

How Hershey Foods Expanded Use of 360 Feedback with Leaders

Hershey Foods Corporation is a confectionery and grocery products company. With headquarters in Hershey, Pennsylvania, it has about 12,000 employees with plants throughout North America, including Canada and Mexico.

Executives at Hershey wanted a 360-degree feedback system that was easy to customize for a variety of groups across the organization. They wanted key functional areas and plants to manage their own programs, so they needed software that was easy to install and use. They foresaw that, over time, multi-source feedback would be used many times by a lot of people. Therefore, the software had to be affordable. 20/20 Insight's pricing structure made this possible.

The goal at Hershey is to make multi-source feedback a permanent part of the corporate culture. The HR staff consulted with experts familiar with 20/20 Insight and the 360 process to ensure that their strategy was developed thoughtfully and that their first programs were successful. Their approach was to introduce multi-source feedback gradually, gaining acceptance along the way. Senior Hershey Foods executives were assessed first, enabling them to refine the core items, spark interest and establish credibility.

One of the first groups to be assessed included more than 120 sales managers. Internal leadership consultant Jim Czupil explained to subjects: "You have an opportunity to grow professionally with this information. How you handle the feedback and the methods you use to share it with your team and your manager will have a significant impact on the benefit you receive from the process. Take time to reflect on the feedback and look for trends that outline current strengths and opportunities to further develop your leadership style." He coached participants to share the feedback with their team and set development goals with their managers.

According to Czupil, 20/20 Insight has promoted a more profound awareness of leadership developmental needs. Analyzing aggregate 360 feedback data has helped define leadership competencies for present and future leaders, and it has helped the organization determine exactly the kind of leadership development programs needed by different divisions. Feedback from participants has been positive, and requests for additional programs continue to rise.*

*Information provided by Hershey Foods Corporation.