 360 assessment with the senior management team. The administrator can communicate such issues as what resources will be required, time commitment required, sample timelines, and information about the instrument that will be used. Keep in mind that some individuals within this team may not have heard about emotional intelligence or may not understand what emotional intelligence is. Therefore, a brief definition of EI and the scales of the EQ 360 will serve to get people thinking in the same direction. Because the scales of the EQ 360 have good face validity, most prospects quickly see for themselves how these skills would facilitate individual and organisational success.

It may also be advantageous to mention that the EQ-i 2.0 and EQ 360 were created from over twenty years of research demonstrating the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, and that EI skills can be learned. EQ 360 assessment efforts should not be undertaken unless there is strong and visible support from senior executives. In order to achieve maximum payoff from the assessment, executives should provide the administrator adequate resources for completion, a commitment to ongoing follow-up, as well as a visible presence throughout the assessment and development phases.

Speaking with the participant and raters before the administration is essential to completing a successful EQ 360 assessment. All individuals participating in the EQ 360 process need to have an understanding of the purpose, process and expectations of the assessment. The more individuals understand about why a 360-degree assessment is being introduced into the organisation and how the information will be used, the more likely participants are to support the effort.

Participants should be notified of a meeting to discuss the EQ 360 process well in advance of the administration of the instrument. The meeting notification should be distributed to all participants and senior management. The notification should include information about the importance of attending the meeting, as well as a meeting agenda.

## **Issues to Consider when Preparing Participants and Raters**

- Depending on the knowledge and experience level of the participants, the administrator may want to discuss the construct of emotional intelligence, how the construct is important to job performance, what a 360-degree assessment is, the EQ 360 and definitions of its scales, how long it will take to complete, and the look of the report.
- Discuss with the participant and raters the expected outcomes of the assessment – what do they want to get out of it?
- Discuss with the participant and raters the reason why they were selected to participate.
- Discuss with the participants their right to confidentiality, informed consent, where their data will be kept, and who will have access to their data.
- Discuss the importance of providing answers that are honest and reflect current functioning.
- Discuss with the participants and raters how they will receive ongoing support and follow-up. Participants need clarification about what is expected of them after they receive their feedback. Raters need to hear what outcomes will result from their feedback; will they be involved in the action planning process or subsequent progress check points? In any case, participants and raters need to know that the 360-degree assessment is not a one-time event, nor one that is a replacement for having healthy and timely conversations around performance.

In an organisational setting, it may be most efficient to introduce the EQ 360 at a meeting attended by all intended participants or through a well-detailed email. This will help to ensure that all the participants and potential raters are equally and fully informed about what is entailed in the assessment process, and will provide the administrator with the opportunity to address important questions or concerns prior to beginning the process.

The general approach to introducing the EQ 360 is to stress the positive, constructive, and beneficial aspects of the assessment. Encourage questions and attempt to answer them in a manner that will not bias the ratings.

## **Introducing EI and the EQ 360**

Briefly describe the inventory, the number of items, the response format, and how long it takes to complete the questions (approximately 20 minutes). Stress that the EQ 360 is not a test. Explain that it is designed to provide the participant with a meaningful learning experience and a chance to develop oneself. You can also say that the participant will benefit personally from the feedback that arises from the EQ 360. The results will help identify the individual's stronger abilities and skills as well as those areas that need to be strengthened in order to increase his or her ability to cope more efficiently with daily demands in various areas of life.

Convey to raters and participants that their participation will help the participant to identify personal strengths, as well as facilitate personal growth where weaker areas are observed.

You may wish to hand out an instructional letter following a group discussion, have the participant distribute a letter among his or her raters, or create an email communication that a senior staff member can send to participants. In cases where preparatory meetings and discussion are not feasible, it is recommended that you create an introductory educational document and allow time for participants' concerns to be addressed before sending administration instructions. When used in lieu of a preparatory meeting, a primary introductory correspondence should include:

- A brief description of the EQ 360
- Reasons why they are being asked to complete the EQ 360 and the benefits of their participation
- An explanation of how aggregate results help to maintain anonymity
- That their participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw at any time
- What will be done with the results
- Who to contact with questions or concerns

Regardless of your preparatory methods, it is essential that detailed written instructions be provided to the raters about proper conditions for instrument completion. The administration instructions should reiterate the purpose of the assessment, why emotional intelligence is being measured, the importance of honest responses, why the participant was selected, and that they are free to withdraw at any time.