



**Head  
Light**

Open-ended questions  
to include in  
360 degree feedback reviews  
*part of our series of Tools*

Talent **Cloud**<sup>®</sup> Breakthrough **software**. Raise **expectations**.



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## Choosing open-ended questions

This guide is aimed at helping those setting up a 360 degree review to select some open-ended questions, which can be positioned:

1. after each question,
2. after each competency section,
3. at the end of the assessment,

or all three if preferred!

Consider the following questions before you look at the suggestions which follow:

- What do you want to get out of the review? For what purpose are you doing it? Is it purely for development? What's going to be most helpful to the participants? Think about the sort of feedback you need to get and this should, in part, drive your choice of questions.
- With whom should you consult when deciding on the questions to ask? Are there people within the organisation who would have a valuable viewpoint on this? Are there people you need to engage in order to get buy-in?
- Do you want to make the open-ended questions optional or mandatory? We can set the system to require answers if you feel that we should be encouraging participants to support their ratings with comments, qualitative feedback, examples and evidence. It is worth noting that, in a recent survey, 97% of our 360 participants said that the open-ended comments were the most interesting and useful aspect of their feedback....
- Is there anything that isn't covered in competency model? For instance, do you want to ask about potential, rather than current performance?
- Do you want to have people provide more detailed explanations of their competency ratings? If so, consider providing an option for them to comment after each competency section.

Below you will find a number of question options. This is by no means an exhaustive or definitive list, and our online Talent Management system will support any qualitative questions you choose, but these are some commonly used and insightful examples for your consideration.

## Suggested questions

### Evidence for the ratings

Each competency area (or even each item) can be followed by an open-ended question which will provide supporting information, explanation, qualification or evidence for the ratings.

These can be particularly useful for development planning and feedback purposes, and also if the data is to be aligned and integrated with Development Centre feedback.

These questions could be worded as follows:

- Do you have any comments on the ratings you have provided above?
- Would you like to provide further information to support the ratings you have given in this area?
- Can you provide examples of this person's behaviour or performance that would help them to understand their feedback in this area?

## Informing development planning

At the end of the 360 assessment, you can include a number of open-ended questions which again are useful for feedback, development and integration with other data, or for personal development planning as part of a leadership programme.

Such questions could be:

- What would the person need to stop doing in order to be effective as a manager/leader?
- What would the person need to start doing in order to be effective as a manager/leader?
- What should the person continue doing in order to be effective as a manager/leader?
- What should this person do more of?
- What should this person do less of?
- What should this person do differently?
- What is this person's key strength?
- What other feedback would you like to provide to this individual?
- Does the person have any particular strengths that might be overplayed at times? If so, please describe these and the impact they have when over-used.
- What do you think are this person's real talents?
- What sets this person apart from others (at their level, or in the organisation)?
- Do you have any further comments that you would like to add?
- If you could ask this person to do one thing (do more of, or do differently) in order to support you and enable you to do your job to the best of your ability, what would that be?
- What sets this person apart from others (at their level, or in the organisation)?

## When used as part of selection for promotion

If you are using 360 for a specific purpose, such as selection for promotion to a higher level role, or to support an individual's learning on a training course or development programme, then consider asking questions which would directly tie in to the objectives of the programme or the promotion criteria.

For example:

- Is there any other feedback that might help this person in their personal development planning?
- Where should this individual focus their personal development efforts in the next one to two years?
- What would the individual need to develop further in order to operate even more effectively as a senior manager or leader?
- Overall, how well does this person demonstrate the behaviours, skills and attitudes which are necessary to be effective at senior levels?
- To what extent does this person demonstrate potential for a more senior management role?
- What advice would you give to help them maximise their potential for a senior management role?
- What impact does this person have on you and your work?
- Is there anything in this person's style or approach that, in your opinion, stops them from being as effective as they could be?

## Next steps

If you would like to take a closer look at developing your Talent Management Strategy, please get in touch.

## About Head Light

Head Light is an award-winning talent management software and consulting firm that works with clients to define and implement impactful talent management strategies.

Talent Cloud® is our cloud-based portfolio of integrated talent management software tools designed for those who expect the maximum return from talent management processes. Our training and consulting services uniquely complement our breakthrough software that engages employees, managers and senior leaders in the selection, development and progression of people in their businesses.

Companies in the FTSE 350, public sector, large and small, from retailers to high tech innovators have all benefitted from our tools, techniques and expertise. Founded in 2004, we are headquartered in the UK.

Head Light has attained the ISO27001 standard for Information Security. Certificate No 217613.





***How do I...***

*transition to Continuous Performance Management*

***How do I...***

*introduce robust Succession Planning*

***How do I...***

*spot High Potentials and Future Leaders*

***How do I...***

*drive Engagement through Career Conversations and Development*

***How do I...***

*embed new values and improve culture*

***How do I...***

*conduct Skills Assessments and a Gap Analysis*