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APPLYING 360 DEGREE FEEDBACK TO THE CF PERSONNEL APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Master of Defence Studies Research Project

By: LCdr Derek Cann
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Abstract

In providing leaders with both developmental and performance appraisal feedback, the Canadian Forces is not unlike most military organizations which rely on the direct supervisor/superior to evaluate the individual. However, for at least 15 years now, the best organizations have moved on to gaining feedback about the performance of leaders using other team members' input. We refer to such systems as multi-rater or 360 degree feedback systems because they potentially involve self, peer, subordinate and even internal and external customer feedback to provide the individual with a more accurate indicator of their performance. Research indicates that 360 degree feedback can be an effective developmental and appraisal tool.

The thesis of this paper states that it is time for the Canadian Forces to embrace 360 degree feedback both as a developmental tool and as an element of the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System for annual assessment of its leaders. The paper starts with a review of the current leadership challenges in the CF and exactly what 360 degree feedback is all about. It then looks at the positive and negative aspects of 360 degree feedback in both the developmental and appraisal contexts. If the CF wants to become a *learning culture* and for its leaders to utilize the transformational leadership style, the time has come to implement a 360 degree feedback system for leaders. This paper proposes using the 360 degree feedback tool during a leader's career once during each Development Period (DP) for personal development as well as incorporating it as part of annual performance assessments.

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"The Imperial Rater seldom rates men according to their merits, but always according to his likes and dislikes."

Wei Dynasty, circa 287 A.D.[1]

As we will see later in this paper, leadership in the Canadian Forces can and must be improved. Therefore, the statement quoted above is both insightful and challenging. It is insightful as it states succinctly the most common method of performance appraisal in military organizations, namely, top-down performance assessment of individuals as seen by superiors alone. At the same time, it calls into question the validity of such assessments as the best indicator of merit. The challenge then is how do we rationalize such a contradiction when top-down rating is such a fundamental aspect of the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System (CFPAS)?[2]

Leadership in the military has been practiced and studied since before the time of Sun Tzu. In recent times, much effort has been put forth to define the practice of leadership as both private and public sector organizations realize the significant part it plays in an organization's success. Exactly how to develop and assess leadership skills remains an area which organizations seek to improve upon. Some of the most recent

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[1]   Quoted by The Quorum Group available at www.jbrau.com/qg-8.html. Accessed 4 Dec 03.
[2]   CFPAS is the DND tool for performance feedback and annual assessment of CF members. Full details can be found at http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/cfpas/engraph/home_e.as.

developments in this area have recognized the value in providing more than just the supervisor's feedback to those being assessed. As will be discuss in detail later in this paper, 360 degree feedback is one method of improving leadership in organizations that has gained popularity over the last 15 years. It is one of a variety of *multi-rater* leadership development methods which use input from other sources such as oneself, peers, subordinates, clients etc, to augment the supervisor's perspective when developing leaders or assessing their performance. It has been embraced in civilian industry but has seen limited application within military organizations. Some believe that an organization cannot truly embrace such notions as *learning culture* and *transformational leadership* without utilizing a development and appraisal tool more sophisticated than the traditional supervisor-rater or top-down approach.[3]

In addition to limited initiatives which seek to introduce 360 degree feedback as a self-development tool for the most senior officers in the CF, this paper will demonstrate that the 360 degree feedback methodology should be incorporated more completely into leadership development as well as leader assessment. This paper will show that relatively minor changes to the CFPAS would achieve many of the benefits of 360 degree feedback and avoid some of the potential negative aspects.

This paper will be presented in two main sections. Section 1 – <u>CF Leadership & The 360 Degree Feedback Methodology</u> will describe; shortcomings the CF has identified in various aspects of leadership and governance, the various aspects of multi-rater systems with a focus on the 360 degree feedback methodology, and the benefits and

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[3]   Walter W. Thornow, *et al, Maximizing The Value of 360-Degree Feedback,* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1998), 120-146.

potential negative aspects of 360 degree feedback. Section 2 – <u>Applying 360 Degree</u>

<u>Feedback in the Canadian Forces</u>, will describe; what we mean when we say that we wish

to use transformational leadership in the CF, and how 360 degree feedback can be

applied as both a development tool and a means of leader appraisal. In order to address

both the positive and negative aspects of 360 degree feedback in the contexts of

development and appraisal, a stawman framework for implementation will be proposed

for the Canadian Forces. The paper will focus on specifics aspects of the CFPAS,

namely the Personnel Development Review (PDR) and the Performance Evaluation

Report (PER). The impact of proposed changes will be viewed as they pertain to

improved development and more accurate annual assessment of leaders, and how they

can positively impact the attitude and performance of participating rater groups. This

section will end by recapping the current Canadian Forces initiative in 360 degree

feedback.

Multi-rater feedback systems and the 360 degree feedback methodology include a

wide range of applications and approaches. Specific application methodologies and

constructs must be tailored to each individual organization based on its needs, culture,

leadership style and expected outcomes. This paper will present aspects of the 360

degree feedback methodology that are well-suited to the CF in an effort to allay fears of

multi-rater approaches thereby enabling senior leaders to move one step closer to

becoming a truly transformational leadership organization.

Impact of Leadership on CF Effectiveness

Let's first define the link between leadership and the effectiveness of the CF to carry out its mission. Studies have found a strong link between an organizations climate[4] and its operational effectiveness. In fact, studies have found a very strong correlation between corporate climate and productivity, as high as a 71% correlation in some cases.[5] *Fortune* Magazine notes that *"*Most admired companies appear to be more successful at breathing life into culture, ... In contrast, prevailing priorities and attitudes in average companies are found to be . . .minimizing risk, respecting chain of command, supporting the boss, and making [the] budget.[6] Similar results have been found in military environments as well. The influence of the leader on climate, and therefore unit effectiveness, was closely interrelated, and "As a component of climate, there is clear evidence that 'the leadership process is a key contributor to organizational effectiveness and morale'."[7] The CF recognizes this relationship in its cornerstone human resource (HR) publication *Military HR Strategy 2020 – Facing the People Challenges of the Future* wherein it states that "The operational capability of the Canadian Forces is

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4 United States Army, USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, Steven M. Jones, *Improving Accountability For Effective Command Climate: A Strategic Imperative,* Sept 2003, 3. Available at http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi. Accessed 3 Dec 03. Climate "is a complex construct of perceptions about organizational structure, communications, allocation of responsibilities, rewards, risk-taking, warmth and support, performance standards, acknowledgement of conflicts, and identification . . . ."
5 Ibid, 3.
6 "What Makes A Company Great," *Fortune Magazine*, October 26, 1998, 218-219.
7 United States Army, USAWC, SSI, Steven Jones, *Improving Accountability. . . ,* 3.

ultimately derived from its people . . . rely on their leaders to look after their well-being and interests."[8]

As can be seen from the above, there is a clear and recognized link between sound leadership and operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. Let's look then at the state of leadership in the CF and whether or not there is a need for change in our approach to leader development and appraisal.

CF Identified Leadership Shortcomings

Within any progressive and dynamic organization there is a need for reflection and continuous improvement, and improvements in the areas of leadership and professional development are no different. For this reason, an organization should always strive to make improvements in the way it manages human resources. But this in itself would unfairly describe and under-emphasize the severity of the current leadership situation in the CF. In recent history, there have been numerous studies and reports which have indicated that "The present [1998] crisis in the Canadian armed forces is primarily a crisis of leadership ..."[9]. If we are to propose changes in the area of leadership assessment and development, it is best to start with an overview of the recent reports and surveys that speak to this *crisis of leadership*. Our review will be limited to that data which refers to the significance of leadership in the CF and the development and selection of leaders.

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[8]   Department of National Defence, ADM(HR-Mil), *Military HR Strategy 2020 – Facing the People Challenges of the Future,* 2002, Message from the CDS and DM, i. Available online at www.forces.gc.ca.
[9]   Government of Canada, Official Opposition Response to the SCONDVA Majority Report, *Real Commitment – Addressing the underlying causes of low morale and the poor quality of life in the CF, Oct 98, Section 2.*

Criticism of leadership and governance in the Department of National Defence (DND) and the CF, as in many other government departments, is not new. In fact, such criticism is a fundamental element of an open and democratic society. But in the early part of the 1990's, a series of very public leadership failures called into question the soundness of leadership in the CF – incidents in Somalia, corrupt financial actions by senior officers, inconsistencies in the military justice system and a resounding loss of confidence by CF members in their leadership. As a result of these activities, the CF looked at specific incidents and the Officer Professional Development (OPD) System in general in order to determine how to move forward.

Following some of the incidents noted above, DND commissioned the *The Phillips Study – Military and Civilian Employee Feedback Survey* in 1995.[10] It identified shortfalls in the confidence both military and civilian employees had in their leadership, the need for seniors to focus on low morale among employees, and the need for much better internal communications.[11] Specific to our study among the reports comments were:

> Message: Defence 2000 management principles need to be refreshed; accompanied by more skills assessment and development; and become part of accountability frameworks through subordinate appraisal processes. Although many employees feel well-treated by their superiors, this presents an opportunity to build an even stronger sense of belonging and community to cushion some of the more negative experiences and emotions currently felt.[12]

Three of the survey statements speak directly to the issues at hand. The response to the statement *I can communicate openly with my superiors,* received 32% replies of either

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[10]   Department of National Defence, contractor report, The Phillips Group, *Military and Civilian Employee Feedback Survey,* June 1995.
[11]   Ibid, 4-9.

"disagree" or "strongly disagree". Similarly, to the statement *My superiors show genuine interest in my well-being* and *I feel respected and treated fairly by my superiors* received 36% and 29% respectively. Equally damning was the response to the statement *I have confidence in the most senior levels of the Department to lead us through these difficult times* – with 61% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with that statement.[13]

In 1997 the Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Doug Young, presented his report to the Prime Minister on the *Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces.* While this report touched on many areas of leadership and good governance in the CF, it paid particular attention to shortcomings in the OPD system and the appraisal and selection of officers.[14] It provided a series of recommendations referring to *Promotion and Command Selection*, giving rise to the current CFPAS system. While many of these recommendations have been achieved, the spirit of this report continues to be a work-in-progress. He stated that, "Effective Leadership of the CF is dependent upon the promotion and selection of the very best individuals for positions of responsibility and command."[15] This paper contends that we must ask ourselves - *can we improve upon the appraisal and selection process in the Canadian Forces?*

The Somalia Inquiry Report of July 1997 was a critical document in the recognition of shortcomings in leadership and the personnel selection processes in the CF.[16] It made several strong recommendations regarding the overhaul of the CF

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12   Ibid, 15.
13   Ibid, Appendix C, 1-3.
14   Department of National Defence, *Report to the Prime Minister on the Leadership and Management of the Canadian Forces,* Mar 97, Ottawa, 15-20.
15   Ibid, 44.
16   Department of National Defence, *The Somalia Inquiry Report,* July 1997, available online at http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/reports/somalia. Leadership is addressed in the Executive Summary and in detail in Ch. 15 of Vol. 2.

performance evaluation and selection processes. Among its recommendations was the

following regarding leadership reform:

> 15.4
>
> [That] The Canadian Forces make a concerted effort to improve the quality of leadership at all levels by ensuring adoption of and adherence to the principles embodied in the findings and recommendations of this Commission of Inquiry regarding the selection, screening, promotion and supervision of personnel; the provision of appropriate basic and continuing training; the demonstration of self-discipline and enforcement of discipline for all ranks; the chain of command, operational readiness, and mission planning; and the principles and methods of accountability expressed throughout this Report.[17]

The Somalia Inquiry Report also identified the need to move from *transactional*

to *transformational* leadership.[18] While we will investigate this further in a later section,

it is prudent to note the Report's support for changes towards transformational leadership:

> However, this kind of leadership has limitations. A transaction creates no enduring purpose that holds the parties together. It does not bind the leader and follower in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose. . . . In contrast, transformational leadership "...occurs when one or more persons engage with others in a way that raises both leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality. . . ." Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused. Transformational leadership, by the enlightened use of inspiration, communication, and understanding of human behavior, can motivate subordinates to achieve more than could ordinarily be expected.[19]

The Somalia incident and the Inquiry which followed were so damaging to the CF

that annual reports for progress towards the recommendations in the Report were required

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[17] Ibid
[18] Ibid, Vol 2.
[19] Ibid

for the following several years. The failures in leadership in Somalia brought home the reality that poor leadership costs lives, ruins careers and strikes at the heart of military effectiveness. The training and professional development of officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) had to be completely reviewed, re-built and set back on a solid foundation of military ethics and values.

The next challenge that DND would face was the *Report on Quality of Life Improvements in the CF (1998)* by the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA).[20] Following public outcry after a series of media reports on poor housing in the CF, lack of care for the injured and veterans, and families needing food banks, SCONDVA crossed Canada visiting bases getting input from personnel at all rank levels in order to grasp the economic and social challenges faced by CF personnel. The result was recognition of inadequate support for military personnel over a range of areas such as pay, housing, the military family, transitions and care of the injured and veterans.[21]

Regarding the subject of this paper, the SCONDVA report recognized that there has been a failure by senior leaders in the CF and by government to support the quality of life of ordinary military members. The report states that "Throughout our hearings we learned that our military personnel . . . feel themselves to have become the victims of a series of broken trusts . . . . If we are to maintain an effective military we must re-establish, on a firm foundation, the trust between our military personnel and those to whom they look for leadership and recognition."[22] Thus, the SCONDVA Report

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[20]   Government of Canada, SCONDVA, *Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces,* October 1998.
[21]   Ibid, Ch.1.
[22]   Ibid

identified what other reports previous to it had noted – that CF leadership is not meeting the challenges of a modern and dynamic military.

One of the commitments made as a result of the QOL Report noted above was an annual QOL Survey to gain feedback on whether or not the recommended initiatives were addressing the shortcomings noted and whether the issues were still seen as requiring improvement. The 2001 QOL Feedback Survey provides a snapshot on career leadership issues. Of those that responded that the career dimension required attention (26.87%), improvements in the PER/promotion system was seen by 33.3% as still needing improvement, and of those that identified superiors and leadership as a dimension requiring improvement (17.18%), 33.74% noted that better leadership was their first choice for needing improvement followed by 27.4% identifying better support to troops as needing improvement.[23]

Many initiatives have been put in place as a result of the leadership shortcomings identified in the reports during the last 10 years. Apart from the specific recommendations actioned in each case, the CF has recognized that it needed to develop and institutionalize career development and the study of leadership. For these reasons, the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI) was created as a unit within the Canadian Defence Academy. In addition, the Directorate of Human Resources Research and Evaluation (DHRRE) has been tasked with commissioning studies and surveys dealing with leadership, quality of life and quality of work life. In the same context, the CFLI continues research into our current leadership and professional development methods and areas for potential improvement – 360 degree feedback being one of them. Some of these papers will be brought forth later in this paper.

As can be seen from this section, the CF has come through a difficult but rewarding period where it has had to recognize many of the systemic shortcomings in its leadership development. While many initiatives are already in place, it would be naïve to think that we have exhausted the areas where improvements are required.

Appraisal and Development Feedback Basics

Since the earliest times when humans have grouped together to achieve their goals (survival, hunting, dominance of others, etc), there has been feedback on performance. The strongest hunter ate first, the failed warrior was often banned from the group or even put to death. Such means of feedback left little room for improvement or development. Since these early times, one would hope that we have progressed in our use of individual appraisal and performance feedback.

Appraisals and feedback for leaders are used for two primary reasons: individual and/or team development and administration of compensation for performance (pay, promotions, assignment decisions).[24] Some authors describe a third usage of formal appraisals as a legal means of defending HR decisions. Nevertheless, performance development and administrative actions will be discussed in this paper. The traditional means of providing feedback is by what is called *downward* feedback, or feedback from the person or persons above you in the chain of command or the company owner for

[23]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, *Quality Of Life Feedback Survey 2001*, 3-8.
[24]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, E.K. Kelloway and V.M. Catano, Contract Report 2003-03, *Contemporary Perspectives on Performance Appraisal: Towards Resolving the Paradox,* Mar 03, 3.

smaller businesses. The opposite of this is *upward* feedback which has gained popularity since the mid-1960's and early 1970's.[25]

The basic approach to appraisals can be grouped into three types: first, second and third generation. First generation describes those methods used where the feedback was strictly downward from the superior to the subordinate. "More often that [sic] not, they were primarily mechanisms for determining pay. The role of the manager was very much to sit in judgement, and the subordinate was often lucky to get a word in edgeways."[26] Second generation appraisals started to appear in the 1970's where the subordinate was invited to participate much more in the process, providing feedback on the appraisal itself as well as developing a plan of action for the coming period. But this approach still focused on downward feedback from the supervisor perspective only. Finally, third generation encompasses all those recent initiates which seek to involve many other rater perspectives in the appraisal itself, it tends to distinguish development from appraisal and may include a focus on team rather than individual results.[27] Much of the recent research focuses on this area of HR and leadership development. The 360 degree feedback methodology is one such recent approach.

Multi-source or Multi-rater Feedback

Performance appraisals or development feedback that use more than the supervisor as a rater are referred to as *Multi-source, Multi-rater, full-circle or 360 degree*

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[25]   United States Air Force, USAWC, LtCol Thomas S. Hancock, *360-Degree Feedback: Key to Translating Air Force Core Values into Behavioral Change,* Apr 99, 6-7. Available online at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc/99-116.pdf. Accessed 17 Jan 04.
[26]   Larry Reynolds, *The Trust Effect* (Sonoma, CA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing Ltd., 1997), 161.
[27]   Ibid, 162.

feedback appraisals.[28] As these names are synonymous for appraisals that collect

feedback from more than one source, we will use 360 degree feedback throughout this

paper. This is the most popular name given to these methods as it best describes the

"circular" nature of the potential raters – self, superior, peers, subordinates and internal

and external customers.[29] Feedback provides the rated individual with a comparison

between how they may perceive themselves and how others perceive them, not simply

the immediate supervisor. It focuses on both the leadership skills and personal style of

the rated individual. The 360 degree feedback systems evolved from methods developed

in performance appraisal processes, organizational surveys, developmental feedback and

the customer feedback part of total quality management[30] (TQM).[31]

       Multi-rater methodologies include a range of products used to capture individual

style, knowledge and skills as well as team or unit performance, perceptions and climate.

Noted below are the definitions of these attributes as defined by Lepsinger and Lucia

(1997).[32]

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[28]   Richard Lepsinger and Anntoinette D. Lucia, *The Art and Science of 360° Feedback,* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, 1997), 6-8.

[29]   United States, Office of Personnel Management, Performance Management and Incentive Awards Division, *360-Degree Assessment: An Overview,* Performance Management Practitioner Series, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, Sep 1997), 1.

[30]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Kelloway and Catano, *Contemporary . . .* , 19.

[31]   Ron Cacioppe and Simon Albrecht, "Using 360 Degree Feedback and the Integral Model to Develop Leadership and Management Skills*," Leadership and Organization Development Journal,* Vol. 21, No. 8, 2000, 390. Available online http://www.integralleadership.org.au/interesting/360FIM., accessed 8 Jan 04.

[32]   Richard Lepsinger and Anntoinette D. Lucia, *The Art and Science of 360°. . .*, 10.

Working Definitions for the Types of Data Collected by 360 Degree Feedback	
Skill	Proficiency at performing a task; degree of mastery (for example, ability to think strategically, communicate in writing, delegate work, influence, negotiate, operate a machine)
Knowledge	Familiarity with a subject or discipline (for example, knowledge of an industry or business)
Style	A pattern of characteristics or ways of responding to the external environment (for example, self-confidence, energy level, self-sufficiency, emotional stability)

Table 1-1

Assessments of team performance have used a variety of surveys and questionnaires completed by either all or select individuals in a team. This information is then used to determine areas where the team is relatively strong and areas where the team may require improvement. These surveys can often provide a leader with immediate feedback on areas where more focus and effort is required. Such surveys can also provide an assessment of the leader as well. The Canadian Forces uses many such survey techniques in order to gain *unfiltered* feedback on a range of issues. As was mentioned earlier, the Directorate of Human Resources Research Evaluation (DHRRE) conducts many of these surveys.

Early research into personnel appraisal determined that the feedback from one source, typically the supervisor, did not match psychometric predictors of performance. In addition, in comparison to others in the work relationship with the rated individual, it was not always the most accurate. Research has found that peer ratings and subordinate

ratings were more accurate against behavioral predictors.[33] This was significant as it indicated that the traditional approach to appraisal and feedback was not only not as accurate as it might be, but it was also founded on one perception of performance which was potentially not as accurate as others in the team environment. The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)[34] describes the likely difference between observers in the table below.[35]

Performance Dimensions Likely to be Observed by Different Rating Sources				
Performance Dimensions	Subordinates	Peers	Supervisors	Customers
Administrative			√	
Leadership	√			
Communication	√	√		
Interpersonal	√	√		
Decision making		√	√	
Technical		√	√	√
Personal motivation		√	√	√
Customer orientation				√

Table 1-2

This is a very generic description of possible differences in observations from the potential raters in 360 degree feedback, but it does correlate with other studies which

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[33]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, S.F. Cronshaw, T.B. Kondratuk, and G.A. Chung-Yan, *Performance Appraisal Discussion Paper,* Contractor's Report 2003-02, Feb 03, Ottawa Canada, 7.
[34]   CCL is an international, nonprofit educational institution whose mission is to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide. It was founded in Greensboro, NC in 1970 and today is one of the largest institutions in the world focusing on leadership. It has offices and associates worldwide.

have found that supervisors are not always in the best position to assess all aspects of
subordinate performance. Some of the more common reasons why a superior/supervisor
may not always be the most accurate in assessing a rater are;

- the superior may have a personal bias. Whether consciously or sub-consciously,
  he may have a propensity to like or value the characteristics of one subordinate
  over others for reasons not related to the work environment. This then tends to
  get reflected in the assessment of the subordinate. Take two production managers
  who both work for the same superior. One is religious, the other is not. The
  religious manager sees the superior, another religious person, in church each
  week. Although the two managers are equal in all respects in the work
  environment, there is a tendency for the superior to rate higher the one he has
  social commonality with, the religious man in this case. Such biases are seen to
  play a significant role in the assessment of subordinates by superiors, and are
  referred to as *superior biases*;[36]

- in the competitive environment of today, organizations cannot afford unnecessary
  overhead. Therefore, they tend to be much flatter hierarchically, which results in
  superiors having many more subordinates than was typical only a decade or more
  ago. The result is that superiors have fewer opportunities to know the business of
  each subordinate and to observe them frequently in the work environment.[37] The
  result can be that they assess an individual's performance based on little

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[35]   Walter W. Thornow, *et al, Maximizing The Value . . . ,* 19.
[36]   Social biases

information, especially the intangible aspects of performance – cooperation with others, team focus, etc. This can lead to inaccurate performance assessments;

- because superiors by definition are at least one level higher in the organization, they are that much more responsible for the *bottom-line*. They are more focused on the financial health of the company. Therefore, because they cannot separate their management concerns from their leadership role, they may over-rate financial performance over other aspects of the subordinate's performance. Take two production managers again. One delivers an annual production profit of 8% while another delivers 7%. The superior may consider the first manager to be performing better. Yet, because workers don't like the authoritarian and demanding behavior of the first manager, they have a higher rate of lost-time, attrition and tend not to volunteer for "company improvement workshops". When these are taken into account, the true production profit of the first manager goes form 8% down to 6%. Not only that, but there is an obvious drop in worker motivation in his unit. The superior may overlook the entire performance range if focused too closely on the *bottom-line;* and

- some subordinates behave differently towards the superior than towards subordinates and peers. Even when the superior makes a concerted effort to adequately observe the subordinate, they may not see aspects of performance which would be obvious to others in the workplace team. These are referred to as "blind-spots". Therefore, the superior tends to make an educated guess regarding

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[37]   Richard Lepsinger and Anntoinette D. Lucia, *The Art and Science of 360°. . .*, 8.

some performance aspects such as customer focus, teamwork, development of subordinates, etc.

The above list, while not all-inclusive, is meant to provide examples where the superior's perspective on subordinate performance can be skewed. It would also be fair to suggest that the perspective of any one rater will have its own biases. This then goes to the fundamental improvement that 360 degree feedback has over traditional assessment from only one source – it compiles the perspectives of several team members to produce the most accurate assessment possible.[38] This is true whether the feedback is used for development or assessment. In the coming sections, we will discuss the major positive and negative aspects of 360 degree feedback.

Now that we have a basic understanding of what 360 degree feedback is and how it differs from traditional feedback and assessment, let's have a look at how it is typically implemented.

Implementing 360 Degree Feedback

A company looking to utilize 360 degree feedback will normally hire a specialized agency which will analyze the work environment, the leadership tier being assessed, and recommend a methodology for data collection. Individual questionnaires is the most common method used and there are many products available which can be tailored to suit the situation. Some of the more popular are; MBTI - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, LTQ – Leadership Trait Questionnaire, BARS – Behaviorally Anchored Rating

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[38]   This is a compilation of shortcomings described in various pieces of literature assembled by the author and not attributable to any one document.

Scales, LMX – Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire, OPQ – Occupational Personality Questionnaire, and TDI – Type Differentiator Indicator. The questionnaires pose a series of questions or statements which are used to produce a psychodynamic profile of the knowledge, skills and style/behavior of the individual being rated. Once distributed to the designated raters including the individual being rated (for self-assessment), the data is collected and responses are compiled by the coach/facilitator. These results usually provide a graphic display of the perceptions of the various rater groups as well as an average in the assigned categories. Such a methodology allows the identification of areas of strength and areas of improvement. If feedback is for developmental purposes only, there would usually be confidentiality between the individual and the coach, the coach typically being exterior to the company or not involved in any assessment aspects of the rated individual. If for assessment purposes, the superior would be provided the results for consideration. The final stage of the 360 degree feedback methodology includes debriefing of the individual and creating an individualized development plan to address the areas for improvement. A typical graphic representation of the 360 degree feedback results is noted below.

Section 1 - Competency Category Rankings   Chris Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Effect	N

6. Analytical Thinking

	Effect	N
Avg:	**7.08**	9
SELF:	6.50	1
IMMSUP:	6.75	1
COLL:	7.13	4
DR:	7.13	4

3. Entrepreneurial/Innovative Orientation

	Effect	N
Avg:	**6.58**	9
SELF:	7.25	1
IMMSUP:	7.25	1
COLL:	6.63	4
DR:	6.38	4

2. Client Focus

	Effect	N
Avg:	**6.48**	9
SELF:	7.00	1
IMMSUP:	6.67	1
COLL:	6.58	4
DR:	6.33	4

9. Political/Cultural Sensitivity

	Effect	N
Avg:	**6.22**	9
SELF:	6.00	1
IMMSUP:	6.00	1
COLL:	6.42	4
DR:	6.08	4

8. Communication

	Effect	N
Avg:	**6.16**	9
SELF:	6.60	1
IMMSUP:	6.40	1
COLL:	6.65	4
DR:	5.60	4

From the previous information, we see that for each of the categories (analytical thinking, entrepreneurial/innovative orientation, etc) the average rating was tabulated, not inclusive of the self-rating. The rating scale is 1–10, and the numbers at the far right indicate how many respondents there were for each group of raters (self, immediate superior, colleagues, and direct reports (DR) from subordinates). The analysis portion of the feedback will group the categories to make general assessments of strengths and weaknesses. After the one-on-one debrief, the rated individual creates a development plan for the short and long-term with the assistance of the coach. The company and the

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[39]   Department of National Defence, Ellis Associates Inc. presentation to Canadian Forces College, CSC 30, *360 Degree Feedback for Development: Group Debrief,* Toronto, Oct 03.

individual may choose additional follow-up to track improvements against personal and corporate strategic objectives.

Now that we have reviewed the basics of the 360 degree feedback and how it is applied, we can now look at the most critical positive and negative aspects of this methodology.

Positive Aspects of 360 Degree Feedback

Over the last 15 years 360 degree feedback has gained wide acceptance as a development tool in the western world. "It is estimated that now almost 25 percent of all US organizations and 90 percent of the *Fortune 1000* companies are using 360 [degree] feedback.[40] Although there is general agreement that 360 degree feedback is a positive improvement over single-source performance feedback, there are also those that believe that 360 degree feedback is neither a panacea for all leadership issues nor is it void of inherent areas of concern which must be addressed. To look at this, we will first identify the major positive aspects of the 360 degree feedback methodology.

The first positive aspect deals with the improvement in data accuracy that is inherent in multi-source perspectives over single-source. We alluded to this in the previous section when we discussed the limitations on the *supervisor only* perspective on performance feedback. Research confirms that when dealing with performance feedback, invariably multiple sources provide a more accurate assessment than a single source, regardless of which single source is used. The US Office of Personnel Management states, "Research has shown [that] assessment approaches with multiple rating sources

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[40]   Ron Cacioppe and Simon Albrecht, "Using 360 Degree Feedback . . . , 390-404.

provide more accurate, reliable, and credible information."[41] In addition to its accuracy, users of 360 degree feedback see a more balanced measure of performance and there is also a strong tendency that "feedback from peers and work associates usually has a more powerful impact . . . ."[42] This is not to say that data accuracy is not impacted by a wide range of factors, some of which are still present in 360 degree feedback (biases, blind-spots, confidentiality, etc), but generally speaking multiple sources for performance feedback, especially for leaders, is more accurate and precise than single sources. With greater precision and accuracy, it is much easier for specific areas requiring improvement to be detected and addressed.

The second significant improvement that 360 degree feedback provides is *self-awareness*. Self-awareness is considered to be the extent of agreement between how others perceive you and how you perceive yourself. When feedback, whether for developmental or assessment purposes, is provided only from the superior, there tends to be limited acceptance of criticisms on the part of the receiving individual, a notion of . . . *well, its your opinion against mine*, leading to a lack of internalization and awareness. But when multiple sources all agree, coupled with the self-assessment portion of most 360 degree feedback approaches, the individual is much more likely to accept the results, thereby gaining much more self-awareness. This typically leads to more rapid development and improvement.

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[41]   United States, Office of Personnel Management, *360-Degree Assessment: An Overview, . . ,* 1.
[42]   Ross Laver, "A Jury System for Jobs", *McLean's Magazine,* Vol. 109, Iss. 32, August 5, 1996, 5.

The Center for Creative Leadership considers self-awareness one of the six essential characteristics for leadership to be successful.[43] In fact, some consider this the most important aspect of 360 degree feedback:

> Much of the emphasis on and excitement regarding multi[-]rater assessment methods is based on the simple and longstanding belief . . . that feedback leads to an enhanced level of self-awareness on the part of the individual receiving it. This, in turn, leads to enhanced effectiveness and performance. Daniel Goleman's "Nine Concept[s] of Emotional Intelligence", Charles Garfield's "Ten Analysis of Peak Performers", Stephen Covey's "Eleven Habits of Highly Effective People", and Peter Senge's "Twelve Principles of Individual and Organizational Learning" all support this fundamental assumption.[44]

The self-assessment portion of the 360 degree feedback can often be very enlightening. Typically, self-raters fall into one of three categories: those that generally agree with the perceptions of others, referred to as "in-agreement raters"; those that rate themselves low compared to others, referred to as "under raters"; and those that self-rate higher than others around them, referred to as "over raters".[45] Research has shown that once identified using 360 degree feedback, each group should be managed in a slightly different fashion. In-agreement raters are most self-aware and tend to be the easiest to embrace the transformational learning culture that corporate leadership models seek. Under raters get an initial boost through the results produced by 360 degree feedback, but they must be nurtured to be more bold, confident and inspired to challenge themselves and their teams. On the other hand, over raters can be the most problematic. They tend

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[43]   Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Shaun Newsome, Arla Day and Victor Catano, *Leader Assessment, Evaluation and Development,* March 2003, 46. Available online at http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/cfli/engraph/home_e.asp.

[44]   Allan Church and Janine Waclawski, "Making Multi-Rater Feedback Systems Work", *Quality Progress*, Vol. 31, Iss. 4, April 1998, 81.

to be least accepting of criticism, and may be prone to reject the 360 degree feedback methodology in favour of traditional, top-down approaches to feedback. This is where the investment that a corporation has put into demonstrating the value of 360 degree feedback, communicating clearly the purpose, training, trust and confidentiality, etc. will be required. If managed correctly, over raters in time demonstrate improvements in leadership and subordinate ratings.[46] We see then that 360 degree feedback provides not only a valuable self-assessment tool, but a baseline for improved development of leaders.

The next important aspect of 360 degree feedback to be looked at is the impact it has on the overall team. In this context, whether the team is a clearly defined sub-set of the unit or simply those members of the unit or organization that are directly influenced by the rater, makes no difference. Because performance feedback is typically sought from peers, subordinates and potentially internal and external customers, those providing the feedback gain a sense of empowerment towards the team. Those providing feedback on the supervisor's performance, even if only for developmental reasons, feel that they are contributing directly to the improvement of the leader, and thus the team itself. In upward feedback situations such as this, this is often referred to as giving the subordinates *voice.*[47] Confidence and trust in the performance feedback system increases.[48] Even when only select individuals on the team are asked for formal feedback, overall the team responds positively to the process. In an evaluation of the CF

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[45]   Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Peter A. Hausdorf and Lynda Zugec, *Designing Effective Leader Assessment/Feedback Systems: Integrating Organizational Culture, Stages of Change, and Goal Setting,* undated, 10-12.
[46]   Ibid, 12.
[47]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Contractor Report 2003-01, G.P. Latham, *et al*, *The Science and Practice of Performance Appraisal: Recommendations for the Canadian Forces,* February 2003. *Voice* refers to the extent that people believe that their views were taken into account before the appraisal decision is made.

Performance Appraisal System (1997), in reviewing upward feedback systems, it states "subordinate appraisal can improve labour-management relations by providing workers with a means of voicing their concerns about the way they are managed."[49] As we will discuss in more detail at a later stage, empowering workers/subordinates, providing them a voice and developing an environment of open and constructive feedback is critical to transformational leadership and becoming an organization with a learning culture.

While we have yet to address the issues surrounding development versus assessment using 360 degree feedback, it is safe to say that the above positive aspects are present regardless of the final purpose of the feedback itself. There are many other positive aspects of multi-source feedback, but those noted above are sufficient for our discussion in this paper.

Negative Aspects of 360 Degree Feedback

Multi-source feedback methodologies are not without their criticisms. While they may be universally accepted as being an improvement over single-source feedback, there are still many that recommend caution in application due to some of the negative aspects noted below. Again, this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather, only those that are germane in this paper.

One of the most significant detractions in the use of 360 degree feedback systems over traditional single-source systems is the resource cost of properly implementing such an HR system. To look at this more closely, we will discuss each point separately;

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48   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, S.F. Cronshaw, T.B. Kondratuk, and G.A. Chung-Yan, *Performance Appraisal. . .* , 8.
49   Department of National Defence, ADM: 6335, N. Lam, *et al*, *The Canadian Forces Performance Appraisal System: An Evaluation,* April 1997, 9. Available at http://www.dhrre@forces.gc.ca.

- cost of external support. Most corporations, even the largest, tend not to have sufficient expertise in 360 degree feedback methodologies within their HR departments to properly administer these systems. Therefore, they require exterior support from leadership development agencies. Starting from scratch and carrying on through to a fully developed process is a time consuming and thus costly venture. Detractors of 360 degree feedback consider that the cost investment exceeds the marginal performance aspects gained,

- resource/time commitment. Even when the system is run by an external company, there is a significant investment in the corporations resources regarding the time committed to these systems. As communications and managing expectations are vital to the success of the methodology, personnel at all levels in the corporation, from raters to senior executives, require training, indoctrination and motivation, time for completion of questionnaires, and feedback and counseling periods. This time commitment far outweighs that normally attributed to traditional performance feedback and appraisal,

- long-term commitment. Typical 360 degree feedback systems are not designed to produce results in the short term and then be terminated. Similar to most leadership development approaches, organizational change and leadership improvements tend to be visible over the longer term. By the very cyclical nature of most appraisal systems (annually or semi-annually), data collection, analysis, feedback followed by personal development plans will occur over a much longer time. Therefore, the corporation must commit to a longer investment in order for real change to occur.

It can be seen from the section above, that initial implementation is costly for an

organization. This is affirmed by Kelloway and Catano (2003) where they state, "It is

clear that implementing a multi[-]source appraisal system is an expensive process and

one that requires a large commitment of organizational resources over a long period of

time (Brutus & Derayeh, 2002).[50]

The next critical negative aspect of 360 degree feedback is the significant debate

regarding its use either as a development tool or an assessment tool. Most of the

literature suggests that while the multi-source methodology is an excellent leadership

development tool, caution should be exercised if it is being considered for assessment for

administrative purposes, such as pay and advancement. The Center for Creative

Leadership supports this position:

> The principal underlying belief at the Center [for Creative Leadership] is that
> individuals need to "own" their assessment in order for change and development
> to occur. Ownership is only possible if individuals do not feel threatened by the
> feedback and believe it is credible and candid. Organizations that link 360-degree
> feedback to evaluations risk losing the value of individual and organizational
> development.[51]

Associated with the belief that 360 degree feedback is best used as a development

tool rather than for assessment is the means of application. As a development tool, it is

assumed that the results of the feedback will not be made available to anyone other than

the coach/facilitator and the individual involved. Those in the direct assessment chain,

such as the supervisor, other than as one of the participants in the questionnaires, will not

be privy to the results. We will discuss confidentiality more separately. In addition,

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[50]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Kelloway and Catano, *Contemporary . . .* , 14.
[51]   United States Air Force, USAWC, LtCol Thomas S. Hancock, *360-Degree Feedback: . . . .*

reaction of the person receiving the feedback, whether they agree or disagree with aspects and whether they embrace a follow-on development plan, is entirely left to the individual. This can lead to an additional negative aspect where the effect of the 360 degree feedback process is lost due to the resistive attitude of the individual. Facteau and Facteau (1998) write, "if 360 degree feedback results are not tied to administrative decisions such as pay and promotions, leaders who receive this feedback may perceive limited accountability for using the results.[52] Nevertheless, "74% of the companies that used multi-source feedback did it solely for the purposes of employee development."[53]

The next criticism of 360 degree feedback relates to confidentiality, transparency and retribution. Most proponents of 360 degree feedback agree that in order for such a system to work, the company must invest significantly in building trust within the participants that the information will be used as designed. This refers to multiple levels of confidentiality in the process. Firstly, raters, especially peers and subordinates, must trust that their feedback will be anonymous. Some studies have shown that up to 35% of subordinates would change their ratings of an individual if they were not provided anonymously.[54] Secondly, those rated, in order to embrace fully the 360 degree feedback results, expect results to be confidential. Along with this confidentiality, raters have fears of retribution.[55] In others words, subordinates sometimes fear that their negative feedback of a superior will "poison" the work environment – the superior will assess their performance more negatively, relationships will be strained, and there will be an overall

[52]   Carolyn Facteau and Jeffrey Facteau, "Reactions of Leaders to 360 Degree Feedback From Subordinates and Peers", *Leadership Quarterly,* Vol 9, Iss 4, Winter 1998, 427.

[53]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Kelloway and Catano, *Contemporary . . .* , 13.

[54]   United States Air Force, USAWC, LtCol Thomas S. Hancock, *360-Degree Feedback:. . .* , 10.

[55]   Scott Wimer, "The Dark Side of 360-Degree Feedback," *Training and Development,* Vol.56, Iss.9, September 2002, 39.

adverse impact on the workplace. This of course, will only occur if the ratee reacts poorly to feedback identifying areas of improvement. Again, this is countered by some evidence which suggests that feedback is usually accepted and embraced positively when supported by multiple sources and there is a measure of transparency on how those results were obtained. Overall, if a 360 degree feedback system is implemented without due consideration for these aspects, a negative result may occur. Experts continue to emphasize the importance of these fears and the need to address them in the design of the system and the communications effort up front.[56]

The final negative aspect of 360 degree feedback refers to how it is implemented. Studies have shown that if insufficient effort is put in place at the start of such systems, participants at all levels will experience mistrust, uncertainty, apprehension and even fear. This will lead to feedback results that are less accurate than expected and there is less likelihood that leadership development will be sufficiently embraced to affect real change in the organization. This will ultimately lead to strategic objectives not being achieved. To counter this, the common mistakes that companies make when using 360 degree feedback must be avoided. Wimer and Nowack (1998) describe 13 frequent mistakes as listed here;

1. having no clear purpose,
2. using it as a substitute [for good supervision],
3. not conducting a pilot test,
4. not involving key stakeholders,
5. having insufficient communication,
6. compromising confidentiality,
7. not making clear the feedback's use,
8. not giving people sufficient resources,
9. not clarifying who "owns" the feedback,
10. having "unfriendly" administration and scoring,
11. linking to existing systems without a pilot,

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[56] Ibid, 37-44.

12. making it an event rather than a process, and
13. not evaluating effectiveness.[57]

As we can see from the preceding paragraphs, there are aspects of the 360 degree feedback methodology which need to be addressed if such a system is to provide the valuable leadership feedback and development expected. We will see in the coming section that 360 degree feedback can become a critical element of both leadership development and assessment, if managed properly.

In Section 1, we have reviewed shortcomings in the Canadian Forces leadership identified over the recent past. While many of these shortcomings and concerns cannot be addressed here, there are also many which may be addressed through leadership development and selection improvements. We then reviewed the fundamental aspects of single-source and 360 degree feedback methodologies. After reviewing the basics of 360 degree feedback, we looked at both the positive and negative aspects of 360 degree feedback. In the coming section, we will address the leadership challenges facing the Canadian Forces and investigate the thesis that 360 degree feedback can have a positive impact on the Canadian Forces when used for both leadership development and leader appraisals.

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[57]   Scott Wimer and Kenneth Nowack, "13 Common Mistakes Using 360-Degree Feedback", *Training and Development,* Vol.52, Iss.5, May 1998, 69-78.

Section 2 – Applying 360 Degree Feedback in the Canadian Forces

In this section, the 360 degree feedback methodology will be applied to the Canadian Forces in both the developmental and appraisal aspects as described in our thesis. In order to do this, the identified leadership challenges from Section 1 will be addressed as we propose overall application of 360 degree feedback in the Canadian Forces leadership context.

In order to apply 360 degree feedback in both the leadership development and leader appraisal areas, let us first review the leadership challenges facing the Canadian Forces which we stated in Section 1. Again, this paper only discussed those that have applicability regarding developmental feedback in general and 360 degree feedback specifically. The leadership challenges are summarized below;

- leaders have a responsibility to work towards an improved workplace climate, an environment of trust, confidence, open communication and support, in essence, the importance of *caring leadership,*[58]

- we are facing a crisis of leadership and require better leader development and selection,

- improvements must be made in the confidence that subordinates have in their leaders,

- better internal communications, subordinates need a *voice* in areas which impact them,

- there must be improvements in promotion and command selection,

- the Canadian Forces must move from a transactional to a transformational leadership organization,

- efforts must be made to restore subordinate trust in leaders, and

- improvements need to be made in the CFPAS/PER system.[59]

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[58]   Government of Canada, SCONDVA Report . . . , 1998, recommendation #43.

While it is not difficult to amass documents which identify the leadership

challenges facing the Canadian Forces, as we have done in Section 1, it is worthwhile to

capture the position that the Canadian Forces has taken regarding these challenges. To

the maximum extent possible, personnel challenges have been defined and a strategy and

action plan set forth in the cornerstone document *Military HR Strategy 2020 – Facing the

People Challenges of the Future (HR 2020)*.[60] It is worthy to note instances where this

document recognizes some of those same challenges noted above that apply to leadership

development and appraisal:[61]

Page 15 . . .
> . . . an appropriate repertoire of leadership tools and styles; and the capacity to
> motivate people and generate trust and confidence;
>
> Leadership in the Canadian Forces accepts accountability for developing and
> fostering an open and positive culture that is responsive to relevant change within
> Canadian society;

Page 20 . . .
> The new workforce composition of the Canadian Forces is educated and highly
> talented and leaders must expand their leadership competencies to include a more
> transformational [edited post-print] style;
>
> We must foster a culture that ensures the integrity of the profession of arms,
> promotes the development of effective leaders, . . . and provides the foundation
> for a strong officer/NCM leadership team; and

Page 21 . . .
> Develop fair and effective performance evaluation procedures that motivate,
> provide performance feedback developmental opportunities, that apply at the
> individual and team level.

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[59]   For a full discussion of these items, refer back to Section 1, sub-section *Canadian Forces Identified Leadership Shortcomings.*

[60]   Department of National Defence, ADM(HR-Mil), *Military HR Strategy 2020 . . . .*

[61]   Ibid, pages as noted.

On several occasions, this paper has made reference to transformational leadership and learning organizations. As noted above, it is also referred to in *HR 2020*. It is therefore wise to investigate transformational leadership and the applicability of 360 degree feedback systems in that context.

Transformational Leadership and Organizations

It is not the intent of this paper to delve deeply into the analysis of transformational leadership and how it can benefit an organization, but rather to understand its fundamentals so that we may assess the applicability of 360 degree feedback within such a framework. For this reason, we will first look at exactly what transformational leadership means.

The transformational type leader "articulates and focuses attention on a clear vision . . . attending to their [followers] individual needs, . . . manages change, complexity and teams."[62] Its name is derived from this leader's ability to embrace change and inspire others to accept change, both in themselves and the work organization. This type of leadership typically includes other leadership styles, but builds on the relationship element/exchange between followers and leaders. It is characterized by leadership that; instills confidence and trust in subordinates towards the leader and the organization, listens to followers and are open to opposing viewpoints thus providing a voice to subordinates, acts as an agent for change, treats each follower as an individual, motivates followers to achieve their utmost, and are aware of how their own behavior relates to the needs of their subordinates and the changing dynamic within the

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[62] Christa L.Walck, "Using the MBTI in Management and Leadership," in *Developing Leaders,* ed. Catherine Fitzgerald and Linda Kirby, (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 1997), 78.

organization.[63] Transformational leadership is not exclusive of other more direct

leadership styles, such as the transactional style, but rather is inclusive of these

approaches and builds upon them, permitting the leader to utilizing each method based on

the situation.[64]

From the above, it can be seen why many organizations, including the Canadian

Forces, seek to develop the transformational style in its leaders. This refers directly to

one of the strategic objectives of *HR 2020* as we have noted above. Next, we will

investigate how 360 degree feedback systems can contribute significantly to

transformational leadership as well as address many of the other leadership challenges

faced in the Canadian Forces. In order to do this, we will first look at 360 degree

feedback used in a leadership development role only. This will be followed by a

discussion on 360 degree feedback's applicability in an administrative/appraisal context.

360 Degree Feedback as a Leader Development Tool

If we use 360 degree feedback as a personal development tool only, we know this

to mean that it will not be used for administrative purposes such as promotion, job

selection, pay or retention. In the typical application, an exterior agency is used to

administer the tool inclusive of such actions as; communicate with participants, facilitate,

hold workshops to train raters, compile results, coach those receiving the feedback, work

with the individual to create a development plan, and conduct follow-up. This is done

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[63]   Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership – Theory and Practice,* 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
Publishing, Inc., 2001), 132-34, 148.

with complete confidentiality between the coach and the individual. Normally, there would also be confidentiality for the raters as there would be sufficient numbers in each category to ensure that results cannot be attributed to one individual. The exception to this tends to be feedback from the superior where perhaps only one input is sought.[65]

As a development tool, we have already seen that 360 degree feedback can be a powerful tool. If it is administered properly, avoiding many if not all of the common mistakes noted by Wimer and Nowack (1998), refer to page 29 of this paper, it promises positive results for leader development. As is suggested, in order to gain buy-in from the executive levels of the Canadian Forces, a strong effort must be made to demonstrate the value of 360 degree feedback. In addition, initial pilot tests could be run on senior officers to demonstrate the value of such systems. We will see shortly that the Canadian Forces has already undertaken some work in this area.

As this paper is concerned with 360 degree feedback applications for leaders, we must define who should participate in this systems, and when it should be administered. In accordance with *HR 2020,* and in keeping with the primary criticisms of Canadian Forces leadership summarized at the start of this section, it is reasonable to suggest that all senior leaders should participate in a 360 degree feedback program. Therefore, it is recommended that all officers above the rank of Captain, as well as the senior ranks of the *Non-Commissioned-Members,* Master Warrant Officers (MWOs) and Chief Warrant Officers (CWOs), should participate. Within each occupation, there are distinct Development Periods (DPs) that make up the Canadian Forces Professional Development System (CFPDS) identified for increasing levels of learning and experience. It is

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[64]   Ibid, 136-39.
[65]   Walter W. Tornow, *et al*, *Maximizing the Value of 360 . . ., 18-27.*

recommended that 360 degree feedback be conducted once per DP for each individual. This would provide everyone with a convenient window of opportunity to participate in the program as well as sufficient time for individual development before administering the tool again. Therefore, over a period of years, each leader in the Canadian Forces would have several opportunities for thorough feedback on their strengths as a leader as well as areas for improvement. Because of the magnitude of implementing such a system for such significant numbers of personnel, it is recommended that 360 degree feedback be initially phased in over a number of years, rank by rank based on a closer assessment of the most advantageous schedule possible.

Benefits Achievable Using 360 Degree Feedback for Development

Many of the potential benefits have been discussed in the previous section. These are generic in nature and apply to the Canadian Forces as much as other organizations. In comparison to the challenges listed at the start of this section, as well as the applicable *HR 2020 goals,* the following benefits may be expected if a 360 degree feedback system is instituted. The applicable leadership challenge is identified in italics:

- *we are facing a crisis of leadership and require better leader development*

    360 degree feedback deals specifically with our ability to develop leaders. There is no other tool in the Canadian Forces that provides the individual with the detailed formal feedback that will allow them to recognize their strengths and areas of improvement, provides a coach to work with them in interpreting the results, and developing an action plan to improve necessary areas in the future. This is a fundamental element of 360 degree feedback systems. There is a significant increase in self-awareness. Research shows, when

administered properly, that there is a "positive relationship between 360 degree feedback and performance improvement;[66]

- *improvements must be made in the confidence that subordinates have in their leaders; better internal communications, subordinates need a voice in areas which impact them;*

With the direct participation of subordinates in feedback to superiors, better communications are achieved and subordinates have a voice to convey their perceptions of their leaders. Analysis found "a strong relationship between participation, or voice, and appraisee satisfaction in general, ..."[67] As the leader develops, the subordinate sees that their rater efforts are having a positive impact. A 1997 report on the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System stated that "subordinate appraisal can improve labour-management relations by providing workers with a means of voicing their concerns about he way they are managed."[68] Kelloway and Catano, in their report on performance appraisal, state that Bailey and Fletcher (2002) have shown "that over a 2-year period subordinates' and managers' assessments of management competence increased . . . ."[69]

- *the Canadian Forces must move from a transactional to a transformational leadership organization; an appropriate repertoire of leadership tools and styles; and the capacity to motivate people and generate trust and confidence*

We have identified that the Canadian Forces wishes to utilize the transformational leadership style. In accordance with the definition, providing a voice for team members, building trust and confidence in the leadership as well as being an agent for change all characterize this objective as laid out in *HR2020*. In 360 degree feedback systems, we see that these same results are

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[66] Carolyn Facteau and Jeffrey Facteau, "Reactions of Leaders to 360. . . ," 1.
[67] Department of National Defence, DHRRE, S.F. Cronshaw, T.B. Kondratuk, and G.A. Chung-Yan, *Performance Appraisal. . . ,* 8.
[68] Department of National Defence, ADM: 6335, N. Lam, *et al*, *The Canadian Forces Performance Appraisal System: An Evaluation. . . ,* 9.
[69] Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Kelloway and Catano, *Contemporary . . . ,* 13.

achievable. Hausedorf and Zugec (undated) recognized the impact that multi-source feedback can contribute to transformational leadership:

> . . . transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional leadership, has consistently been positively related to work outcomes. The results of their [Levy, Cober, and Miller (2002)] research indicate that exposure to transformational leadership is related to greater feedback seeking behavior. The researchers suggest that feedback seeking behavior may be beneficial for an organization as employees who seek feedback may become more valuable and credible.[70]

- *We must foster a culture that ensures the integrity of the profession of arms, promotes the development of effective leaders, . . . and provides the foundation for a strong officer/NCM leadership team;*

While there are many opportunities for team building and participation with senior NCMs in the leadership team, subordinate involvement in 360 degree feedback is just such an opportunity. Senior NCMs have a wealth of experience and knowledge that can be passed along to superiors, and their contribution to leadership development should not be overlooked. In a booklet prepared as a synopsis of a symposium on *The NCO in the Future Army*, the following comment was made, "The partnership [officer/NCM] – long in place but not always adequately acknowledged involves a 'two-way street of coaching, mentoring, and leading'."[71] From a larger perspective, multi-source feedback from both subordinates and peers may lead to improvements in the Canadian Forces culture of teamwork and open communication.

The above benefits are typical of those that can be expected when 360 degree feedback systems are used for leadership development and properly integrated into existing organizational systems. Multi-source feedback is a logical next step in

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[70]   Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Peter A. Hausdorf and Lynda Zugec, *Designing Effective Leader Assessment . . .* , 14.

developing our leaders in a transformational and learning organization. Our next step

will be to look at 360 degree feedback as a potential element of the Canadian Forces

Personnel Appraisal System (CFPAS). The use of 360 degree feedback in appraisal

systems is more controversial and not without it critics.

The Current Appraisal System

Currently in the Canadian Forces, a merit system is used for such administrative

actions as promotion, course selection, continuation of service, and selection for special

programs such as post-graduate studies and medical and legal in-service education. This

is done through formal boards where candidates are scored against set criteria. Inputs to

the merit system are typically of two types; qualifications and subjective assessments.

Qualifications include all formally recognized achievements an individual might possess;

language ability, specific courses completed, occupational qualifications, etc. Subjective

assessments include; Letters of Performance from Commanding Officers or above,

course reports, and Performance Evaluation Reports (PER). The PER is the product of

the CFPAS as we have mentioned previously. A PER is submitted annually on each

trained member of the Canadian Forces.[72] The PER is the most crucial input to most

merit processes/boards. CFPAS is network-based software distributed throughout the

Canadian Forces using the Defence Information Network (DIN).

If the Canadian Forces is to utilize 360 degree feedback as an assessment tool, it

can only be achieved in one of two ways; as an integral part of the CFPAS mechanism, or

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[71]   Department of National Defence, Directorate of Army Training, *The NCO – Backbone of the Army,* 2000, 18.

[72]   Department of National Defence, ADM (HR-Mil), *CFPAS Policy Directive*, 2003, 1. Available online at http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/cfpas. Most recent access 28 Feb 04.

as an independent report provided to the HR management system. As an independent

report, any 360 degree feedback would overlap all areas currently part of the annual

CFPAS causing duplication and contradiction, and therefore is not a viable option for the

Canadian Forces. This paper will investigate the use of 360 degree feedback as an

improvement to and element of the current CFPAS.

It is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor to administer the CFPAS at the

unit level, with review(s) within the unit by the chain of command. The two elements of

the CFPAS are the Personnel Development Review (PDR) and the Performance

Evaluation Report (PER). With the exception of course reports when taking formal

training and promotion being indicative of good performance, the PDR is the only formal

developmental feedback mechanism in the Canadian Forces.[73]

The purpose of the CFPAS, PDR and PER are:

> . . . to develop CF members through constructive feedback and to accurately
> assess the level of demonstrated performance and potential for career
> administration purposes. . . . The purpose of the PDR is to provide a standard CF
> format for feedback in which the supervisor and member can discuss
> performance, potential and career development. The PER is to assess and report
> the member's performance and potential for retention and advancement based on
> MOC and rank specifications and position requirements set by the supervisor
> during the PDR sessions.[74]

The PDR is drafted at the start of the annual review period, reviewed at least once

during the year for feedback, and the PER is the resulting product at the completion of

the review period. The critical issues to note here are;

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[73]   Ibid, Policy Directive, para 2.
[74]   Ibid

- with the exception of the chain of command for review purposes upon final submission, the supervisor has the only input into both the PDR and the PER, and

- the PER, the appraisal, is constructed using the PDR, the developmental tool. Therefore, even without using the 360 degree feedback methodology, the Canadian Forces has created and operates a system, CFPAS, which merges development and appraisal – under one individual perspective. We should keep in mind, as we have stated earlier, that research indicates that both peer and subordinate ratings tend to be more accurate than superior ratings.[75] Merging development and appraisal you will recall, is one of the primary criticisms against using 360 degree feedback for appraisal purposes.

Now that we have looked at the existing appraisal system, CFPAS, we will investigate how 360 degree feedback could be integrated into this system. In this context, we will assume that utilizing 360 degree feedback as an element of annual assessment, will not be administered by an exterior agency, but rather by the divisional and HR management system as is the case currently. Certainly exterior assistance would be required to develop and roll-out a 360 degree feedback system initially.

The PDR currently used is of a standard format. The largest part of the PDR is the description of job performance expected by the supervisor. While this varies in detail based on the job and supervisor, it normally does not include performance aspects related to strategic organizational objectives, lead change, be an innovator, etc.[76] There is

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[75] Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Peter A. Hausdorf and Lynda Zugec, *Designing Effective Leader Assessment. . .* , 13.
[76] Department of National Defence, ADM (HR-Mil), *CFPAS Policy Directive*, 2003, para 3.

usually only one opportunity for feedback from the supervisor prior to assessment. The

CFPAS handbook confirms that "the PDR consists of a minimum of two feedback

sessions; the first at the midpoint and the second at the end of the reporting period

concurrent with the PER debrief."[77] There is little direct link between the PER

assessment categories and the PDR itself. Over consecutive years in the same position,

the PDR can provide cumulative feedback.

Integrating 360 Degree Feedback into CFPAS

In order to integrate 360 degree feedback into the PDR and PER, would require a

highly detailed integration plan. While this is not our purpose here, we will point out the

basic steps necessary so that we may describe the potential benefits. A valuable appraisal

system should link individual assessment to organizational objectives. The Treasury

Board of Canada, in describing performance management best practices, identifies that

"360 degree feedback is part of the employee assessment process. . . . The process is

linked with compensation, recognition and rewards and with corporate objectives, values

and behaviors."[78] The first step therefore, is to develop a new PDR with performance

expectations and feedback not only reflective of job requirements but also corporate

objectives. With such a PDR, even without 360 degree feedback at this juncture, the

individual becomes familiar with leadership performance expectations.

The next step, and the essence of incorporating 360 degree feedback into CF

appraisals for leaders, is for significant change to occur in the completion of the officer

and senior NCM PER. Currently, only the supervisor assesses the performance of these

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[77]   Ibid, para 4.
[78]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, Kelloway and Catano, *Contemporary . . . ,* 18.

leaders without input from others. A variety of feedback tools could be used or developed that would collect data from designated raters in order to compile a more complete perspective of performance. Such a questionnaire would be linked to the specific assessment areas of the PER. Rater feedback would be collected and provided to the supervisor. As is the case in the current system, the supervisor would continue to be responsible to complete the PER, using the 360 degree feedback similar to other input in determining overall performance. It is interesting to note that Cynthia McCauley of the Center for Creative Leadership, supports this method of using 360 degree feedback as an appraisal tool.[79] Again, the supervisor remains responsible to the chain of command for PER completion. Assessment feedback and counseling between the superior and the individual would continue. Confidentiality of rater input would be protected as is usually the case with multi-source feedback.

The paragraph above provides a rudimentary methodology for integrating 360 degree feedback into the current CFPAS. Nonetheless, it should be enough for us to discuss the benefits and challenges of using 360 degree feedback as an appraisal tool for leaders in the Canadian Forces.

Benefits of Using 360 Degree Feedback for Appraisal

An appraisal system utilizing multi-rater feedback, coupled with 360 degree feedback used as a development tool at designated periods during a leader's career, will compliment each other and provide many benefits. We have listed many of these

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[79]   Sylvester Taylor and Cynthia McCauley, "A Question of Leadership – Should Managers Be Able To Review The Ratings Their Subordinates Receive From 360 Degree Feedback Instruments?," *Leadership in Action,* Vol. 23, Iss. 2 (May/Jun 03).

benefits previously when discussing feedback for developmental purposes. Those that refer specifically to the use of 360 degree feedback in appraisal are listed below:

- there is greater accuracy in providing multiple perspectives over a single perspective when appraising leader performance. This has been stated previously, and it applies equally in the assessment context. Lepsinger and Lucia (1997) state;

> The use of 360 degree feedback provides a more objective measure of a person's performance. Incorporating the perspective of multiple sources provides a broader view of the employee's performance and helps to minimize biases that result from not only limited views of behaviour but limited information processing capabilities.[80]

- incorporation of organizational values and expectations of leaders will reinforce and thus improve leadership performance. In the Canadian Forces, such leadership values as a transformational leadership style, teamwork, communication in an open environment, etc. are all *HR2020* objectives which can be supported by multi-source assessment;

- improvements in annual appraisals will increase the accuracy of PERs, thus assisting in improved selection of leaders in all categories. While this is difficult to validate or qualify, it is reasonable to assume that more accurate PERs will lead to improved selection for promotion, command opportunities and senior leadership roles;

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[80]   Richard Lepsinger and Anntoinette D. Lucia, *The Art and Science of 360°. . .*, 212.

- trust and confidence that subordinates have in leaders within the Canadian Forces has been identified as a area for improvement. With greater participation in assessing leaders, subordinates will tend to have greater trust and confidence in leaders selected by a process they are participants in. As was previously stated, subordinate appraisal can improve labour-management relations.[81]

- the current PDR is designed to be the basis of the annual assessment, the PER. However, it is neither linked to the assessment factors on the PER nor usually the organizational leadership values the CF hopes to instill. This would be improved if a revised PDR, designed to support the 360 degree feedback element of the PER, were to be initiated. This stronger link between the PDR and the PER would improve confidence and trust in the CFPAS system.

- by having multiple sources provide input to the supervisor for "consideration" when completing the annual PER, the advantage of using multiple perspectives is gained while still allowing the supervisor to make a final judgement on performance. Therefore, while 360 degree feedback is used at the unit level annually, only the final PER is submitted to the HR management system. This is identical to the process currently done for PDRs. These remain at the unit level. The rated individual should be more comfortable with the process knowing that select opinions, perhaps of a single rater, are

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[81]   Department of National Defence, ADM: 6335, N. Lam, *et al*, *The Canadian Forces Performance Appraisal System: An Evaluation. . . , 9.*

not having a significant or permanent impact on administrative selection processes.

- in the current CFPAS structure, there is opportunity for biases and favoritism due to its heavy reliance on a single source. This is a drawback of such "top-down" traditional appraisal methods.[82] Not only will accuracy of evaluation be improved, but the supervisor will be more reluctant to overlook multiple other opinions which may be in contrast with his/her own.

In the above sections we have proposed a means of utilizing 360 degree feedback as an assessment tool by integrating it into the current CFPAS. This proposal was not meant to be a total solution as much as a framework to develop the arguments herein. Such a proposal as this would require extensive work and evaluation before it could be launched. But at the same time, it allows us to see how 360 degree feedback would have a positive impact on leader assessments in the Canadian Forces. We also identified some of the primary benefits of using 360 degree feedback in both the developmental and appraisal areas.

We will next look at the negative aspects of using 360 degree feedback as a means for appraisal.

Negative Aspects of 360 Degree Feedback as an Appraisal Tool

        Assuming 360 degree feedback is implemented as previously discussed for assessment purposes, there are potential negative aspects which must be considered. Among these are:

- developing a new PDR which better reflects the performance expected of our leaders as well as those areas of the PER which an individual will be assessed against, and creating questionnaires which will enable valuable data to be collected for compilation in producing a PER, requires dedicated resources. In addition, greater time would be required overall for PER completion as more individuals are participating in the process, multiple sources as compared to a single source. Although this will require additional resources, pilot testing should be able to confirm that the resulting improvements are worthy of the investment made. In addition, as we have stated earlier, the success of 360 degree feedback systems when they are implemented, depends significantly on the investment put into the process from the beginning. This includes training sessions, commitments regarding the purpose and use of the information, commitment of senior leaders, and validation of the process. If these are properly addressed 360 degree feedback can be a very effective assessment tool;

- a *popularity contest*. A concern that is expressed by some authors regarding the negative aspects of 360 degree feedback when used for appraisals is the

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[82]   Ibid, 4.

issue of rewarding the popular leader vice the effective leader. Lam (1997) goes on to state, "supervisors may also try to please subordinates an obtain a higher rating by giving their subordinates ratings higher than their performance would warrant."[83] While this certainly would be a negative aspect were it to occur, it is mitigated using anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, within the structure of the CFPAS, unjust inflation should be identified and corrected by senior unit review. With regard to popularity being an adverse trait for supervisors, this is not necessarily the case. Popularity, or *agreeableness* as defined by Smithers, Livingstone & Nadjiwon-Fraser (2002), is actually a positive trait for leaders in transformational organizations.

> Individuals who score highly on agreeableness factors are typically characterized as being sympathetic to the needs of others, trusting, helpful . . . . These characteristics are also consistent with the transformational leader . . . .[84]

As can be seen from the above, what is considered a negative leadership trait in one instance, can also be considered a positive trait in another. Essentially, whether a leader's popularity is a positive or a negative, may depend on the culture of the organization. Popularity should never displace integrity, honest and fairness. In a progressive transformational organization, improved relations between leaders and followers are critical. Leaders are often

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[83]   Ibid, 9.
[84]   Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Sonya Smithers, Holly Livingstone & Maria Nadjiwon-Fraser, *Personality & Military Leadership,* 2002, 26. Available online at http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca.

required to made unpopular decisions. This will always be the case in the
Canadian Forces. But agreeableness of leaders from the subordinates
perspective is an overall quality;

- confidentiality. This has been discussed when we reviewed the negative
aspects us 360 degree feedback use as a development tool. Even more so
when it is used as an assessment tool should an organization determine what
and how information will remain confidential. Both raters and those being
rated should have a clear understanding of confidentiality and transparency
expectations within the system. "In most cases, multi-rater appraisals rely on
anonymous input, so programs usually include a means to disassociate
assessments and comments from the identified raters;"[85]

- data integrity. Some research has found that feedback accuracy is reduced
when used for assessment rather than purely for developmental purposes.[86]
As well, we have previously mentioned the risk for what is referred to as
retribution – if the leader receives negative feedback and they do not accept it
well, they may assess raters more harshly.[87] However, as has been pointed out
previously in this paper, time and effort invested in gaining confidence and
acceptance of 360 degree feedback can usually mitigate against such negative
impact;

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[85]   US Office of Performance Management, "Multi-Rater Appraisals: What About Confidentiality and
Personal Privacy?", *Workforce Performance Newsletter*, August 1998.
[86]   United States Air Force, USAWC, LtCol Thomas S. Hancock, *360-Degree Feedback:. . . ,* 10-11.
[87]   Scott Wimer, "The Dark Side of 360-Degree Feedback," *Training and Development . . . ,*" 4.

- culture. The culture of an organization plays a critical part in whether or not 360 degree feedback systems will be appropriate for assessment. Tornow and associates (1998) finds that there are various aspects of an organization's environment and culture which impact the effectiveness of 360 degree feedback. These include; team atmosphere, willingness to accept criticism, the importance the organization places on human skills in its leaders, etc.[88] This is linked to the whether or not the organization has a *learning culture*:

> The process of 360 degree feedback is important not only because it can contribute directly to organizational development but because it can help create a general learning culture that will make ongoing development possible.[89]

The question therefore, is whether or not the Canadian Forces culture would support 360 degree feedback as an assessment tool. We have already identified that a wide range of documents state that the CF wishes to have transformational leadership and become a learning organization. Yet, this is contrasted by some research already done discussing applications of 360 degree feedback which states, " . . . we do not suggest that . . . 360 system is necessarily appropriate within the context of the CF, given the strong top-down culture . . . . [however] there is likely significant utility in implementing a system of horizontal feedback (ie. feedback from colleagues).[90] This suggests that while there may be use in a modified 360 degree feedback

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[88]   Walter W. Tornow, *et al, Maximizing the Value of . . . ,* 196-215.
[89]   Ibid, 120.
[90]   Department of National Defence, DHRRE, S.F. Cronshaw, T.B. Kondratuk, and G.A. Chung-Yan, *Performance Appraisal . . . ,* 7.

system (*180 degree feedback*), the CF is not culturally suited by its paternalistic and hierarchical nature to subordinate feedback. More than anything, this is a condemnation of our present state which must be challenged and overcome in order to develop into a transformational learning organization. Such opinions cannot be acceptable, otherwise, other statements such as those in *HR 2020* are nothing more than hollow words; and

- there is a risk that if 360 degree feedback is implemented for appraisal and then was to fail or become irrelevant because supervisors did not value the input of peers, subordinates and potentially customers, the damage overall would be significant. This situation could not be permitted to occur. Significant monitoring and validation would be necessary to ensure that the participants see the value in the process.

The above list of issues is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather, it serves to identify some of the hurdles that must be overcome in order for 360 degree feedback to be effectively used as an element of the CFPAS. While they each hold their challenges, none appear insurmountable.

Current CF Initiatives Regarding 360 Degree Feedback

We will briefly summarize ongoing activities regarding 360 degree feedback in the Canadian Forces. Although popular in the civilian sector for over 10 years now, it has been slow to catch on among military communities. Not unlike our allies, the CF is

at the investigation and experimentation stage thus far.[91] Initiatives which use 360 degree feedback as a developmental tool for leaders are being embraced more readily at this point than initiatives which seek to use it as an appraisal instrument.

Peer assessments have been used as an assessment instrument for many years in an ad hoc fashion. Peer assessments are typically used during extended training periods, most notably for Officer Cadets while at the Royal Military College of Canada and Basic Officer Training. Results are not released to individuals but rather provide the leadership staff a perspective they would not otherwise have.

At this point, both DHRRE and the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute have commissioned a significant number of reports and papers on the subject of leadership development in general and multi-source feedback systems specifically. The bibliography to this paper provides a list of these documents. DHRRE has also received a tasking from the Director Military Careers Administration and Resource Management (DMCARM), the policy owner for the CFPAS, to investigate 360 degree feedback as a potential appraisal tool.[92] Thus far, DHRRE has commissioned several reports but has not reviewed this material nor formulated a position.[93]

Preliminary initiatives concerning 360 degree feedback have been its use as a development tool. Commencing in 2002, the Canadian Forces College has administered several pilot exercises for the National Security Studies Course and the Command and Staff Course.[94] After a successful pilot during CSC 29 course, in the Fall of 2003 all

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[91] Dr. Bob Walker, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, telephone conversation with author, 2 Mar 04.
[92] LCdr Mike Cope, DMCARM 2, telephone conversation with author, 08 Mar 04.
[93] Maj B. Johnston, DHRRE 4-2, telephone conversation with author, 26 Jan 04.
[94] Cdr R. Walker, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, telephone conversation with author, 20 Nov 04.

Canadian students on CSC 30 participated in a 360 degree feedback personal development exercise.[95]

In this section of the paper, we have applied our understanding of 360 degree feedback, reviewed in Section 1, to the Canadian Forces. After recapping the leadership challenges facing the Canadian military and the *HR 2020* strategy to address these issues and become a learning transformational organization, a 360 degree feedback approach was proposed in order to examine both its positive benefits and challenges. Each negative aspects was countered with either contrary argument or mitigating factors. Although a strawman proposal for integration of 360 degree feedback into the Canadian Forces was put forth, the purpose was to provide a means of evaluation for the paper's thesis. This section argued that 360 degree feedback can be readily applied to the Canadian Forces as both a personal development tool and as a valuable and advantageous option for annual leadership appraisals.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

It is a challenging task to demonstrate the value of change in an area where the impact of that change cannot be measured in a bottom-line sense – dollars saved, efficiency gained, or widgets produced. This is the case when proposing changes in the area of leadership development and selection. It is especially difficult if the culture is paternalistic and hierarchal in nature as it requires at least a partial recognition by those

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[95]   Department of National Defence, CSC-DND, *360 Degree Feedback for Self-Development Pilot*

very leaders that something is broken. Thus suggesting that 360 degree feedback, a methodology that invites opinions about the leader him/herself from peers, subordinates and even customers, be introduced into the Canadian Forces is just such a challenge. In this situation however, there is in fact significant evidence, supported by confirmation from the senior leaders in the Canadian Forces, that a leadership problem exists. Section 1 of this paper reviewed the many surveys, reports and findings that identify the leadership challenges we face. *HR2020* confirms the military's commitment to addressing these leadership challenges, and the overriding need for the Canadian Forces to embrace transformational leadership and the value inherent in all members of the defence team. The use of 360 degree feedback systems for both leadership development and selection is a bold step towards such organizational change.

This paper, after a thorough review of the evidence for and against 360 degree feedback, proposes that its benefits to the Canadian Forces overall are positive and long overdue. For the individual leader, personal development has been shown to be significant from 360 degree feedback systems. For the team overall, inclusive of the leader's peers and subordinates, confidence, trust, cooperation and caring can be positively influenced by the introduction of mechanism which permit their candid views and perspectives to be considered by leaders. This gives them voice and allows them to improve their sense of belonging. Perhaps as significant as the development both the team and individual receive is the impact 360 degree feedback can have on the organization itself. Better able to develop its leaders as well as articulate the strategic leadership attributes it seeks to foster will provide the Canadian Forces with a powerful

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climate for learning and a synergy between the strategic values placed in quality leadership and the way in which that leadership is assessed.

The resources required to properly administer 360 degree feedback systems are significant both in time and cost. But the most successful organizations in the world, whether public or private, are implementing multi-rater systems. In addition, the greatest resource commitment will be required for implementation of 360 degree feedback as a personal development tool, not as an element of our appraisal system. Use of 360 degree feedback for appraisal by integration into CFPAS requires an initial investment but has a relatively low recurring cost. If benchmarking is a valuable performance measure, we continue to see that 360 degree feedback appears as a benchmark in top organizations yet we overlook it for the Canadian Forces.

The majority of the negative aspects of 360 degree feedback and the challenge faced with its use tend to be solvable by avoiding the mistakes organizations often make when implementing these systems – failure of senior leadership buy-in, not investing enough effort in training, convincing and communicating, not developing trust in the instrument, not maintaining confidentiality, and failing to demonstrate the benefits that will accrue from its implementation. Like most HR systems which are introduced in large corporations, resistance and skepticism should be expected. It is the role of HR managers to ensure that initial apprehension is addressed and overcome through sound integration practices and upfront investment.

This paper proposes that 360 degree feedback be used as both a development system and an appraisal instrument. Key to its use as an appraisal tool is the means by which it is integrated into the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System. This paper

proposes that 360 degree feedback be an addition to the CFPAS rather than replace any significant portion of the current system. Allowing the PDR to be re-developed to better reflect the strategic leadership values the CF desires, and adding the new dimension of upward feedback as an element of the PER performance review preparation, with the supervisor and chain of command still respected, combines the benefits of both systems.

It is time for Canadian Forces leaders to go beyond their fear of upwards feedback and recognize the proven value to leader development that multiple performance perspectives provide. Such methodologies as 360 degree feedback move us in the right direction when used for both development and performance assessment.

If the Canadian Forces truly wishes to embrace such philosophies as transformational leadership and creating a learning culture, we require less rhetoric and more action. In this paper it has been demonstrated that 360 degree feedback systems can contribute to just such strategic change. It is time for the Canadian Forces to demonstrate its commitment to leadership change. Far too often we forget that our leadership power is derived from the very people and relationships we have with our teammembers. Not only are they the people we lead, but also the *people we serve.*

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