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A new tool for employee appraisal

Heard of the 360-degree method of appraisal that seeks feedback on the employee's performance from every other employee in the organisation? Peddled as the latest democratic approach to human resource evaluation, the software is now available in the Indian market too, eliminating the need for manual appraisal. Ruchi Sud discusses its salient features

Launched by a human resource training organisation, Manford Allianz, the 360 degree leadership compass software, provides performance feedback from the employee's full circle of daily contacts, subordinates to peers to top bosses. Since assessing performances of a large number of people can be a tall and tedious order if done manually, the new software is in the form of a Compact Disc (CD). It has been designed in a manner that allows employees to choose their own parameters for assessment, besides facilitating self-designing of their questionnaires. With a choice of over 300 questions, it ensures adaptability for everyone's chosen criteria. One can also decide the range of rating scale and customise the dimensions and categories of acceptable range of scores, which in effect enables one to design the entire report.

"It is a password protected administration. Report modules ensure complete security and confidentiality to the users. All those in direct contact with the person are asked to fill in the questionnaire and then the findings are analysed. No paperwork is required as the report, once ready, appears on the computer screen itself," explains Sukhdeepak Malvai, senior consultant, Manford.

The form containing a whole set of questions about the managerial skills and other areas is drafted after detailed discussions with the organisations. First the person himself is asked to rate himself on various factors. Subsequently, a minimum of three persons, each from among his colleagues, subordinates and superiors, are asked to rate him on those very factors. These forms are given only to those capable of providing objective feedback. The questionnaires, duly filled, are then scored and compiled in the form of a detailed and objective report. The results, however, are kept confidential and not revealed to anyone other than the person concerned.



Priced reasonably at Rs 20,000, the CD works out to be more economical in comparison to the manually produced reports of 360 degree feedback, which can cost anything between Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,500 per report. Thus, if there are 100 employees whose performances are to be evaluated, the total budget through conventional methods can run up to one-and-a-half lakh to two lakh rupees, "whereas our software is just a one-time investment," says Malvai.

The hardware requirement is 30 MB of hard disk space with a colour monitor. A Celron with 64 MB RAM is best suited for this kind of a software. Several companies, Sahara airlines, Usha, Telstra V.comm have tried it at their HR units, and the same has been highly rated by well-known HR consultants like Dr Uday Parikh and Dr. T V Rao, also. The company boasts this is one-of-its-kind appraisal tool in India, though the concept is not uncommon abroad, which earlier prompted several leading Indian companies to import it from abroad. The Indian version, however, seems better as it also tries to incorporate questions relevant to the Indian cultural set-up and in tandem with, and specifically suited to the Indian work scenario.