Head Light

Making Sense of 360-degree Feedback

part of our We think… series

The Talent Cloud Platform

Developing Skills. Encouraging Performance. Boosting Recognition.

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Making sense of 360 – evaluating feedback

At Head Light we firmly believe in the power of 360-degree feedback, but we also recognise that real value is only gained when the feedback is understood, accepted and acted upon by the recipient.

The role of a feedback facilitator is therefore pivotal; anecdotal evidence from our clients strongly points towards a face-to-face feedback session as being the most valuable part of a 360 review, a critical element in enabling subsequent behavioural change. Essentially, the role of the facilitator is:

- To help the recipient to make sense of their feedback; to help them understand what it means for them.
- To help the recipient prioritise aspects of the feedback and decide how they are going to respond to it.
- To assist the individual in identifying courses of action; development activities, conversations they need to have, etc.
- To provide an experienced eye; for instance, helping the individual navigate through the report, interpret the ratings, see patterns in the feedback and to put things into perspective.
- To offer an unbiased, professional (and sometimes unemotional) interpretation of the feedback, where necessary.

In addition to ensuring that the reports generated by our own online 360 degree feedback tool, Talent360 are intuitive, user-friendly, customisable and able to represent the data in a number of different visual formats, we support our clients by providing either expert 360 facilitation services or internal training to develop a pool of internal facilitators.

The Head Light Feedback Facilitator Training course

On this programme we introduce facilitators to our ‘Head Light Lenses’. There are a number of different models you can use to evaluate or make sense of the feedback contained in a 360 degree feedback report and we have developed a number of tools specifically for this purpose. We use the term ‘lens’ because different models provide slightly different ways of looking at the feedback and can be used to achieve a specific aim or objective, much like one would use different lenses on a camera to get a different effect.

Moving on from the JoHari Window

One commonly used model for evaluating and using the outputs from a 360-degree review is the ‘JoHari Window’. The JoHari Window is an excellent tool for helping people to build their self-awareness and understand how they can interact more effectively with others, but it does have its limitations. Even the most sophisticated of 360-degree feedback processes is unable to identify things of which neither the individual nor others are aware, so it does require a certain amount of skill and experience in order to uncover aspects of behaviour or performance that are in the ‘unknown’ pane. There is also a risk that a serious issue will emerge which would need the expertise of a clinical psychologist or counsellor to deal with it constructively and effectively. For this reason, the JoHari Window is often adapted for use with 360-degree feedback – but we have taken this further and designed the PAPU-NANU.

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PAPU-NANU

PAPU-NANU (not named after a Polynesian island – stands for **P**ositive:**A**ware, **P**ositive:**U**naware, **N**egative:**A**ware, **N**egative:**U**naware) comes as standard as part our Talent 360 tool.

It is useful when:

- reviewing a 360-degree feedback report, either in preparation for a feedback conversation or during a session, or
- helping a recipient to understand their data.

It helps to reduce the preparation time required in advance of a 360-feedback discussion and provide a platform for constructive conversations between feedback recipients and their managers. The following provides an outline of how it works, so you can try using it to make sense of your own 360 feedback, or to give you a structure to work to when preparing to discuss a report with a client or colleague.

The development of PAPU-NANU

PAPU-NANU was developed through our **experience of facilitating 360 feedback discussions**; these can often be challenging and emotional, but it is important that a feedback session is as positive and constructive an experience as possible.

PAPU-NANU uses **deliberately positive language** and aims to **highlight the most useful bits of feedback** and ways of responding to these.

It is essentially a way of **categorising, prioritising** and **distilling** feedback; a good 360 will provide you with a wealth of rich data, which can either be hugely insightful and helpful, or totally bewildering!

PAPU-NANU gives you a **structure** which will help you to **'organise'** the feedback into four categories, which then focuses you on the likely development needs and key strengths and initiates thinking about what could be done differently to operate more effectively and make use of the feedback.

It views areas where there are differences in perception as 'opportunities' – that is, areas in which the participant could make people more aware of his or her behaviour, intentions or thinking processes. These differences are also opportunities to increase his or her self-awareness and understanding of the impact on other people.

PAPU-NANU is similar to the JoHari Window, but it focuses on these perceptual differences and uses slightly different axes to sort the information:

- Whether the feedback was a surprise, or whether it was expected (aware vs. unaware)
- Whether the feedback was positive (or motivational) or negative (developmental, or constructive) – this is often most easily identified by the strength of others' ratings (relatively high or relatively low)

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The four categories

The four resultant categories, or 'boxes', are described below.

- **GREEN** - Clear strengths: positive or more highly-rated feedback which was expected – i.e. you may have also rated yourself highly on this.
- **PINK** - Good news: positive or more highly-rated feedback which was unexpected – i.e. you may have rated yourself lower than others did.
- **YELLOW** - Agreed development areas: developmental or lower-rated feedback, which was expected – i.e. you also gave lower ratings to this aspect.
- **ORANGE** - Hidden talents: unexpected developmental or lower-rated feedback - i.e., you rated yourself more highly than others did. These might be strengths or talents that you have which are 'hidden' from others. They may also be areas where you think you are having a particular impact which is not seen (or perceived differently) by others. This could therefore represent a development need.

To sort the data into these four boxes, you could go through the following steps:

1. **Start by comparing the self-ratings and total others' ratings**. Go through the items and look for those which have the biggest gaps between the two scores. Items or competencies with the biggest difference are those of which the participant is more 'unaware' of (less agreement between him or her and others' ratings) and those with the smallest differences are the 'aware' areas (more agreement between self and others).
2. **Look at specific groups**, if the overall 'others' category does not generate differences of much magnitude. For instance, the differences between self and manager ratings is often an interesting one, because of a common tendency to rate self highly and for managers to apply the lowest ratings. Looking at the ratings from these two groups can 'sharpen' the difference between scores. Pick out those items which have the biggest gaps between different groups, perhaps using a coloured pen to highlight the most significant differences.
3. **Highlight any areas where the participant's own scores are very similar** to those from other groups, using a different colour.
4. Look at which areas were **rated highest and lowest overall** (use the competency summary graphs to see where the relative strengths and areas for development might be).
5. **Combine the results of steps 1 to 4** to identify specific behaviours or competencies in each of the four boxes.

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The PAPU-NANU Grid

	Expected (others' feedback similar to self)	Not expected (others' feedback different to self)
Others' feedback positive	**CLEAR STRENGTHS**	**GOOD NEWS**
Others' feedback constructive	**AGREED DEVELOPMENT AREAS**	**HIDDEN TALENTS**

There are a number of ways in which you could structure a feedback meeting based on this model, but a conversation could involve discussing the contents of the four boxes and then using the following to generate discussion and development actions:

Window	What should we do?
CLEAR STRENGTHS	• Plan to use these more often, in more situations • Think about how these can support you in developing weaker areas • Can you help to develop others in these areas?
GOOD NEWS	• Read comments to understand what you do that you were not perhaps aware of • Plan to do these things more often, in more situations • How could you use these to greater effect? • Could you gather more feedback to increase your confidence and self awareness in this area further?
AGREED DEVELOPMENT AREAS	• Think about what you could do to improve these areas – how can you learn? • Read the comments to see what specifically you could do more of • Set some clear action plans in order to address some of these areas – can you use any of your strengths to support you in this? • Are these really critical to effectiveness in your role, or for success at the next level up? • Are there people in your team who could support you in these areas?
HIDDEN TALENTS	• Try to understand the feedback – how might it have come about? • Think about how you could change these perceptions – what are others not seeing? • Is it the case that this is something you do internally (e.g., problem-solving, critical thinking)? If so, how can you make others more aware of your efforts here? • Could it be that your positive intentions are not obvious to others? How can you change this?

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The advantages of PAPU-NANU

Most experienced feedback facilitators will have a set of models that they use when helping individuals make sense of 360 degree feedback and the JoHari template is often reflected in these.

Having used PAPU-NANU in many feedback conversations, we find that our model gives you these advantages:

- **It's easy to overlook the feedback that falls into the 'clear strengths' category**. Areas in which you and others rate your behaviour as being effective can often get pushed to one side in the rush to pick apart the lower-rated areas. PAPU-NANU is a good way of encouraging you to highlight these strengths and to make better use of them. During the face-to-face discussion, it can be really useful to direct the individual's attention back to this box if they're dwelling on the less positive feedback and when looking for ways of helping them develop other areas.
- **The 'good news' feedback usually gets less attention**. Highlighting the areas in which others see you as being more effective than you see yourself can be a counterbalance to the 'hidden talents' and PAPU-NANU brings this feedback to the surface, encouraging you to think about how you could capitalise on the strengths you were unaware you possessed.
- **The positive language you adopt when applying this model is key**. In particular, the framing of the potentially contentious areas where the individual has given themselves much higher ratings than others have as 'opportunities' and 'hidden talents' can help people to think more constructively about what this feedback is offering them, and how they can benefit from being made aware of it. In discussions you would normally use 'constructive' or 'developmental' instead of 'negative feedback' and deliberately drawing the individual's attention to the green and pink boxes gives a more positive feel to a feedback discussion.
- Some clients find the **structured nature of this process helpful** – applying a logical process to reviewing their feedback.
- The **visual nature of the process is appealing**.
- Our reports are designed to be **informative, helpful and intuitive** and the PAPU-NANU option provides more guidance as to which aspects of the feedback might be most useful and what you actions you can take in response to it. We also know that not everyone has the luxury of a mentor or feedback facilitator, or they might be remotely managed and have limited opportunities for development discussions. We often encourage feedback recipients to draw up their own PAPU-NANU grid and populate it with items of feedback and potential development actions, encouraging them to take ownership of the outputs and putting them in their own language.
- **Streamlines and speeds up this process**, allowing users to make the best use of their preparation time and enabling them to have focused, high quality, face-to-face feedback discussions.

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Next Steps

If you would like to take a closer look at the Employee Engagement levels within your organisation and the steps you can take to increase this, please get in touch.

About Head Light

Head Light is an award-winning talent management and talent retention 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 platform tools designed for those who expect the maximum return from talent management processes. Our training and consulting services uniquely complement our platform 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.

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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…

boost Recognition

How do I…

drive Engagement through Career Conversations and Development

How do I…

embed new values and improve culture

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