

**PODCAST TRANSCRIPT: WHY ARE 360s IMPORTANT IN TODAY'S WORKFORCE? (08:51)**

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**Welcome to an edition of the 360-tracker podcast, sponsored by The Booth Company. Today we will be asking Dr. Daniel Booth, founder and CEO of The Booth Company, a few questions about 360-feedback and its importance in today's workforce. So Daniel, why don't you start by telling us what 360-feedback is.**

**Dr Daniel J. Booth:** That's a really good question because today it can mean almost anything. There are appraisal systems where appraisal comes from one's peers and direct reports and others who watch the person in action. And of course there is what we do, which is design instruments, actually scientifically designed instruments, to measure management skills and leadership skills; and in addition, what kind of impact those skills have on overall effectiveness, on the trust level, on the attention level on a team, things that we call outcomes of the way skills are executed. But essentially the definition of 360-feedback is on a given topic to collect opinions and perceptions from those people who see the person in action. The most reliable is that which comes from people who have many opportunities to observe, such as the direct reports of a manager.

**That is a very clear definition of 360-feedback, which is important for our listeners to hear, since the term can be misused. So tell us why someone should go through a 360-feedback program.**

**Dr Daniel J. Booth:** Let me give you an example. You're a manager and you've got 7 direct reports. You've had an appraisal, you're boss talks to you once in a while, and sometimes people will make comments to you about whether you're being helpful in giving them feedback or training them. So you get all these little bits and pieces in your everyday life. When you get a well-done 360-feedback report, you now have organized according to the skills that are really basic to your job, and also what kind of impact your having on those direct reports, on your peers and on your own boss. And it's organized in such a way that you can objectively analyze, how am I coming across in the goal setting function? How am I doing in terms of providing the help people need for planning? Am I doing my work collaboratively? What's the consensus from my team? Am I including them in decision making and honoring all the experience they bring to the job? How am I doing on giving feedback? So all of these things are put in a logical order and separated out from my directs and my peers, and I see how many people agree and disagree and I have an opportunity to evaluate all that feedback and make decisions on where I'm being successful and where I'm not.

**You illustrated an example of a 360 process. But do you have a real life example that you could share?**

**Dr Daniel J. Booth:** The first one that comes to mind was a struggling executive running an entire IT department for a large insurance company. When the data came back, not only did this executive score high only in what we called the dark side of leadership, using pressure to get results and also high in creating tension on the team, but the direct report managers had very similar profiles. The whole department was under terrible pressure and it was all coming largely from the senior executive. The executive was coached, not extensively, I think over the period of a year and may have had two or three conversations with our internal coach that we had trained

at this company. The second time around there was such a desirable drop in the tension on the team and the pressure had gone from the 98th centile, which means only 2% of the population could possibly score higher, down to normal. And what came up were the leverage areas of the Task Cycle®, what came up was the perception of the senior exec instead of leading with a cattle prod, was actually inspiring people, discussing the vision, communicating the vision, this is where the strengths came out in the second time around, and these had been pretty non-existent the first time around. So not only did we have this wonderful healthy change in the climate, and with a new focus on clarifying the mission, communicating it, getting buy-in, doing the proper analysis that's necessary at that level, but at least half the managers on that team were now modeling after the newly enlightened, should I say, or empowered and better educated senior executive. This is the one that came to mind first.

### **Why are 360-feedback programs important in today's workforce?**

**Dr Daniel J. Booth:** Millennial's, the youngest cohort at work today, are sometimes described as the un-mentored, or even un-parented generation. The relevant point is their great need for feedback and not just cheerleading. And what's encouraging is their openness to feedback and coaching. But you know, it is our experience the same need exists for Generation Y, X, Boomers and even my own generation. Let me tell you an anecdote. In the early 70's when I was just getting started in this business, Shell sent me to a gas field in western Kansas. One of my clients was a 60-year-old supervisor, one year away from retirement. At half his age I wondered what I could possibly offer this old man. I didn't have to worry. He greeted me with a big smile and thanked me even before we started his review. He looked me in the eye and he said this was his last year and it was going to be his best, and darned if he didn't wish he'd had this sort of thing 36 years ago when he was first made supervisor. That was very encouraging to me as I was getting started. But there is another important force in the world besides generations that are making 360-feedback more important today. Few people today are in the same position within an organization or even at the same organization for more than 2-3 years and their stakeholders are changing just as quickly. The 360-feedback program that we might have provided for an individual contributor, such as a research analyst in a pharmaceutical company, won't be current beyond 12-18 months. And if they change roles, such as becoming a supervisor, they'll have a whole new set of competencies to measure. So the changing workforce is creating an even greater need for more periodic feedback, people have new roles, new cohorts, new responsibilities, and new competencies as they move up in the organization and go from place to place. So I think this creates an even greater need for real-time periodic feedback, so we can stay sharp in what we are trying to accomplish.

**I want to thank you Dr. Booth for your insights on the 360 industry and I hope we can do this again. This concludes this edition of the 360 tracker podcast.**

