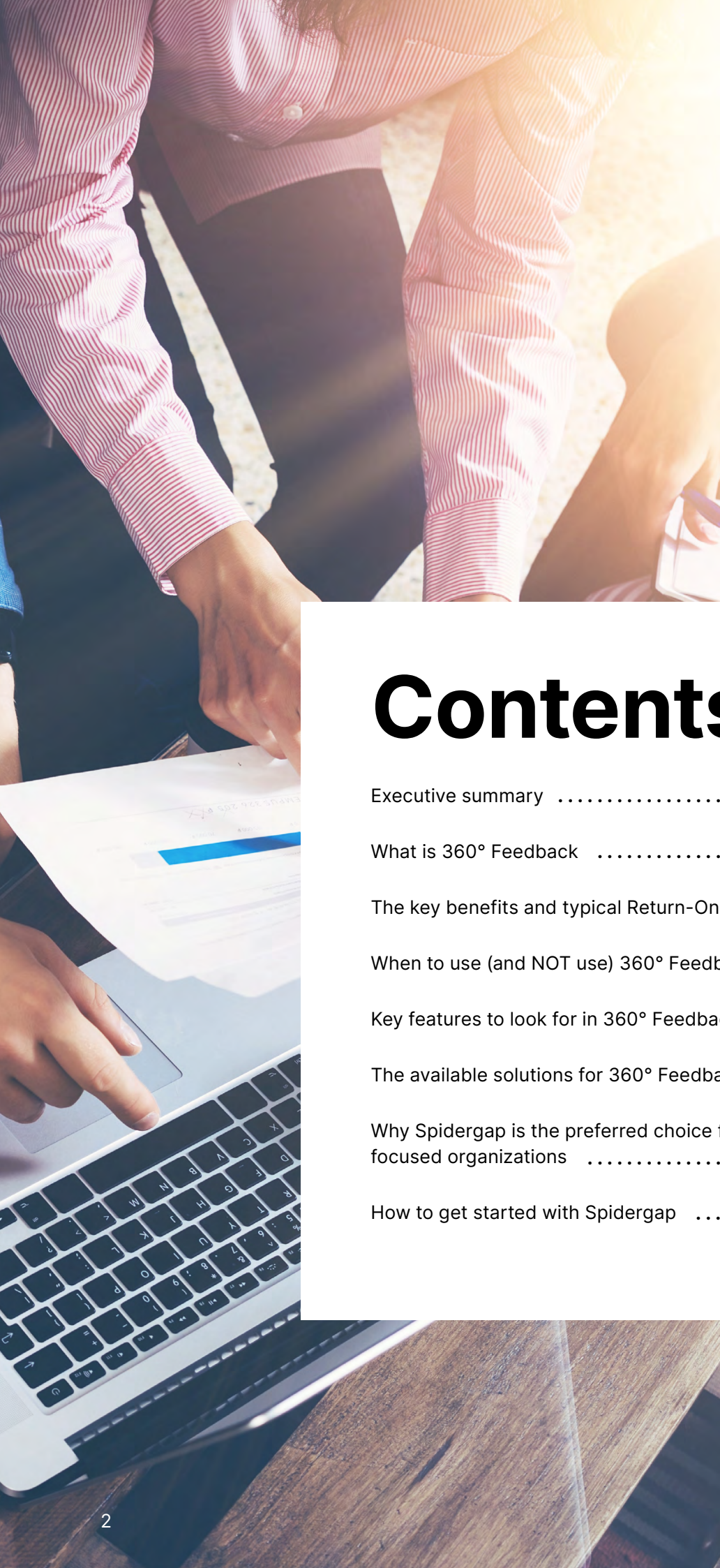




360° Feedback Buyer's Guide

**A guide for leaders who
want 360° Feedback
software that drives
real results**



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Executive summary

Why 360° Feedback Matters

Traditional manager-only feedback is incomplete. Managers rarely see the full picture, making it hard to deliver fair, actionable insights. As a result, employees often lack meaningful feedback, leading to stagnant growth, disengagement, and weak leadership.

360° Feedback changes this by gathering insights from multiple perspectives — managers, peers, direct reports, and self-assessments — to provide a well-rounded, holistic view of strengths and development areas.

When done right, it:



Increases employee retention & engagement



Develops stronger performance



Creates a culture of feedback & accountability



Improves decision-making

A Stanford Business School study concluded that the most important capability for leaders to develop is self-awareness.

(Source: [MIT Sloan](#))



Choosing the right 360° Feedback solution

With so many options, how do you pick the right one? The best solutions are:

- 1 Easy to implement
- 2 Clear and actionable in reports
- 3 Scalable
- 4 Customizable where it matters
- 5 Certified to high security and compliance standards
- 6 Supported by best practices and expert guidance

Most platforms fail by providing limited customization, requiring significant setup effort, and ultimately generating complex reports that are difficult for employees and managers to use.

To avoid these issues, we recommend choosing a purpose-built tool for 360° Feedback (such as Spidergap), which provides an intuitive, customizable platform designed to turn feedback into real, measurable improvement for your employees.

What is 360° Feedback?

360° Feedback is a powerful, structured process for gathering performance and development insights from the people employees work with regularly.

Unlike traditional top-down reviews or other feedback exercises, this method delivers a more holistic and growth-focused outcome. It empowers individuals with clear actions to develop their strengths and work on improvement areas.



Who provides feedback?

- ✓ The individual receiving feedback (a self-assessment) – Encourages personal reflection.
- ✓ Peers – Collaboration and teamwork perspectives.
- ✓ Managers – Leadership insights and strategic guidance.
- ✓ Direct Reports – Feedback on leadership effectiveness.
- ✓ External sources (optional) – Broaden insights with feedback from your customers, suppliers, vendors or volunteers.

More than
85%

of all the Fortune 500 companies use the 360 degree feedback process as a cornerstone of their overall leadership development process

(Source: [Forbes](#)).

Employees who receive meaningful development opportunities are

34% more likely to stay.

(Source: [BetterBuys](#))

The key benefits and typical Return-On-Investment (ROI)

360° Feedback is a tool that drives change across individuals, teams, and the organization.



Benefits for employees

Know your strengths and areas for improvement – Gain deeper self-awareness.

Advance your career – Use feedback as a personal development roadmap.

Boost confidence – Understand how others perceive your strengths.

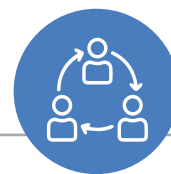


Benefits for organizations

Reduce turnover – Employees are more engaged and likely to stay when they feel they are growing.

Improve collaboration – Feedback encourages transparency and trust.

Drive business performance – Employees who receive regular feedback perform better.



Benefits for managers and leaders

Give meaningful feedback – Structured input improves coaching conversations.

Strengthen team dynamics – Address small issues before they escalate.

Develop future leaders – Identify high-potential employees.

The Return-On-Investment (ROI) of engaged employees

Structured 360° Feedback development programs that support employees and leaders with their personal development reduce churn, increase performance and profits, delivering clear returns.

Companies with high levels of employee engagement improved 19.2% in operating income, while companies with low levels of employee engagement declined 32.7% over the same period."

(Source: [Towers Perrin-ISR](#))

When to use (and NOT use) 360° Feedback

Best use cases for 360° Feedback

- ✓ **Employee growth** – Encourages continuous development and self-awareness.
- ✓ **Company culture alignment** – Reinforces values, behaviors and expectations.
- ✓ **Leadership development** – Helps managers refine their leadership style.
- ✓ **Training and skill development** – Delivers data-driven insights for talent planning by identifying learning gaps and training needs.
- ✓ **Succession planning** – Prepares employees for leadership roles.
- ✓ **New role onboarding** – Supports smooth transitions with early feedback.

Avoid using 360° Feedback for

- ✗ **Salary or bonus calculation reviews** – When financial rewards are at stake, the purpose and focus of your 360° feedback project shift, reducing accuracy and often leading to confusing feedback.
- ✗ **Ranking employees** – Feedback cannot be reliably compared across teams. Feedback is best for growth, not competition.
- ✗ **Fixing known performance issues** – If you are already aware of a performance issue, it's best for a manager to tackle it head-on.

360° Feedback is for development, not discipline



Key features to look for in 360° Feedback software

Selecting the right 360° Feedback tool is critical to ensuring your organization gets meaningful insights, drives real development, and sees a return on investment. However, not all tools are created equal.

Below, we break down what features are essential, what features are recommended, and what features are optional extras when evaluating solutions.

Overview of 360° Feedback software features

Feature	Essential	Recommended	Extras
1 Clear and actionable reports	✓		
2 Easy implementation and administration	✓		
3 Customization (questions, competencies, anonymity)	✓		
4 Security and compliance (ISO 27001, GDPR, HIPAA)	✓		
5 Scalability and pricing transparency	✓		
6 Expert support and best practices	✓		
7 Mobile-friendly access		✓	
8 Guidance on coaching and development planning		✓	
9 Anonymity options		✓	
10 Feedback provider approval workflow			✓
11 Group reporting			✓
12 Integration with HR systems			✓



Essentials: Must-have features for a high-impact 360° Feedback tool

A great 360° Feedback solution must include these elements to ensure effectiveness, ease of use, and long-term value.

Clear and actionable reports

Employees need to quickly understand their feedback and know what to do next.

What to look for

- Reports that prioritize key insights rather than overwhelm users with excessive data
- Strengths and areas for improvement clearly highlighted
- Guidance on how to use each chart to draw conclusions and make decisions

Easy implementation and administration

The tool should be simple for both administrators and participants, reducing setup time and confusion.

What to look for

- Quick setup with minimal IT support required
- Intuitive, easy navigation
- Simple workflows for collecting feedback and sending reminders

Customization (questions, competencies, anonymity)

Every company has different leadership models, competencies, and development priorities.

What to look for

- Ability to customize questions, rating scale, and feedback categories
- Flexibility to align with your core values and leadership competencies
- Ability to tailor anonymity settings to fit company culture

Security and compliance (ISO 27001, GDPR, HIPAA)

Sensitive feedback data must be handled securely to ensure confidentiality and compliance.

What to look for

- ISO 27001 certification or equivalent security standards
- Access control and permissions management
- GDPR and HIPAA compliance for data privacy

Scalability and pricing transparency

The tool should grow with your organization without unexpected costs.

What to look for

- A pricing model that scales and adapts with usage (not one that penalizes growth)
- Clear, transparent pricing with no hidden fees
- Flexible licensing options for different team sizes

Expert support and best practices

Even the best tools can be ineffective if implementation is done poorly.

What to look for

- Dedicated customer support with fast response times
- Access to best-practice guides, templates, and training resources
- Expert guidance on structuring your 360° Feedback process for success

Recommended: Features that enhance the experience

These features are not essential but can significantly enhance the experience and improve outcomes.

Mobile-friendly access

Employees should be able to give and receive feedback easily, even when not at their desk.

What to look for

- A mobile-responsive feedback form (that doesn't need them to "download an app")
- Ability to review feedback reports on smartphones and tablets

Guidance on coaching and development planning

While reports should be actionable, having additional guidance available can help HR teams and managers deliver great coaching sessions, and help employees develop better development plans that drive real change.

What to look for

- Guidance for managers and employees on how to review and discuss the feedback report
- Structured development plan template with guidance on how to complete it
- Ability to reference with learning resources, training programs, or mentoring initiatives
- Customizable templates for personal development plans

Anonymity options

Organizations start with anonymous feedback but later choose to change to identifiable feedback for more open and constructive conversations.

What to look for

- Ability to choose how average scores are grouped (e.g. Direct reports separate to other groups, or included)
- Able to choose whether to have written feedback anonymous or attributable to names or roles



Extras: Features that may be useful in specific cases

These features may add value depending on your company's needs, but they aren't necessary for a high-functioning 360° Feedback process.

Feedback provider approval workflow

While asking managers to approve the selected feedback providers might improve the balance of raters, it can create additional workload without a significant benefit. Usually this can be avoided by clear guidance when asking individuals to choose, or determining the list for them in advance.

When it's useful

When you aren't confident that employees will select the right feedback providers, or feel that only the manager would have enough knowledge to determine the best balance of feedback providers.

Group reporting

360° Feedback is most valuable to the individual receiving it, and as feedback is subjective, comparing or combining results across teams isn't recommended.

When it's useful

When looking for common training needs across the organization, or in specific teams so that you can develop or highlight relevant resources.

Integration with HR systems

Although integration sounds like a useful feature, most 360° Feedback projects have a specific start date that the employee data needs to be ready for, rather than continuously. As a result, an Excel upload is usually sufficient.

When it's useful


If you're using an HRIS and plan to run 360° Feedback projects continuously throughout the year, seamless integration can reduce manual data entry of employee information, and enable employees to access historical feedback reports.



Common mistakes when evaluating a 360° Feedback tool

Just because a feature is available in some software solutions, doesn't mean it's a good idea, or right for your organization.

Here are some common mistakes when organizations are looking for a 360° Feedback solution:



Get clear on what your essential needs are before selecting a tool. Enhancements like HR integrations, gamification and summary reporting can be beneficial, but they shouldn't come at the expense of clarity, usability, and effectiveness.

❌ **Over-prioritizing benchmarking or industry comparisons**

Industry averages might seem useful, but they often distract from real priorities and lead to over-analyzing scores instead of planning what action to take.

Personal development isn't about ranking employees — it's about helping individuals focus on meaningful improvements that drive growth.

❌ **Feature overload (too many graphs & visuals)**

Some platforms overload reports with complex visuals that look impressive but often confuse employees and fail to help them prioritize what matters.

Instead, prioritize reports that are clear, simple, and designed to drive action.

❌ **Assuming reports need extensive customization**

While question sets should be adaptable, reports should be ready to use without requiring heavy modifications.

Instead, prioritize tools that provide pre-built, easy-to-understand reports with actionable takeaways.

The available solutions for 360° Feedback

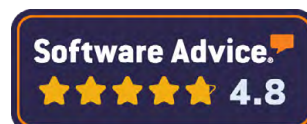
Choosing the right tool can be challenging, and research takes time, so we've put together an overview of available solutions, highlighting when they work best and their limitations.

Solution Type	Best For	Limitations
Purpose built 360° Feedback tool (e.g. Spidergap) Customizable platforms that focus on delivering impactful 360° Feedback	Organizations wanting an easy to use, customizable, expert- supported feedback with actionable reports.	Focused specifically on 360° Feedback, not a full HR suite.
Broad HR Platforms (e.g. BambooHR) Comprehensive HR suites that include 360° Feedback as one module	Centralized HR teams looking to integrate multiple HR processes and functions.	Lack depth in feedback analysis. Limited flexibility with workflows. Costly when paying for features that are not needed while missing out on functionality that would add real value.
Standardized Assessments (e.g. Korn Ferry) Proven frameworks within a structured process	Large enterprises with significant budget looking to outsource professional development initiatives using predefined methodologies.	Expensive and complex - often requiring a certification or specialists for debriefs. Limited customization - lacks alignment with a company's unique values, goals, or competencies.
Generalized Survey Tools (e.g. SurveyMonkey) General survey platform or online forms	Basic and budget- friendly feedback collection.	High admin effort, graphs/data tables without clear insight, no structured workflows or analytics.

Why Spidergap is the preferred choice for employee-focused organizations

Whether a company has 10 or 10,000 employees, organizations that prioritize their people benefit from a purpose-built 360° Feedback tool like Spidergap (www.spidergap.com), designed to support a fully customizable feedback process tailored to their unique needs.

When looking for a solution, look for software with great reviews. With thousands of organizations worldwide relying on Spidergap, it's the trusted choice for delivering clear, actionable insights that drive personal development.



What Spidergap provides

- ✓ **Instantly Actionable Reports** – No confusing charts, just clear insights.
- ✓ **Customizable Where It Matters** – Tailor questions, but automatically get easy-to-use reports.
- ✓ **Enterprise-Grade Security** – ISO 27001 certified for data protection.
- ✓ **Expert Support Included** – Best-practice guidance at no extra charge.
- ✓ **Scalable & Cost-Effective** – Affordable pricing with no hidden fees.
- ✓ **Mobile-Friendly Access** – Provide and receive feedback without an app download
- ✓ **Step-by-step Guidance** – Effective Coaching & Development Planning
- ✓ **Group Reporting** – Support Training Needs Analysis (TNA)
- ✓ **Anonymous vs. Identifiable Feedback Options** – Choose the right mix for each project



What our customers are saying

"I selected Spidergap for its ease of use and flexibility. The feedback from those who completed the assessments has been very positive, particularly regarding the simplicity and visual presentation of the reporting. Based on my experience, I would happily recommend Spidergap."

— **Emily Ritchey, VP of Human Resources (Industrial Manufacturing)**

"It was amazing. The Spidergap team were awesome in helping me work out any problems that I had. I was working outside of my normal comfort zone so their assistance was greatly appreciated. The assessment is out to the raters now, including me!"

— **Katie Gaier, HR Manager, Marin Clean Energy**

"I loved that it provided feedback on many of the leadership factors we have in our program, and did so in a clear way."

— **Howard P. Sr. Consultant (Education Management)**

<https://www.spidergap.com/reviews>

Get started with Spidergap today

[Start Your Free Trial](#)

[Arrange a Demo](#)

- ✓ **See how easy it is**
No setup, no IT headaches. You're up and running in minutes.
- ✓ **Get real results**
Turn feedback into clear actions and measurable growth.
- ✓ **Get expert help**
Work with our 360° Feedback specialists every step of the way.
- ✓ **Start risk-free**
No credit card, no hidden fees. Just real value, fast.

"This product is great for 360 feedback and the customer service is outstanding!"

Rochelle H, Supervisor of Learning and Implementation (Electronic Manufacturing)

