



*September, 2011 Volume 2: Issue 8*

### *360 Degree Assessments*

## *a MESSAGE from SYLVIA*

### *The Manager's Coach*

Looking back over the various jobs I had spanning three decades, I sometimes think about how ALL of those work experiences might have been enhanced if my direct supervisors would have received 360 degree feedback from a sampling of employees. Even the positive situations could have been improved. I am so clear about this now many years later.

My boss who used raw profanity as a way of life would have learned that her office staff held her in low esteem as a result of her language. If she had known how we felt, maybe she would have cared enough to change it. My boss who never seemed to be available would have discovered that we needed her input more than once a month. Perhaps she would have made herself accessible if she had realized how frustrated we were with her chronic absence. And my boss who played favorites could have had an opportunity to stop this behavior had he understood just how it disempowered many of us. There are other examples, but these illustrate the point. People in supervisory positions NEED and DESERVE feedback on their leadership ability, performance, behavior, attitude, professional image, and ability to inspire their employees.

How can bosses obtain meaningful feedback? One powerful strategy is

through the use of 360 degree assessments—which, by the way, I am trained to conduct. Depending on the situation and structure of the organization, bosses such as business owners and nonprofit executive directors can pursue this on their own without having to wait for someone in authority over them to recommend and implement it. In the case of larger corporate organizations, company policy often dictates that only senior level managers or Boards may initiate such a process. Whatever the circumstances, 360s are incredibly valuable to everyone in the work environment! Read my article below to learn about specific benefits.

*Sylvia*

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### **360 Degree Assessments: 10 Benefits to Managers**

Without exception, persons in management positions can benefit significantly from a 360 degree assessment conducted by an outside consultant or coach. This type of assessment provides managers with an unfiltered view of their “performance” in the workplace according to a selected group of employees who represent several or all layers of the organization. The hired third party interviews (face to face or by phone) up to ten staffers, using a standardized set of pre-established open-ended questions approved by the manager. After the interviews are completed, the consultant or coach prepares a comprehensive summary of the common themes and trends, carefully protecting each employee’s privacy. The following is a list of the major benefits to such an assessment:

#### **1. The manager learns how staff views her daily behaviors.**

This piece of the final report shows the manager exactly how her know-it-all attitude or inaccessibility affects her employees. It provides her with examples of how her anger problem stifles morale, how her silent treatment creates fear, or how her constant interrupting during conversations shuts people down.

#### **2. The manager receives evidence of his strengths.**

In this section of the report the manager reads a comprehensive list of his

strengths according to the staff who were interviewed. In addition, the manager learns what he does better than anyone else his employees have ever known throughout their careers as well as specifically what they count on him for.

### **3. The manager gains insight around her weaknesses.**

This section reports obvious weaknesses as identified by the staff. This is where a failure to serve as a credible, steady resource to employees shows up. It's where gossiping or lack of genuine interest in people gets mentioned.

### **4. The manager receives feedback about certain aspects of his professional image.**

This piece discusses the manager's body language, speech, dress, approachability, character, integrity, likeability, and confidence. Employees have been given the opportunity to weigh in on these components, citing examples of both positive and negative evidence.

### **5. The manager learns how her staff interprets her frame of mind and world view.**

In this section the manager reads about whether or not her employees see her as emotionally stable, grounded, solid, fair, supportive, optimistic, and/or generally eager to jump into the day. Managers with great talent and skill are sometimes surprised to learn that staff questions their emotional stability, motivation, or ability to serve as leaders.

### **6. The manager finds out how his staff sees him as a human being.**

Here the manager reads a detailed, collective description of himself. This can be enlightening and humbling. It's not unusual for employees to know their manager as a good and decent person who is not capable of leading a department to greatness. But the reverse can be true too. Sometimes employees talk about a boss with noteworthy technical skills who is self serving, self absorbed, and disconnected from others.

### **7. The manager gets a peek at how others view her outside of the department.**

This piece talks about what staff hear outsiders say about her: persons in other departments, individuals in the community, stakeholders, etc. In this

section the manager learns about her reputation as “dictator” or “great boss material” or “open minded”.

**8. The manager receives information about his impact upon others.**

Here the manager reads about how he makes employees and others feel when he is around them and interacting with them. He finds out if he makes people nervous and upset or if he inspires them to exceed expectations.

**9. The manager gets clues about her professional and personal development needs.**

In this section the manager gains insight around the technical and/or soft skills her staff wants her to acquire and implement. As she reads this, she has the opportunity to learn specifically how they think she should grow over the next year or so.

**10. The manager learns how he influences his employees’ attitudes, work performance, and job satisfaction.**

This piece allows the manager to read an assessment of his degree and type of influence upon his employees. He may now understand that he either de-motivates people or excites them, throws stumbling blocks their way or finds ways to support them, kills their satisfaction or fuels it.

## RESOURCES

John C. Maxwell’s 2005 edition of *The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization* explores the concept of leadership from a very different angle. In this book the author talks about how YOU can lead people from whatever position you hold. He discusses myths, challenges, and specific strategies for leading upwards, across, and downwards. The reality, he says, is that 360 degree leaders have certain qualities that allow them to lead in every direction, and that’s what makes them valuable. You may obtain a hardcover copy of Maxwell’s insights from Amazon for less than \$15.00.

## TIP

## Start With Your Unique Situation

Determine the three top benefits that a 360 degree assessment could provide to your organization. Specifically, figure out what how those benefits could make a positive impact on staff morale and function, your products and/or services, the relationship between employees and supervisor, and community perceptions of your company. If you are not the decision maker, you may want to find a creative way to influence your boss so that he/she chooses to engage in this evaluative process.

## *Where in the World is SYLVIA?*

On August 30, 2011 Sylvia delivered a presentation entitled, “The Gifts in Uncertainty”, for statewide consultants affiliated with Pennsylvania Women Work! whose headquarters is located in Pittsburgh. The occasion was an inservice training day held at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East. The presentation included an assessment that allowed participants to determine how well they cope with uncertain situations both at home and at work.

During the last week of September, Sylvia will be presenting her business at a regular meeting of the Harrisburg Chamber’s Diplomats Committee. Sylvia has served on the committee for three years and currently is chairperson.

## *About This Ezine*

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged

*Launching Lives Ezine* is dedicated, above all, to “building people...building businesses.” ©2010, 2011

## About SYLVIA

**Sylvia Hepler**, Owner and President of Launching Lives, is an executive coach based in South Central PA. Her mission is to support corporate and nonprofit executives and business owners as they solve problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives. Her background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A [certified executive coach](#) through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education, Sylvia is a platinum level expert author on [ezinearticles.com](http://ezinearticles.com). She has produced an audio CD entitled, "Making Change", [two special reports](#) for persons in management positions, and an e-book entitled, No Surprises: A Business Guide for Starting Your Coaching Practice.

More information is available at her [Launching Lives Website](#)

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*Sylvia enjoying the summer weekend before the week of both an earthquake and Hurricane Irene*

# Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives is an executive coaching company located in South Central PA. Its mission is to support managers and executives to solve their most pressing problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives utilizing a holistic approach. Launching Lives focuses on BUILDING PEOPLE through individual, private coaching, group coaching, assessments, specialized products, presentations, and retreats. Most coaching takes place by phone.

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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