

In 2006 Hertfordshire Constabulary launched its Leadership Charter designed to build upon its sound practices reflected in the Home Office Police Performance Assessment. This Charter clearly defines what leadership means and what is expected from leaders at all levels within the Constabulary.



In 2007, as the Constabulary reached full establishment, the organisation needed to be even more selective to ensure the correct number and right calibre of people entered the leadership development programme. The secondary aim was also to set realistic expectations of promotion in all officers. Specifically, the roles of Sergeant and Inspector are considered to be critical to the effective delivery of policing services to the people of Hertfordshire and the organisation is committed to implementing processes which are rigorous and defensible when identifying officers for promotion opportunities.

Performance in the current role, as measured through the Performance Development Review (PDR), was not necessarily considered to be a universally reliable indicator of an officer's leadership potential for a higher rank and consequently the requirement for a different and more objective type of assessment was identified.



The Constabulary aligned itself with a key recommendation of the report commissioned by Police Leadership Development Board suggesting that all recruitment and selection processes for the service from Constable to Chief Officer and CID to community beat, need to be able to distinguish those candidates who are able to have a positive impact on subordinates through the kind of leadership they provide.

The decision to introduce the 360 tool as part of the selection for promotion process at Hertfordshire Constabulary was made.

Selecting the right tool

Hertfordshire's succession management manager Amanda Johnson selected talent management experts Head Light Communications who built the model around her required criteria: it had to be completely anonymous, robust enough and designed for selection purposes and last no longer than 20 minutes. The resultant product is called Talent360, known internally by Hertfordshire Constabulary as 'Leadership360'. In addition to this software product, a diagnostic questionnaire was also required.

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*Amanda Johnson,
Hertfordshire Constabulary*

In order for officers to accept the diagnostic questionnaire, it needed to be based on the nationally recognised frameworks of the Police's Integrated Competency Framework (ICF) and Police Leadership Qualities Framework (PLQF). "Using all of the standard ICF behaviours would have resulted in a questionnaire that was far too expansive for use when operational demands compete for time", Amanda said. "It would not have focused on the Leadership behaviours that are so important to us." She added.

Through thorough research and consultation, five areas of competence from the ICF were identified as critical for effective leadership within Hertfordshire Constabulary and which underpin their Leadership Charter. These five competencies provided critical behaviours, which were then developed into questions for inclusion in the 360 degree questionnaire.

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The purpose of this questionnaire, also developed by Head Light Communications, was two-fold. Firstly, to help individuals evaluate their performance in their leadership role, and secondly to assist the organisation to identify those who have strong potential for more senior leadership roles.

The five areas are:

- Effective Communication
- Maximising Potential
- Community and Customer Focus
- Respect for Equality and Diversity
- Personal Responsibility

Early pilot results

Amanda conducted two pilot groups, both of which have proved successful, prompting interest from other forces in the UK which are considering it as a model for their own leadership assessment programmes. "The Leadership Board had their own opinions of the officers' behaviours in the latter cohort and on reviewing the data were impressed with how closely the data and their own impressions of the officers matched," Amanda said. The pilot demonstrated a 75% correlation with those passing the interview boards. An integral part of the development of the questionnaire and the 360 review process itself was a full consultation process within the Constabulary and with the Police Federation, the independent body that represents the interests of officers and staff. As a result it has been formally ratified by the Managing Staff Board.

In 2007, the Constabulary then chose to apply 360 to all Chief Inspectors in the Constabulary and, expecting a mixed reaction from strong reluctance to high levels of enthusiasm, she enlisted support from the Deputy Chief Constable who clearly positioned the importance of the programme to the force.



In total, 30 Chief Inspectors took part and nominated their reviewers, including partner organisations and agencies. "There are some behaviours that are better observed by those who engage with our officers from outside the force," said Amanda. "As part of the questionnaire design, if it's believed that only certain review groups will observe certain behaviours, then only these groups are presented with the questions to rate. This keeps the length of the questionnaire short, making it quick to complete and keeps the questions relevant to avoid 'not-observed' scores or misleading median ratings" she added.

Key enablers for success

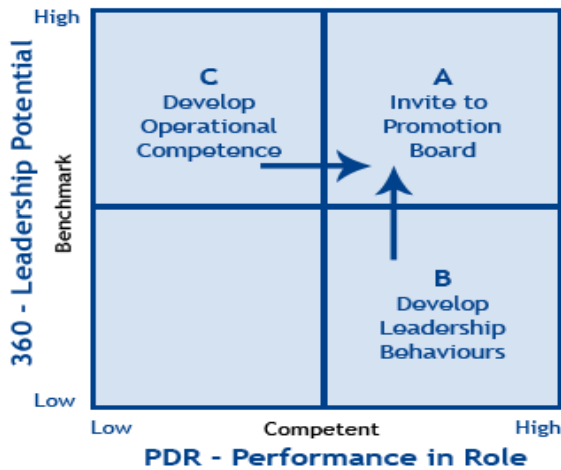
Talent360® includes a number of unique process controls, to make it robust and fit for use in a selection process, specifically the role of the Moderator. This, in combination with some other software features makes this tool uniquely suitable to meet the requirements for robustness and transparency for this 'high stakes' application of 360, that includes feedback from those both within and outside the organisation.

As a result of being able to keep the questionnaire as short and as relevant as possible to those completing it, combined with the ease of use of the software (following extensive trials across Hertfordshire and other forces), the Constabulary has experienced industry-breaking levels of 360 review completion. "We have enjoyed outstanding levels of engagement for this process and tool, both within the Constabulary and outside to its stakeholders and other forces", said Amanda. "We have had completion rates in excess of 93% for every single 360 process we have run. That compares to a more common 50% - 60% achieved across industry as a whole." she added.

Adding to the overall picture for an individual

Candidates for promotion have to demonstrate their technical competence by achieving at least a 'competent' rating in their PDR. They then participate in a leadership 360 degree review to assess their leadership behaviours against a benchmark.

In combination with a performance measure, the selection decision is based on the model below:



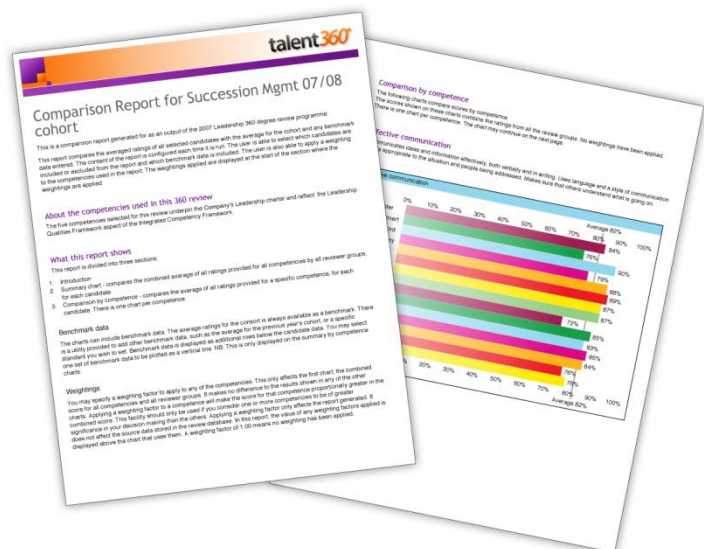
- A. Candidates scoring high in both their PDR and 360 are invited to attend the Promotion Board.
- B. Candidates with above competent PDRs but 360 results that are below the benchmark may not be good candidates for promotion as they may have peaked in their current role. These candidates would previously have been encouraged to go for promotion and may have subsequently dropped out, or not been effective in a more senior rank.
- C. By contrast candidates with strong 360 results but without the strength in their PDR may be people who are less suited to their current roles but will thrive in higher ranks. These people would previously have been denied the opportunity to be promoted.

Objective Programme Evaluation & Benchmark Data

The Constabulary has completed an extensive external project evaluation of this 360 process, the tool, the questionnaire and has gathered the thoughts and opinions of those who have used it. A staggering 74% of those who have been reviewed reported that they have improved their leadership performance from having gone through this process and the subsequent follow up. Over 81% found the tool easy to use with only 7% reporting an adverse impact on their time. The graphical output of containing in the 360 review in individuals Personal Reports was also given outstanding ratings, over 80% considered the feedback to be valuable.

In one particular review process, each Chief Inspector was reviewed by an average of 14 reviewers totalling over 428 reviews for their entire group. Since then the Constabulary has implemented structured 360 review processes for promotions across the ranks from PC to Sergeant to Inspector.

“We have a huge amount of data here as a result of these reviews,” said Amanda. “We can quickly compare individuals against the benchmarks created by Talent360 to see who is showing potential and identify where any development areas might be, personally or across the group.”



Return on Investment and Expectations

Even though the data will primarily be used to assess leadership skills and potential for those looking for promotion, it has provided the Constabulary with much more value than originally envisaged.

In terms of promoting and developing cross-force working, this 360 review tool has been used for learning and development purposes within teams comprised of officers from other forces such as Bedfordshire Constabulary.

The decision was taken early to include partner agencies in the 360 review to gain feedback from them and, according to the Head of Learning & Development, Lesley Pritchard, "Partnership working is critical to our success and we won't make the sort of progress we want by working in isolation. We have a wide and varied environment in which to operate and by engaging our partners in developmental activities for the people they work with we can build on the strong relationships we have with them".

"My personal definition of leadership", explained Amanda, "is the ability to inspire willing action in others' and as such is not just the preserve of those at the top, but can be demonstrated by people at all levels in the organisation. The use and implementation of our Leadership360 tool reflects this philosophy and it is made widely available for learning and development purposes as well as formally for selection." Word has got out amongst the force and the Constabulary now has a constant stream of requests for further ad hoc 360 reviews to be performed, this time driven by individuals who were reviewers in past review programmes.

"I was genuinely surprised, and of course pleased to hear that even in a working environment that historically has been dominated by a command and control ethos, there was an appetite driven from a personal perspective for this type of review and feedback. Employees in other organisations might 'shudder' when 360 is mentioned but with Head Light Communications' help we have created something very different here" said Amanda.

The Constabulary plans to continue to work with the Leadership Review Board to make extensive use of the benchmark data as part of progression, individual learning and development and overall training needs analysis.

"I started out by wanting to use a diagnostic tool that would be able to accommodate the needs of the force now, and in the future, without being locked into one way of doing things or a fixed assessment or role profile. With Talent360 we can add new indicators of behaviours that we think are important to this Constabulary (such as indicators of Engagement) and Head Light Communications keep the product bang up to date with all the latest innovations and thinking in this field", she concluded.

Associated solutions for the police service

Employee retention and career development tools

Talent Navigator®, our online career development tool, helps your officers and staff to develop structured career paths within your own force.



It includes support for the Skills for Justice ICF and National Occupational Standards and is fully customisable to adapt to the individual circumstances of your force.

Talent Navigator produces tailored development plans that identify the skills, experience and qualification gaps that an individual would need to address to fulfil their career ambitions.