THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK FOR

HIGH SCHOOL DECA OFFICERS

By

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ABSTRACT

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Marketing education has been noted for providing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become professional leaders in education and in business and industry. Student leadership is key to many organizations in education, communities, and society. Student leaders take on the challenges of leading a population of students to attain an identified mission or goals. Each person should be nurtured with proper training, and more importantly, proper evaluation to help students to harvest upon their successes and create developmental plans to improve their weaknesses.

In order to fully prepare student leaders for positions in business and industry, especially in a Marketing Education and DECA program, it is ideal to utilize the concepts that most students will encounter in their professional lives. Evaluation is a key component of growth and personal insight. The purpose of this study is to assess the current evaluation methods for high school DECA officers, determine the gap of where the evaluation was and where it should be, and provide a plan for utilizing 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool for young leaders.

The researcher conducted a literature review to analyze the current research and insights into peer review in the educational setting and evaluation within business and industry. Utilizing the research from the literature review, the gaps will be identified between how the DECA leaders are currently being evaluated and the ideal business strategy for evaluation. Based on the results, the researcher provided rationale and a format in which 360-degree feedback can then be created, implemented, and evaluated within the high school marketing education training curriculum.

Table of Contents

Resources

Engraining the process in an organization

Problems with 360-degree feedback

Lack of training

Combining tools

Performance appraisals

Focus on weakness instead of positives

Limitations, areas for further research and improvement

Case study

Conduction of case study

Sample population

360-degree feedback for Kimberly High School DECA officers

Benefits

Challenges

Changes in the current system

Benefits and challenges in business and industry

Benefits and challenges in the secondary education setting

Analysis of findings: benefits

Analysis of findings: challenges

Discussion of analysis

List of Tables and Documents

CHAPTER I

Introduction

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us

To see oursels as ithers see us!"

Robert Burns, Scottish poet (1759-1796)

<u>Introduction</u>

The goal of marketing education is providing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become professional leaders in education and business and industry. Student leadership is key to many organizations in education, communities, and society. Student leaders take on the challenges of leading a population of students to attain an identified mission or goals. Each person should be nurtured with proper training, and more importantly, proper evaluation to help students to harvest upon their successes and create developmental plans to improve their weaknesses.

<u>Background: Kimberly High School</u>

The Kimberly Area School District was established in the late 1920's, and houses a current population of 882 students, 67 teachers, and 35 support staff members. The purpose of Kimberly High School is to "provide quality learning experiences for students, encouraging them to be lifelong learners and giving them opportunities to discover, develop, and share their talents and interests" (www.kimberly.k12.wi.us). The four community values that the high school uses to focus efforts are respect, responsibility, honesty, and kindness (Kimberly High School handbook, 2001). There are many diverse opportunities for student involvement, including advanced academics,

sports, and many organizations, one of which is DECA (an association of marketing students).

Background: Kimberly High School DECA

John Farrah instituted the Kimberly High School DECA chapter in 1970. The success of the KHS DECA program is due to the collaborative effort of the staff, parents, students and the community. The marketing curriculum is more defined and substantial than other genres to allow for more real world experiences and a positive transfer of learning from school to work. The program has been built to allow four advisors to facilitate over 250 DECA members per year in the school population of 882 (M. Rietveld, personal communications, April, 2001).

DECA's leadership consists of ten officers: president, vice-presidents, sales projects, finance, media specialist, and school store managers. The officers, at a series of summer workshops, develop an intensive program of work every summer. These programs involve creating a mission and determining activities for the year (www.wideca.org). Kimberly High School earns the honor of gold chapter every year, the highest international honor awarded (National DECA, 2000-01 DECA Guide).

The DECA organization is centered on civic consciousness, leadership development, gaining a greater understanding of marketing and management, and social intelligence (www.deca.org). Many organizations have come to rely on the program for financial or service needs, and the students rely on the organization for entertainment, competition at the state and national events, and various programs based upon the four internationally acclaimed ideals. The DECA advisors have maintained a strong leadership position within the school and community, as well as the state affiliation.

The DECA officers are expected to coordinate all-chapter meetings, lead the chapter, delegate to the members, support all related activities, and serve as liaisons between the marketing program, other organizations within the school, administration, parents, work stations, and the community.

Background: 360-degree feedback

360-degree feedback has been used in business and industry as a self-development tool. The term "360-degree feedback" refers to gathering and processing multi-rater assessments on an individual and then feeding that person back the results (Bookman, 1999). The process includes tuning into the observations and perceptions of those around the individual who are in a position to observe behavior and skills. The critical aspect of 360-degree feedback is to identify gaps between perception and desired performance (Wilson, 1997). The process includes a self-assessment and peer appraisals. The data is compiled and analyzed by a trained professional. The individual receives the feedback and then creates a plan for personal and professional development. 360-degree feedback is primarily used for developmental purposes, yet organizations do use it for evaluation and performance appraisals.

Research Purpose

In order to fully prepare student leaders for positions in business and industry, especially in a Marketing Education and DECA program, it is ideal to use the concepts that most students will encounter in their professional lives. Evaluation, including 360-degree feedback methodology, is a key business strategy for growth and personal insight. The purpose of this study is to assess the current evaluation methods for high school DECA officers, determine the gap between the current evaluation methodology and ideal

methods, and provide a plan for utilizing 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool for young leaders.

Problem Statement

The researcher identified the lack of formalized evaluation for Kimberly High School DECA officers as a problem in the culture of the organization.

Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to evaluate what is currently being used to:

1. Provide feedback for student leaders and to compare that against the 360-degree feedback process being used in business.

2. A 360-degree feedback process will be used in the future to provide student leaders with a wider array of feedback regarding professional performance.

Need

The researcher, in her capacity, has found that there is not any formalized evaluation techniques or structure at the local, state, or national levels for DECA officers. Therefore, student leaders do not have the opportunity to learn about personal strengths or areas for improvement. The research conducted will demonstrate that a structured evaluation methodology is of value for personal and professional development. The researcher, in her capacity of a marketing education teacher-coordinator, believes that 360-degree feedback will provide more insightful information to the student DECA leaders because each student is learning about her/his own strengths and weaknesses from a peer, instead of an adult advisor. "Behavioral science research suggests that people are more likely to hear and personalize messages resulting in changing attitudes and

behaviors if they believe the messenger is similar to themselves and faces the same concerns and pressures" (Gartner & Reissman, 1999).

Research Mode

The researcher will employ a comparative case study to identify the gaps between current approaches to evaluation of high school leaders and the possible use of 360-degree feedback. The researcher will define how evaluation of high school DECA officers is conducted at the Kimberly High School setting, determine the gap between where the evaluation was and where it should be, and provide a plan for utilizing 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool for young leaders. The researcher will implement 360-degree feedback all DECA officers in the future based upon the results of this study.

Limitations

The major limitation of the study is the small amount of literature available regarding educational evaluation of high school leaders. In researching, virtually no materials were obtained regarding the evaluation of DECA officers or vocational education student leaders.

The limitation of the 360-degree feedback proposal for high school leaders is that very little research has been conducted regarding 360-degree feedback in a high school education setting with students as the subjects. However, many educational organizations, both secondary and post-secondary, are looking to 360-degree feedback for educator evaluation.

In addition to a small amount of literature, many organizations do not have a formalized evaluation procedure in which to make comparisons, neither within the DECA

community, nor across disciplines. Instead the researcher chose to focus on peer

performance evaluations and peer tutoring to provide secondary data for the literature

review.

<div align="center">Assumptions</div>

The researcher made several assumptions in the design of the study. They are:

1. DECA and other student organizations within the high school setting do evaluate
    their leaders, but do not have any formalized evaluation method. This assumption
    is based on the number of stabile, successful organizations within the school
    environment that have strong leadership, yet lack available information regarding
    leadership evaluation.

2. Leaders of Kimberly High School DECA have received the training in order to
    complete the required leadership position. Without proper training of the role, it
    would be extremely difficult to determine the true evaluation of one's
    effectiveness.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

360-degree feedback	Practice of gathering and processing multirater assessments on individuals and then feeding back the results (Bookman, 1999).
DECA	"An Association of Marketing Students" (www.deca.org)
Feedback	A process whereby the results of action serve continually to modify further action (Webster's Dictionary, 1997).
Holistic	Systemic, encompassing or integrated (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Leadership	The ability to influence the thinking and actions of people (Wisconsin DECA guide, 2000).
Mentor	A wise and trusted teacher, guide, and friend (Webster's Dictionary, 1997).
Peer review	Peer review allows workers to learn more about how their coworkers view them These coworkers often know more about the strengths and weaknesses of a colleague than does the manager. The peer review method is an excellent way for the managers to learn more about the performance of an employee (Gruner, 1995).
Performance	1. The act of performing. 2. Something performed; deed, feat, etc. 3. The ability to perform; also the effectiveness of performance (Webster's Dictionary, 1997).
Teamwork	Working together to achieve a common goal (Kalnins, 2001).
Tutee	To be tutored or instructed (Webster's Dictionary, 1997).
Tutor	A private teacher (Webster's Dictionary, 1997).

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter summarizes literature regarding student leadership evaluations and 360-degree feedback in organizations, including the basic information surrounding 360-degree feedback, processes/methods in which to implement 360-degree feedback, and problems and areas for improvement of 360-degree feedback.

Student Leader Evaluation

Peer Review

Peer mentoring, tutoring, helping, and researching are a number of different forces that at work in many different educational systems. The effects of the peer programs are linked, via research, to lowered birth rate among teenagers, improved academic performance, and conflict resolution (Gartner & Reissman, 1999). Tutoring also has cognitive and emotional benefits. The tutees can receive additional help and support without being compared to others in the classroom (Gaustad, 1993). Peers in education are helping counselors and teachers change the vision of schooling. "The answer to many of the problems faced by young people today is young people themselves" (Gartner & Reissman, 1999).

The "peer principle" suggests that students will be more willing to listen to a trusted fellow student rather than an adult, because the peers tend to listen to each other better than adults and the students have the same understanding of younger language (Gartner & Reissman, 1999). "Peer appraisal begins with a simple premise: the people best suited to judge the performance of others are those who work most closely with them" (Peiperl, 2001). Student/peers have cognitive advantages over adults, in that the tutor may understand the tutee's problems because they are cognitively closer in

framework; thus allowing the tutor to present subject matter in term that the tutee understands (Gaustad, 1993).

Peer review allows workers to learn more about how their coworkers view them. These coworkers often know more about the strengths and weaknesses of a colleague than does the manager. The peer review method is an excellent way for the managers to learn more about the performance of an employee (Gruner, 1995). Young people can be used as a helping resource in education rather than an inactive learning participant. Students can be viewed as resources with something to give rather than problems for adults. Gartner & Reissman believe every student has something to offer another student and that the process merely helps the "rich get richer" (1999).

When the peer review is conducted in a proper manner, many benefits can be obtained. Many different forces of the military have been utilizing some peer review techniques because it builds camaraderie. Gruner states that the most difficult aspect is to determine if it is being created and instituted properly. More candid feedback can be generated, as well as fostering teambuilding, improving interdepartmental skills, and emphasizing skills improvement needs. One human resources expert stated that "employees tell it like it is. 'They give you the full range of good things, OK things, and bad things' " (1995).

To determine if a peer is meeting the expectations provided, evaluations should be written to pinpoint the attributes that the organization feels the individual should possess (Gruner, 1995). Specific criteria and procedures that will be used to evaluation individuals should be identified early in any evaluation process. The criteria should be in direct relation to the goals of the team or organization

(www.uky/drlane/groups.peer.html). Some areas for consideration when creating peer

evaluations and procedures include the following: productivity, working together,

fulfilling personal and team goals, determining outcomes of the team, communication

and relational processes, working interdependently, and assessing one's own feelings

(www.uky/drlane/groups.peer.html).

The University of Washington also uses peer evaluation, with the following topics

as measures:

1. Prompt and regular team meeting attendance

2. Participation in the organization and division of the team's work

3. Contribution to the research requirements of the project

4. Contribution to preparing the assigned work for submission

5. Overall support for the team's efforts on the project.

The peer evaluation asked the students to numerically rate their peers, via

documented rubric and Likert scale, on a level of "1" as the lowest (no participation, no

contribution) to "5" as the highest (outstanding contribution and participation)

(www.facstaff.uwa.edu). Other organizations choose to ask peers to evaluate each other

in regards to if they would work with one another again and to provide a grade for a

peer's contribution (www.gsu.edu).

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill encourages student tutors to evaluate the learners, themselves and the overall program. The university asks the tutors to determine their personal goals, improvements made on the goals or area for concern, student feelings about effectiveness, and to ascertain the impact made in the program (www.unc.edu).

Gaustad found that tutors themselves also reap the benefits of teaching others. With the proper training, supervision and support, tutors can benefit academically from helping other students. The tutors need to model study skills, such as concentration, organizational habits, and questioning techniques. Since the tutors spend time reviewing and practicing the material with the other student, the retention level of the information covered is higher, as well as adding more comprehensive and integrated understanding (1999).

Evaluation must be reflected upon to receive the full impact of the information. Serio recommends to review the most interesting and surprising responses, review changes that could be made, and determine additional information that would be needed for increased personal development. The end evaluation can lead to members of the program having an increased involvement in the decisions of the organization (2000).

Gartner and Reissman suggest that the benefits of the program are tremendous and the innovative approaches should be instituted soon to allow for the trend to become "the thing to do"; however, a critical mass (although the critical mass has not been identified) could help the peer education movement become a nationwide phenomenon (1999).

Current Evaluation of Kimberly High School DECA Officers

Kimberly High School DECA (an association of marketing students) has been a leader in the school and community since 1970, when John Farrah first instituted the program (M. Rietveld, personal communications, April, 2001). The organization has been recognized internationally for its involvement in many civic organizations; strong leadership; and the development of many marketing and management competencies of students, including an advanced cooperative education curriculum with the surrounding business communities and an on-site learning lab (Kimberly High School DECA handbook/student guide, 2000). The school environment has many different organizations in which students may choose to share their energy and talents, including athletics, academic organizations, and civic clubs (Kimberly High School student handbook, 2001). DECA has gained great popularity and annually has a membership rate of 20 percent of the student population (National DECA membership form, 2001).

Shirlee Kyle, the national director of high school DECA, states that National DECA does not have any formalized evaluation methods for their student officers. The national DECA applicants must complete an application, meet grade point average requirements, complete an interview, and have served DECA at the state association level. The only evaluation or follow-up procedure utilized with the national DECA officers are monthly reports that each individual is required to complete. These reports are to include all telephone and mail correspondence, any appearances made as a national officer, and personal or team goals (2001)

Chad Froeschle, Marketing Education professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, relays in personal conversations that the educational purpose of marketing education is to help develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to allow young professionals to success in marketing and management. Further, Froeschle notes the three aspects of a marketing education program:

- The classroom. In marketing classrooms, the professional educators provide information, case studies, and projects regarding the foundations of marketing (human resources, economics, and marketing and business) and the functions of marketing (financing, risk management, selling, promotion, pricing, purchasing, marketing-information management, product/service planning, and distribution). The marketing teachers offer a domestic and global viewpoint to further help students in their future careers.

- The co-op program. The second portion of any marketing program is the on-the-job experience. The cooperative education program allows students to practice the skills used in the marketing classroom in real-world work situations. The students work with one employer for an entire year to learn and experience a more in-depth look into the operations of a business.

- The DECA organization. To further a student's personal and professional development, DECA offers leadership and competitive opportunities. The students have the opportunity to compete in various occupational fields via competitive exams and role-play situations with business and industry experts (2001).

Due to the highly professional nature of marketing education and DECA, it is imperative that students are provided with the evaluation tools that many individuals will encounter in their futures (C. Kalnins, personal communication, February, 2001). Close to 25 percent of all Fortune 500 companies are utilizing 360-degree feedback as a method to evaluate employees (Bookman, 1999). In order to remain competitive with business and industry standards, it would be ideal for the marketing education curriculum to incorporate 360-degree feedback initially into the DECA organization (M. Rietveld, personal communications, May, 2001).

Kimberly High School DECA officers can gain a great deal of insight by utilizing 360-degree feedback because it offers a formalized evaluation method and also allows for the leadership team to learn their own strengths and weaknesses from the people that know the most about their performance: their peers (C. Kalnins, personal communication, June 2001). Although the concept is entirely new to student organizations, and fairly new to high school educators, the effects of utilizing 360-degree feedback could provide some developmental feedback for the individuals that can help shape them earlier in their professional careers.

The Kimberly High School DECA handbook outlines that student DECA officers volunteer to devote a full year of their time to the DECA in a leadership position. The election of officers is held annually in April. Most times the student population has elected the officers, and on a few occasions the DECA advisors appoint the new leadership based upon previous involvement and dedication to the organization (2000).

In reviewing the evaluation procedures for Kimberly High School DECA officers, it has been found by the advisors that the current evaluation methods do not met the needs of the organization or the student population (DECA advisor meeting notes, 2001). The DECA handbook that was created for Kimberly High School identifies that the evaluation tools currently used are singular: a self-evaluation form that is given to every DECA officer at the end of each school term (45 contractual school days) during a weekly officer meeting. Each officer is required to complete the self-evaluation within one week and turn the form into an identified advisor for processing and discussion. The evaluation form harbors open-ended questions, such as the following:

- Please list all of the activities that you have completed this term.

- What are your future activities for the next term?

- What help do you need to conduct your duties more effectively?

- What can an advisor do to help you?

- Please list any comments regarding this term.

- On a scale of 1-10, please rate the overall effectiveness of the team.

- On a scale of 1-10, please rate your own effectiveness as an officer.

Once the advisors receive the evaluation sheets, the forms are read and analyzed, but very little is done to follow up on the self-evaluations. Minimal value was attached to the process (by both advisors and officers) and it merely became another piece of paperwork.

Another informal method of evaluation is during the DECA officer meetings. These meetings are conducted once per week, with all officers and advisors in attendance, to plan for future activities and evaluate the effectiveness of the recently concluded activities. During this meeting, the president of the organization utilizes parliamentary procedure to direct the meeting and each officer is required to provide a weekly report. During the officer reports, the rest of the officer team learns about the projects, progress, and setbacks that each individual officer has encountered. These verbal officer reports allow the other leaders to know what work is being completed, but also allows the advisors to ascertain any changes that must be made in order to allow for officer success. This form of evaluation is extremely informal, as the advisors only provide insight when problems occur, and often the feedback provided is not communicated very well to the individual, or the advice is not taken at all by the officers (2001).

What is 360-degree feedback?

"What is currently called 360 assessment - or multi-rater, multilevel, full-circle feedback - is a widely used and effective process for giving and receiving feedback." (Wilson, 1997). The term "360-degree feedback" refers to gathering and processing multi-rater assessments on an individual and then feeding that person back the results (Bookman, 1999). The process includes tuning into the observations and perceptions of those around the individual who are in a position to observe behavior and skills. The critical aspect of 360-degree feedback is to identify gaps between perception and desired performance (Wilson, 1997).

The process is either formal (pre-arranged questions with specific content areas) or informal (brief interviews with co-workers) to gather data about managers (Wilson, 1997). Regardless of the process, the intent of 360-degree feedback is to provide insights from a wide variety of people who interact with the manager (Graham, 2000). What managers do with this feedback is highly individual (Gerard, Personal Communication, 2001). Some may choose to ignore or reject the ideas, but others who take an honest and open look may improve their skills and effectiveness (Graham, 2000).

Bookman states that since having been introduced in the 1950's, 360-degree feedback has been used by 22% of Fortune 500 companies with the intent of providing developmental feedback. A recent American Society for Training and Development literature study provided overwhelming evidence that using 360-degree feedback for employee development is extremely effective, especially when feedback accompanies one-on-one coaching (1999). Porsche Cars North America Inc. in Reno, Nevada conducted a survey about 360-degree feedback with their employees and had the

following results: "88 percent of its 250 workers believed the process was valuable to them personally; 82 percent said it was valuable to the company; and 88 percent said they had made changes in behavior as a results of the feedback" (Wells, 1999).

Vaughn Limbrick, director of professional development for APICS—The Educational Society for Resource Management states,

> Before you bought your last new suit, you probably stepped in front of a three-way mirror to see how you looked. You may have caught a glimpse of yourself at an angle you've never seen before—a view you hardly recognized. If we can live for years without seeing a complete picture of our physical selves, imagine what we fail to recognize about our less visible qualities: our behavior, talents, attitudes, and potential (1999).

Wilson states that the feedback that is received can be positive or negative. Good, honest and well-expressed feedback is critical to personal development within the workplace. To know how others perceive us and experience our behavior is a key to self-awareness and growth (1997). More often than not, a person's behavior and attitudes may appear very differently to co-workers than what was intended (Gerard, Personal Communication, 2001).

Wilson notes that an honest self-rater will gain much insight from the 360-feedback process; however, those that do not rate themselves honestly (either higher or lower) will not reap the benefits of 360-degree feedback. A lower or higher rating will negate the growth of that manager on their career path; thus no real growth will take place. This self-knowledge will help the manager be aware of their current level of mastery and develop the steps necessary to increase performance (1997).

Wimer and Nowak state that work groups within the organization and the entire organization may benefit from the 360-degree feedback process. Individuals that work with one another in a group setting are able to share their feelings on an anonymous platform, which can lead to unburdening oneself of negative feelings. It is the hope of most raters that the feedback they provide will lead to motivation for others to change. "It's common for a group's morale and effectiveness to improve dramatically after the members have had the opportunity to give others concrete, honest, behavioral feedback and know that their views have been heard and taken seriously" (1998).

<div align="center">360-Degree Feedback Process</div>

Overall, 360-degree feedback has been noted as being effective, when done properly (Gerard, Personal Communication, 2001). The intent of the 360-degree feedback process is to facilitate conversations about expectations, roles, and responsibilities (Antonioni, 2000). Wells states that the process of 360-degree feedback is designed for long-term value. Therefore, development plans should be created to help the individual improve skills and reinforce progress (1999).

Determining the Purpose: Developmental or Evaluative

A common mistake among organizations instituting a multirater feedback system is that there is not a clear purpose (Wilson, 1997). Wimer and Nowak state that a clear purpose will help identify any organizational issues or strategic needs. Without a purpose, the organization will not treat the underlying issues and may not lead to desirable outcomes (1998). An understanding of the program, a process, and method of communication should be clearly identified at the start of the process (Peters, 2001). Rushing into 360-degree feedback without a clear idea of purpose or an examination of

organizational factors (such as downsizing) is a typical organizational mistake (McCurry, 1999). Wimer and Nowak believe the assessments should be designed and implemented to address specific strategic and business needs. A pilot study should always be conducted to ensure that the true purpose is met with the assessment tools, feedback meetings, and personal development plans. It is important to involve the key stakeholders in the entire process to gain input on decisions and assist with implementation. In order for the process to run sufficiently, communication must be open between all members of the organization (1998).

When the objective of the 360-degree feedback is developmental, feedback tends to be confidential, and individuals are expected to make behavioral improvements based upon the feedback that they receive (Antonioni, 2000). Peter Ward, Ward Dutton Partnership, has stated his surprise in people's acceptance of negative comments about behavior. This is achieved because the feedback was constructive and is seen as a greater process (McCurry, 1999). Wilson states that the questions crafted for developmental purposes rate observable behaviors and skills. The end result is for the individual to create an independent developmental plan based upon the insight learned through the feedback process. When a person is being evaluated for developmental purposes, the individual must be able to feel comfortable with the environment and the facilitator so that the skill strengths and weaknesses can be delivered without the fear of being judged. Much of the information delivered is sensitive and a trusted facilitator must be involved in the process (1997).

Conversely, when 360-degree feedback is used for performance appraisals, more personal information about the individual is needed (Wilson, 1997). When the objective is evaluative in nature, the feedback is not confidential and is used annually in order to conduct performance appraisals (Antonioni, 2000). However, when the appraisal is linked to pay or advancement, the raters will be less likely to provide true information (Wilson, 1997). Peiperl shares that short-term improvements are typically made in evaluative feedback rather than the comprehensive, useful changes that can be made when the feedback is developmental (2000).

Daniel Kanouse, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Take Charge Consultants, Inc. in Downingtown, PA, offers eight steps in developing a successful 360-degree feedback program:

1. Separate the systems, establish clear goals.

2. Communicate your strategy.

3. Choose the right program.

4. Train employees.

5. Ensure confidentiality.

6. Start from the top down.

7. Admit your mistakes (1998).

<u>Preparing the Employees</u>

To get honest feedback, a safe environment must be created in which the feedback is used for purposes primarily developmental (Wilson, 1997). Regardless of the quality of the tool and the time it may take to complete the session, the manner must be positive and should include coaching and counseling. Participants who receive a full-view of

themselves as others see them are usually surprised by the results and may become angered by their feedback. The participants should be given time to internalize feedback to work through their reactions toward acceptance and understanding (Haworth, 1998).

It is imperative to inform employees about how the tools were developed, how they will be used, how raters will be selected and who will have access to the results. This requires training for the individuals to ensure feedback success (Haworth, 1998). If not, it only natural that the employees will resist the feedback process (Kanouse, 1998). Initially, a clear letter of explanation should accompany the rating materials to positively explain the purpose of the tool and provide questionnaire instructions.

The employees should always be aware of who will have access to the feedback (Wimer & Nowak, 1998). Haworth writes that confidentiality and privacy are extremely important and the system has been designed so that the report is only shared with the person being evaluated, followed by a discussion between the individual and the manager. The development plan should be housed with the manager and can be a part of a Human Resource file. If any other members of the organization are privy to the feedback, the individual should be consulted. Some consider this assessment tool to be weapon that can be used against them later (1998). When the feedback results are presented to the management in any manner, the purpose then becomes developmental with administrative ties (Peters, 2000). Raters are also concerned that their own responses remain anonymous as to not create any friction in the work environment (Kanouse, 1998).

When a manager is aware that feedback is being collected on her or his performance, a level of curiosity and anxiety that accompanies the wait. A comprehensive timetable should be created to ensure that communication is provided early and the perceived value is intact. A long wait for feedback results adds more stress to the workplace. It is ideal to provide feedback within four to six weeks after the questionnaires have been completed (Haworth, 1998).

Determining Assessment Tools

Typically, the 360-degree instrument is a questionnaire with approximately 100 items to rate, (Bookman, 1999) ranging from how the manager establishes plans, takes risks, manages diversity, leads and delegates, solves problems, and communicates (Graham, 2000). The questionnaires should focus on the desired behaviors and those that are valued by the organization (Wimer & Nowak, 1998). The questionnaire should provide enough items to identify patterns, themes, or a specific understanding of the behaviors being assessed. The measurement tool should be easy to understand and free from jargon that could be confusing. Candy Albertsson, BP Amoco, stresses that the instrument should address specific company competencies (McCurry, 1999). Wimer and Nowak recommend insisting that "user-friendly" should be of the highest priority when designing a 360-degree questionnaire (1998). The rating system should be objective and simple to generate the most useful appraisals. Number or letter grades make it easiest to compile and analyze data (Peiperl, 2001).

Graham believes that one assessment tool cannot identify the effectiveness of all managers. Each person has a unique, differing style of management. The use of the 360-degree feedback may encourage managers to assimilate and all behave and manage the

same. Some of the most effective managers possess an intangible leadership style that

cannot be mirrored by a 360-degree feedback assessment tool (2000). Peiperl believes,

however, that the simple ratings do not always generate enough information (2001).

When selecting assessment tools, it is necessary to ensure that the skill sets are

job related and reinforced through other human resource activities, such as performance

appraisals, as well as a proper determination of the purpose of the feedback (Wilson,

1997). When these ideals are not considered, the investment into such a tool has little

economic value (Haworth, 1998).

The other raters (colleagues, managers, subordinates, customers) range from 5-10

different people, including the person being assessed (self-rating), his or her direct

supervisor, and several peers and subordinates (Bookman, 1999).

Providing Feedback to Employees

Bookman wrote that it must be communicated to the person being evaluated that

the feedback is simply data, thus it cannot make decisions for a person. The self-rater

will need to make her/his own decisions about what to do with the data in order for it to

have effectiveness. Another point of consideration is that the feedback is one snapshot of

an individual. The snapshot does not provide a holistic view of a person; simply an

insight from 10 co-workers in the work environment at a moment in time. The feedback

received should not be accepted nor rejected too quickly. Thought and consideration

should be given to all positive and negative responses. In managing 360-degree

feedback, the manager should remind the employee that the person is his or her own

expert. The role of the facilitator is to coach and instruct in a manner that helps the

individual find meaning in the feedback (1999).

Time must be taken to implement the 360-degree process in order for it to be fully effective. If a follow-up feedback session is not completed, employees don't know what to do with the feedback they received or how to address the issues brought out in the feedback report. Training and communication about the feedback process is necessary for all involved. How the feedback is communicated has a direct relation to how it is received. The facilitators should never deliver the feedback in a group setting and the facilitator should have no bias on the individual or the work setting (Wells, 1999).

<u>Resources</u>

Wimer and Nowak state "One reoccurring problem that the ratees face after the feedback session is over is that they don't know what to do with the results." Providing goal and development resources for the manager to make the changes identified in the 360-degree feedback is a necessary step to ensure that the process is fulfilling.

The development plan should be established, identifying what, when, and how to address and strengthen performance. People need insight, ideas, and guidelines. It may be necessary to provide ideas and opportunities for improving behaviors (Peters, 2000). Some organizations provide the tools to assist in plan completion, while other organizations leave that responsibility up to the employee to uncover (1998).

The employees must believe that the company values their quest for self-development and personal and professional growth. A mentoring program is an excellent way for top management to provide that additional value (Haworth, 1998). Any resources used should be made with the goal of maximum transfer of learning for the individual (Wimer & Nowak, 1998).

<u>Engraining the Process in an Organization</u>

Wimer & Nowack believe that 360-degree feedback should be an ongoing event rather than a process and it should not be considered a "flavor of the month" (1998). The process should be repeated over time to ensure that the process is aimed at increasing and improving the competencies and behaviors rather than the snapshot of the person's performance. Continuous feedback and open communication should be given and repeated over time. The process should be supportive for the individuals and constantly evaluated by the facilitators to ensure that the strategic goals of the business are being met.

Wells states that at the conclusion of the 360-degree feedback process, it would be insightful to conduct a follow-up survey with the employees to determine feedback effectiveness. It is ideal to determine if the feedback helped the employees with the desired change in knowledge, skills, or abilities, and also to determine if it was valuable to the company and it's strategic business goals (1999). Peters believes the program should continually be evaluated. Since 360-degree feedback is a time-consuming process, it should be monitored often, and the successes should be broadcast (2000).

<div align="center">Problems with 360-Degree Feedback</div>

<u>Lack of training</u>

Many problems stem from the lack of training given to facilitators, ratees, and raters (Wells, 2000). Marie Green, principal of Management Education Group, states:

> There's often too much focus on getting he feedback and mining the data and too little focus on use the feedback for job-related or behavior change. Unless there's commitment throughout the company to do something concrete with the feedback and

follow up on it, there's no completion of the loop and everything tends to get dropped.

Due to the time that it takes for raters to honestly evaluate their colleagues, staggering the assessments is necessary to ensure that raters are not inundated with questionnaires (Haworth, 1998).

Additionally, the raters must be trained to ensure that they do not make personal attacks on the recipient. The result is that the employee being evaluated becomes defensive, the employees turn negative to the process, and the whole process is deemed as unproductive (Kanouse, 1998).

Combining tools

Kanouse has found that the multi-rater forms can be detrimental when combined with other management tools or systems (1998); however, other proponents of 360-degree feedback, such as Roger Leck, Human Resources Director of BNFL, believe that 360-degree feedback should not be used alone and it should be employed as part of a larger process (McCurry, 1999). Kanouse states that when a manager's performance is identified as positive and effective in one management evaluation tool and is negative in the 360-degree feedback session, morale problems most likely will occur. When combined, the negative 360-feedback could cross over into the compensation aspects of the evaluation, thus making it unfair to the person being evaluated and the other raters may be blamed for the feedback (1998).

However, 360-degree feedback should not be a substitute for assessing and managing people's performance. It is rather a process for helping people gains a rich perspective on how others view their management practices, interpersonal style, and effectiveness (Wimer, Nowack, 1998).

Performance appraisals

Anecdotal and hard data have shown that 360-degree feedback, when used for performance appraisals, creates a new set of problems for the employees and facilitators, including improper rater selection, overrating and underrating biases, resistance from employees, and the neglect of personal development (Bookman, 1999).

When 360-degree feedback is related to pay, the risk is enormous for the organization and its employees (Wells, 1999). The use of this feedback method for merit raises can undermine trust and may put relationship and careers in jeopardy. When employees are rating one another for promotions or pay increases, employees act in a manner to generate good feedback, leading to a popularity contest (Lewis, 2000).

Focus on weakness instead of positives

The 360-degree feedback process is bound to bring out the imperfections of the manager. This process is difficult for people to focus on their weaknesses instead of improving their assets and the value of their contributions (Graham, 2000).

Graham has found that some employees use the assessment tool as a means to "get back" at a manager who has angered them. Of course managers are aware of this and may start reprimanding their employees differently because they know that they feedback will reflect all behaviors, regardless if they are well intentioned for the company (2000).

Limitations, Areas for Further Research and Improvement

The following authors identified concerns and suggest the following advice:

1. Human Resources professionals should create a development guide that will offer management specific insight to help encourage action from the feedback (Wells, 1999).

2. Human Resources could also provide situations or case studies as to which the persons evaluated can experience the desired outcomes with guidance.

3. Do not have all of the raters evaluate employees in all areas. It may be beneficial to break apart the assessment questionnaire so that raters will be able to evaluate the areas in which they have the most experience. If raters rate in areas that they do not have knowledge, the overall product is less effective (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000).

4. Continually appraise the 360-degree feedback system to ensure that the proper goals are being met. There are not many published reports that state the effectiveness of 360-degree feedback; therefore, companies need to evaluate the effectiveness for their particular organization, based upon their strategic needs and goals (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

A case study with a mixed approach was used to compare the current evaluation of Kimberly High School DECA officers, identify the changes that should be made for the evaluation process and compare the effects that a properly conducted 360-degree feedback evaluation could generate with student officers. As part of this process, a plan will be developed to implement the new evaluation program into Kimberly High School DECA.

Case Study

Qualitative research, as noted by Miles and Huberman, "provides an intense or prolonged contact with life situations" (1994). Throughout the qualitative research process, the researcher gains a holistic overview of the situation for study. In order to gain greater insight, the researcher gathers the perceptions of those involved in the process or setting for study. Once data is gathered, the researcher can isolate themes and expressions, thus leading to written analysis with little standardized instrumentation (1994). The researcher has chosen to use such qualitative research to study 360-degree feedback in business and industry and determine its implementation into a sample population of secondary students.

The case study method is a unique method to conduct social science research. As Yin notes, case study research identifies the "how" and "why" of a question and then examines the real-life situation (1994). A case study approach is ideal to scrutinize 360-degree feedback in business and industry and its possible incorporations into education.

The researcher has chosen to use empirical inquiry due to the contemporary nature of 360-degree feedback. Empirical inquiry provides an intensive path in which the researcher can determine the current boundaries of 360-degree feedback, both in business and industry and in the educational setting. The secondary data researched has not identified the use of upward feedback for DECA officers.

The researcher assumes construct validity because the data for analysis has been tested and proven in other research venues. This validity leads the researcher to believe that the same results will be achieved over time. The researcher chose to select the basic benefits and challenges of 360-degree feedback within business and industry and the evaluation of high school DECA officers. The purpose of the construct validity is to demonstrate that 360-degree feedback would reflect the same benefits to the DECA officers. The additional validity would be that the actions to rectify the challenges could also be used in the secondary education setting.

A mixed-method multiple case design was instituted to guide the research. The case study was both comparative and evaluative. It had three comparative points:

1.   Business and industry versus marketing education and DECA.

2.   Evaluation versus 360-degree feedback.

3.   Peer review versus 360-degree feedback.

   The case study was evaluative in two other manners:

1.   Determining strengths and weaknesses of 360-degree feedback and DECA officer evaluation.

2.   Holistic in nature.

This multiple case design is unique because the researcher did not identify any formalized evaluation methods for organizational leaders of DECA, yet chose to research and compare a highly advanced business strategy for implementation into the program.

Conduction of Case Study

"A research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions about questions" (Yin, 1994). The researcher has used Yin's five components for research design:

1.	A study's question. How can evaluation be improved for DECA officers?

2.	Its propositions. Why is 360-degree feedback an effective tool in business and industry? How can 360-degree feedback become effective for DECA officers? All questions guided the researcher into the mixed case study.

3.	Its units of analysis. The sample population to pilot the 360-degree feedback in the case study is eight DECA officers, ranging from 15-17 years old. The individual students are the primary units of analysis. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the only case study being conducted on this topic.

4.	The logical linking of data to propositions. The researcher used the literature review, personal communications, and documentation to obtain data. Multiple sources were used and a chain of evidence was documented to analyze data. Tables helped identify different categories. Merriam states that it is important to identify patterns, develop categories, and look for recurring themes in the data (1998). Within each category evidence was applied to demonstrate the benefits and challenges of

implementing 360-degree feedback in business and industry and education. The validity was strengthened with the patterns observed within the table.

5.   The criteria for interpreting data (1994). The researcher interpreted the data by first analyzing the supportive and conflicting evidence. From this analysis significant criteria were determined that led to conclusions. The researcher, in her four years of marketing education experience, also brought personal expertise into the case study.

Sample Population

The sample population used to test the implementation of 360-degree feedback in education is the 2001-2002 DECA officer team. "The sample is a small representation of the population" (Robson, 1993). For this study, the sample consists of two males and six females. The males are 16 and 17 years old and the females are between 15 and 16 years old. Each student in the sample population is involved in other physical or social organizations and has demonstrated high academic achievements.

The sample is considered a purposeful sample and the participants chosen for several factors. The sample base had never been evaluated as DECA officers before; therefore, the adjustment to 360-degree feedback would be easier. The eight officers are new to DECA leadership and have begun training at the same time. In the past the organization has had at least one officer remain in office for two years, thus bringing previous training, leadership styles, and opinions into the new school year. The current sample population will not experience those issues.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The findings are based upon the research gained from the literature review, interviews, and personal communications, as well as the comparative case study methodology. The benefits and challenges in business and industry and in education have been identified, an analysis of these findings conducted, and a description of how the benefits can be utilized and challenges rectified at Kimberly High School. Within these findings, the comparative and evaluative aspects of the mixed-method multiple case study identified in the third chapter are analyzed.

Benefits and Challenges in Business and Industry

The benefits of 360-degree feedback in business and industry are expansive. However, challenges have been identified as well. The following chart shows the benefits and challenges identified via the literature review and personal interviews. (Table 4.1)

Benefits	Challenges
The information obtained is developments in nature and the results can be implemented into the lives of the persons evaluated.	Strong resistance to change in the current evaluation system by the employees.
The process incorporates a "team approach" to self-development. 360-degree feedback allows co-workers to help one another learn the personal strengths and areas for improvement with the goal of personal development.	The individuals can ignore the feedback if they would like (unless it is used for performance appraisals).
The information learned via 360-degree feedback can be transferred directly into the workplace. This transfer can lead to more meaningful relationships and the self-awareness could have the long-term effects of a more profitable bottom line.	The rating forms must be modified to ensure that the proper skills sets are being addressed. The rating forms must meet the needs of the organization.
The process can bring about cultural	The personal threat of exposing oneself to

alignment within the organization and a greater awareness for development.	the opinions of others. Along with hurt feelings and grudges comes manipulation and dishonesty among raters.
The individuals can "see themselves" through someone else's lenses. Most do not experience this enlightenment in the workplace.	

Benefits and Challenges in the Secondary Education Setting

The secondary educational setting offers similar benefits and challenges as business and industry, but there are variances in the development, implementation, and delivery of the 360-degree feedback process.

(Table 4.2)

Benefits	Challenges
Students are more willing to accept 360-degree feedback because of their limited evaluative experience.	Immaturity of high school students throughout the process can negate results.
Early transition into 360-degree feedback can lead to more successful evaluations in business and industry.	Over- or under-rating is more likely because students are typically unable to be objective.
Students will receive a full view, rather than feedback from just a teacher or parents.	Students may be over-sensitive to the results of the 360-degree feedback and the process may be viewed negatively rather than developmentally. Students are more prone to share the negative results in an overdramatic nature with others.
The process is more comprehensive and more information is obtained than standard group evaluations.	The process is time consuming for a small number of people.
Negative behaviors may be identified and changed before these behaviors become professional habits.	The program is expensive for small organizations: $62.00 per packet. DECA is a non-profit organization with a limited budget.

As with any process, there will be hurdles to clear in order to conduct an effective 360-degree feedback. Since the program will not be fully implemented until the fall of 2002, the first year will be considered a pilot study. The process has been identified and training guides have been developed, but a live version of the training and 360-degree

feedback must be in place before it can be fully implemented into the culture of Kimberly High School DECA.

Analysis of Findings: Benefits

The benefits identified of 360-degree feedback can be extremely positive. Many of these benefits overlap between business and industry and education. The researcher critically analyzed the similarities in benefits, the rationale for different benefits in each industry, the similarities in challenges, and the rationale for the challenges in each industry. Since 360-degree feedback in education is modeled after that of business and industry, many benefits and challenges are similar. The differences lie in the population's levels of experience.

The main benefit that is identified is the developmental gains that an individual has the opportunity to gain in business and education with the use of 360-degree feedback. Regardless of whether the individual is a seasoned professional or a student starting career exploration, the personal insight that leads toward self-development from the 360-degree feedback process can be extremely enlightening. Both populations, when trained and debriefed properly, will be equipped with the personal knowledge and tools to make behavioral modifications that can lead to a more gainful work environment.

The students and professionals will have to adjust to 360-degree feedback, but the transfer of learning is a benefit to both groups. The personal information obtained can be used both in business and industry and education. The industry professionals can use the information directly in their workplaces and the students can transfer the learning in their DECA officer roles, the classroom, and the part-time jobs.

In both populations, each group has the opportunity to view themselves through other's perceptions. This 360-degree view, when conducted properly, provides a realistic view of the individual that one would normally not be able to receive. This insight into one's personality and work performance is equally beneficial to persons in business and industry and education.

A benefit identified in business and industry that was not found in education is the focus on cultural alignment. In a secondary educational setting, students do not have much influence over the inner-workings of the school system or the organizations within. The students follow the guidelines provided and generally accept the confines of the school or organizations. On the contrary, many professionals in business and industry take a more active stance in their organizations. The cultural alignment becomes more important as the workers become increasingly focused on their careers.

In the business and industry setting there is a greater need for a team approach. The co-workers have a stronger dedication to their team members because each person's performance can lead to the productivity of an entire group. 360-degree feedback is more beneficial to the team approach in business than education because the consequences are not as severe in education.

The literature review identified that persons in business and industry are more skeptical and resistant to 360-degree feedback. Alternately, student leaders are relatively new to any formalized evaluation techniques; therefore, 360-degree feedback would be an easy transition. The students would require the same amount of training as those in business and industry, and most likely would need a bit more follow-up time to ensure

that the feedback was received in a developmental manner. The lack of previous experience would minimize the rejection and fear of the process.

Students have limited interaction with professional people. Conversely, those in business and industry have many opportunities to work and interact with other professionals who are qualified to provide feedback. Students typically only receive formalized feedback regarding performance from one view-their teachers. A platform would be provided, using 360-degree feedback, for students to receive the same type of insight as those in established careers. The raters and ratees would need to be trained to ensure that proper review is conducted, but the 360-degree view from peers would be similar to that in business and industry. Peer reviews are used in many classroom settings, but most times the students are under or over-rated by their classmates, thus making the feedback ineffective. The implementation of 360-degree feedback would incorporate a formalized approach that is designed to yield more advanced information.

Negative behaviors are identified and challenged in 360-degree feedback for business and industry and education. However, when these behaviors or attitudes are identified at an early age, it is easier for the person to work towards change before it becomes a habit. It is possible for a professional to change a behavior or attitude, but it may take longer for the transfer of learning to be implemented. Students and professionals that are open to the process and feedback will most likely be willing to institute a change, but the students will have a chance to do so before negative career effects arise.

Analysis of Findings: Challenges

        The challenges that were noted in business and industry and in education are very similar. The pattern for challenges will depend on which situation will be most extreme per population. For example, improper rating is a challenge in both populations; however, it is more likely that the situation will occur in secondary education.

        A challenge observed in business and industry is the strong resistance to change in evaluative methodologies. The process of 360-degree feedback is uncomfortable for many professionals because all sides of one's personality are under scrutiny by their colleagues. The uneasiness, and challenge of the new method, can lead to resistance to change. "If a single email can send a pulse racing, it's the one from human resources announcing that it's time for another round of 360-degree feedback" (Peiperl, 2001).

        When 360-degree feedback is used for developmental purposes, there is a choice in what to do with the results. An individual may digest the information, create a developmental action plan, and work towards improvement. An individual may also choose to ignore the results or become resentful. Since the 360-degree feedback, in developmental situations, is not linked to pay or advancement, the implementation of results has highly individual rewards. If the person is not willing to analyze and accept the feedback, the true intent of the 360-degree feedback process has not been achieved.

        As in any situation, the rating instruments must match the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the job and work situation. This challenge is important because the entire organization must rely on each other, especially in business and industry. The 360-degree feedback is intended to create awareness of strengths and weaknesses and encourage more self-awareness and personal productivity. If the rating instruments do

not match the skills sets required, it is impossible for 360-degree feedback to work as intended.

The researcher identified the exposure of personal feelings between colleagues as a challenge to overcome in implementing 360-degree feedback into business and industry. Especially in performance appraisals, people are less likely to provide true feedback when the result can inappropriately alter merit raises or advancement. Objectivity is compromised when hurt feelings or manipulation surface in 360-degree feedback. These attitudes or behaviors negate the true intention and hinder the benefits of 360-degree feedback.

The immaturity of high school students serves as the largest challenge in implementing 360-degree feedback in the secondary education setting. The immaturity leads to many of the challenges noted on the above chart. The DECA officer population ranges from 15-18 years old. Personal development has not reached full potential.

Over- or under-rating among the DECA officers is more likely than in business and industry due to the need for peer approval. Typically, students are more concerned about acceptance than providing true feedback that may anger or hurt another individual. The threat of providing negative feedback that could be traced back to an individual frightens students. Students are more likely to over-rate an individual to provide positive experiences and help increase a student's self-esteem. On the contrary, a small population of students could use 360-degree feedback as a platform to retaliate against another person. In either situation, the under- or over-rating must be closely monitored.

The personal sensitivity of the DECA officers may be higher than those in business and industry. Students typically receive formalized feedback from teachers and parents. With 360-degree feedback, students will receive personal insight from their peers regarding strengths and weaknesses. While the strengths can be very empowering, the exploration of weaknesses can be difficult, especially when identified by peers. Many students may share these negative feelings with others and the process can then become more threatening than necessary.

360-degree feedback is a time-consuming process. This challenge, although the initial implementation is to be conducted twice for eight students, will consume almost four months for the analyst. The benefits of 360-degree feedback outweigh this challenge, yet additional time will need to be allotted for training, implementation, analysis, and follow-up.

The costs associated with implementing 360-degree feedback into the DECA organization are more than typically spent on feedback and analysis. For each student, the cost is $125 per year. As DECA is a non-profit organization, funds would need to be determined early in the process to implement the 360-degree feedback.

Implementation of 360-degree feedback into Kimberly High School DECA

Research has shown that many challenges can be overcome with proper training from the beginning implementation of 360-degree feedback, as well as continual open communication between all parties involved. The process is deemed, via literature review and comparative case study, to be positive and enlightening for participants. In the Kimberly High School DECA setting, many benefits are identified. These benefits

are concluded via case study and the researcher's four years of experience working with

Marketing Education and DECA.

(Table 4.3)

Feature	Benefit
• Students gain insight about their performance from their peers	• Students are more likely to listen to the insight of their peers than their advisors. • The student prestige is far more important than approval from advisors.
• Students will learn the actual tasks that they complete successfully or unsuccessfully.	• Students will be able to use the specific advice to know exactly what needs to be improved upon.
• Students will experience the evaluation techniques that are currently being used in business and industry.	• Students will be more prepared for their future work environments than their peers.

In the Kimberly High School DECA setting, the challenges that will be found in

incorporating 360-degree feedback are minimal, and can be worked through in a manner

of three to five years. The anticipated challenges include:

(Table 4.4)

Challenge	Action to Rectify the Challenge
• Students do not understand the intent of the 360-degree feedback process.	• Provide accurate training from the start of the process. • If students still don't understand, discuss further on an individual basis.
• Large time commitment to conduct and analyze the results.	• Two advisors will conduct the 360-degree feedback for the first two years. Additional advisors will be trained once the problems are worked out. • The analyst advisors will take on a lighter advisory role in weekly activities for these years to allow for additional time to work with student officers.

• Students use 360-degree feedback as an opportunity to "get back" at one another.	• Train the students from the beginning about proper rating. • If improper rating continues during the process, identify the individuals and work through the problems.

Discussion of Analysis

Business and industry and education both can greatly benefit from the implementation of 360-degree feedback into the work environments. The benefits and challenges are similar, yet unique to each situation. The benefits can easily cross over between populations, as well as the challenges.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher believes that great insight may be attained for student leaders with the strategic use of 360-degree feedback for Kimberly High School DECA officers. This ideal can be achieved with proper training, honest feedback, a developmental process, and an open mind. The purpose of this study was to assess the current evaluation methods for high school DECA officers, determine the gap between the current evaluation methodology and ideal methods, and provide a plan for utilizing 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool for young leaders. As described in Chapter 1, the objectives of this study were as follows:

1. Provide feedback for student leaders and to compare that against the 360-degree feedback process being used in business.

2. A 360-degree feedback process will be used in the future to provide student leaders with a wider array of feedback regarding professional performance.

The researcher, based upon the literature review and comparative case study, concludes that 360-degree feedback would be an excellent choice to implement into Kimberly High School DECA. The literature has identified the many positive aspects of 360-degree feedback, as well as surfacing challenges and methods in which to rectify any problems with the developmental process. The comparative case study allowed the researcher to critically analyze the gaps between the current evaluation system and the ideal business strategy to student evaluation. The benefits of utilizing 360-degree feedback for Kimberly High School DECA officers are tremendous. When the advisors

and students are trained properly, and the feedback is conducted in the manner intended, students will have many opportunities for self-development.

<div align="center">Changes in the Current System</div>

Institution of 360-degree feedback into the organizational culture of Kimberly High School DECA requires much planning and training to meet the full developmental intent of the program. The overall lack of formalized training does not leave for a transfer of many documents or procedures.

The current self-evaluation methods must be re-organized so that more true insight and feedback can be obtained. The self-evaluation sheet that has been used in the past will no longer be acceptable, nor do the questions coincide with the goals of 360-degree feedback. The ideal of a self-evaluation will still be kept intact, but will be reformatted and paired with a developmental action plan.

<div align="center">Kimberly High School DECA 360-Degree Feedback Training Plan</div>

A comprehensive plan for the implementation of 360-degree feedback into the organization is outlined, as well as recommendations for future research and manipulations of 360-degree feedback within the confines of the DECA organization.

Planning the 360-Degree Feedback Process

In order to provide the most concise 360-degree feedback possible, Kimberly High School DECA will be aligning the feedback materials and processes with that of business and industry. It is imperative (for the transfer of learning) that the process be as close to what the student leaders will encounter in their professional lives as possible.

To implement 360-degree feedback, the following steps will be taken to incorporate the process: determine rating materials, train all DECA officers and advisors, conduct the rating, deliver the results, create development plans, and follow-up of the feedback process.

Since the students maintain their leadership position for one full year, it would be beneficial for the 360-degree feedback to be conducted two times per year. If the process were to be conducted more than two times per year, the students would not be able to implement the changes identified in the process or make headway on the goals determined in the developmental action plans. If the process were to be conducted only one time per year, the students would not be able to determine if the goals were attained or if any changes identified were made with that time frame. Therefore, it is ideal to conduct the 360-degree feedback process twice per school year.

A schedule must be determined at the beginning of the year during the planning phases to ensure that all DECA officers will receive the proper amount of time for analysis, application, and implementation. A 360-degree feedback schedule will be utilized during the school year to allow all eight officers to experience the 360-degree feedback process twice. There will be an approximate three-month period between 360-degree feedback sessions to allow for changes and accommodations.

During the introduction meetings, the DECA officers will receive all materials for the 360-degree feedback meeting, determine which individuals will be asked to provide feedback, and discuss any questions or concerns about the process.

- The school store managers will be the first to be evaluated because the activities for that office start one month prior to the beginning of the school year.

- The president will be evaluated next because areas for concern with the head leadership can be dealt with early and the president can then take an active role in working through the 360-degree feedback processes with other officers.

- The next person evaluated will be the financial services officer. This officer is responsible for all financial transactions within the organization. Feedback should be given to this person early to ensure that all activities are conducted properly and that the program is not put in any financial jeopardy.

- The secretary will be evaluated next, so as to ensure that all communication within the chapter is concise and meets the goals of the student membership.

- The media specialist will experience the process next because of the key role that this individual plays with the print, radio, and television media. At this point in the year the media officer has had several opportunities to work with other organizations and will have a strong grasp on the duties of the officer.

- There is not a large urgency for the vice president to go through the 360-degree feedback process early. This officer plays a supportive role to the other officers and the immediacy of the feedback is not necessary.

- The historian is responsible for recording all activities that occur during the year, including written documents and photographs. This officer writes the Gold Award and presents the chapter's activities at the National Career Development Conference. The historian also helps the other officers when needed. The historian will be the final officer to experience the 360-degree process.

Below is a schedule of 360-feedback for the 2001-2002 school year. In the following years, the schedule will be modified to meet the Kimberly High School yearly calendar.

ADVISOR 1

School Store Manager #1	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	September 25, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 2
Peer evaluations due	October 9
Feedback meeting	October 23
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	October 30
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	January 22, 2002
Self-evaluation due	January 29
Peer evaluations due	February 5
Feedback meeting	February 19
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	February 26

ADVISOR 2

School Store Manager #2	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	September 27, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 4
Peer evaluations due	October 11
Feedback meeting	October 25
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 1
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	January 24, 2002
Self-evaluation due	January 31
Peer evaluations due	February 7
Feedback meeting	February 21
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	February 28

ADVISOR 1

President	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 2, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 9
Peer evaluations due	October 16
Feedback meeting	October 30
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 6
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	January 29, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 5
Peer evaluations due	February 12
Feedback meeting	February 26
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 5

ADVISOR 2

Financial Services	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 4, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 11
Peer evaluations due	October 18
Feedback meeting	November 1
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 8
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	January 31, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 7
Peer evaluations due	February 14
Feedback meeting	February 28
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 7

ADVISOR 1

Secretary	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 9, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 16
Peer evaluations due	October 23
Feedback meeting	November 6
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 13
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	February 5, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 12
Peer evaluations due	February 19
Feedback meeting	March 5
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 12

ADVISOR 2

Media Specialist	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 11, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 18
Peer evaluations due	October 25
Feedback meeting	November 8
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 15
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	February 7, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 14
Peer evaluations due	February 21
Feedback meeting	March 7
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 14

ADVISOR 1

Vice-President	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 16, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 23
Peer evaluations due	October 30
Feedback meeting	November 13
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	November 20
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	February 12, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 19
Peer evaluations due	February 26
Feedback meeting	March 12
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 19

ADVISOR 2

Historian	Date
TERM ONE	
Introduction meeting with advisor	October 18, 2001
Self-evaluation due	October 25
Peer evaluations due	Nov 1
Feedback meeting	Nov 15
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	Nov 21
TERM THREE	
Follow-up meeting with advisor	February 14, 2002
Self-evaluation due	February 21
Peer evaluations due	February 28
Feedback meeting	March 14
Development action plan due, meeting with advisor	March 21

<u>Determining Rating Materials</u>

In order to implement the 360-degree feedback process into Kimberly High School DECA, the rating sheets must be determined. The self-rating and peer rating sheets are entitled "Life Styles Inventory" and will be purchased from Human Synergistics International. The rating and self-rating sheets were chosen because of the depth determined by the instrument and the amount of information provided to the rater at the conclusion of the process. The cost of the process per person is $65.00 per kit, which includes the LSI and LS2, the descriptions packets, and self-development worksheets (McDermott, Human Synergistics International, 2001)

The rating packet includes a comprehensive listing of characteristic traits that can help identify specific behavioral or style patterns. There are two packets that are involved in this process: a self-rating packet for the individual and a rating packet for the peers of the individual being evaluated. The rater is instructed to read each word or phrase carefully and to be as open and accurate as possible. The individuals are asked to rate on the following levels: use a "2" if the word is like you (the person you are describing) most of the time; use a "1" if the word is like you (that person) quite often; or use a "0" if the word is essentially unlike you (that person). The rater is instructed to start at the far left column, of four, and work down the columns. The rater has 240 describing words of characteristic traits, each of which leads the data compiler to specific results.

During the personalized feedback session, the advisor will provide the Life Styles Circumplex, developed by J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. The circumplex is a visual aid that allows the individual to profile her/his score. See Appendix for the reference copy of the Life Styles Inventory. (Human Synergistics, Incorporated)

Training

The DECA officers and advisors will have to be trained extensively to ensure that the 360-degree feedback is developmental in nature. The officers and advisors will need immense training on rating and evaluating feedback. Each officer will receive a packet explaining the 360-degree feedback process. Since the feedback will not serve any evaluative purposes, it is the hope of the advisors that the other officers will be more prone to provide true, honest feedback. The packet will include a description and purpose of 360-degree feedback, the pros and cons of the process, example forms, an explanation of how to effectively rate others and oneself, the feedback timeline, analysis of the feedback document, and the developmental action plans. (Doc 3.1)

The DECA advisors will also have to be trained to ensure that the leadership of 360-degree feedback is conducted properly. Initially, two advisors will institute the program in the 2001-2002 school year. The two other advisors will receive the same training, at the same time, as the DECA officers. The adult perspective will allow the 360-degree feedback advisor/trainers to identify any gaps in training that are important to evaluation success. Within the first year of 360-degree feedback, many of the complications will be worked out of the system. The second year of the program will allow the "old" advisors to coach a "new" advisor in the process. In the third year, the 360-degree feedback process will become part of the DECA officer culture, and the

coached advisors will take on the responsibility and leadership for two DECA officer

360-degree feedback sessions.

(Doc 5.1)

<p align="center">DECA Officer Team, 2001-2002</p>

<p align="center">360-Degree Feedback Training Guide</p>

What is 360-degree feedback?

- 360-degree feedback is a process used in many business and industry settings that

allows a manager to be evaluated by their peers, subordinates, and managers.

- The process is developmental and will not be used for evaluation of the DECA

officers.

- The information is gathered from you (self-evaluation), four other people that you

work with that will know your performance output, and one DECA advisor. The results

will be analyzed and "fed" back to you.

- This process has been called the "good, bad, and the ugly" of feedback. You will

learn many things about yourself. It is up to you to accept the feedback and make

changes, or ignore the results.

Why use 360-degree feedback for DECA officers?

- 22% of all Fortune 500 companies use 360-degree feedback for their management

staff. (Bookman, 1999) You are all young professionals that will be entering the world

of marketing and management. This is an early preparation for your career.

- You know much more about your peer's performance than the advisors know.

You will be able to provide more concise and helpful information to your fellow officers

that can be helpful in their professional careers.

- This formalized evaluation approach will give you the best platform to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Although the process is intensive, the benefits can be tremendous.

Rating forms

- A copy of the rating form that we will be using is attached. We will be utilizing the Life Styles Inventory from Human Synergistics, International. This company offers many professional organizations with the tools to provide feedback for their employees. Please review the document.

- There are 240 different items in which you will be rating yourself or someone else. Use your decision-making skills to pick the description that most accurately fits that person. You will have one week to finish your own self-rating sheet and two weeks if you are evaluating someone else. Always remember that honest responses will help personal development.

- Read and follow all directions. Be sure to use a pen and press hard when writing. In reading each characteristic, pick the number (0, 1,or 2) that most accurately describes you or the person you are evaluating. If you are having difficulty choosing, make a quick decision and move to the next question.

- The best thing that you can do for yourself and your fellow officers is to be HONEST. Rate each person (and yourself) fairly. You are doing an injustice to each person that you rate higher or lower than s/he deserves. A higher rating can mask any weaknesses that may be detrimental to the team and the mission of our organization as a whole. A lower rating can lead to poor morale and unwillingness to cooperate in the future.

- This is not a platform to sling insults! And it will not be tolerated.

Feedback timeline

- The 360-degree feedback will take place in two shifts: fall and spring. This will allow for you to complete the process once, identify your strengths and weakness, and create a developmental action plan. The second feedback session will allow you to see where improvements have been made and determine ways in which you can become a more successful leader.

- Each person will be involved in this process for six weeks.

o   Week One: receive materials, identify raters, discuss current self-observations about personality and performance, and identify any concerns.

o   Week Two: self-rating form is due to advisor.

o   Week Three: external rating forms are due to advisor.

o   Week Four: analysis of documents by advisor.

o   Week Five: feedback meeting with officer, discuss personal insights and feedback from peers, and developmental action plan activity is assigned.

o   Week Six: developmental action plan is due to advisor, discussion about goals, and additional insights regarding the 360-degree feedback process.

Analysis of the feedback document

- All feedback will be kept confidential. The advisors will not share the self-rating forms, or those of your peers, with anyone else. It is important to the mission of DECA that the 360-degree feedback remains developmental and non-threatening.

- The self-rating will be compiled and the results will be placed in the Life Styles Circumplex. This document will show you, based on your responses, your styles of orientation, needs, leadership styles, and different character traits.

- The peer ratings will be compiled together as a whole; therefore, no one will be able to discern what any one individual had evaluated. With a compilation of five people, a good analysis should show some similar patterns in behaviors and lifestyles.

- The analysis will be completed one step further to highlight the differences between the self-rating and the peer ratings.

- During the feedback meeting, all information will be provided in the order previously noted. The DECA officer will have the chance to question or comment at any time during the process.

Developmental action plans

- Based on the feedback received, every DECA officer will be required to complete a developmental action plan.

- Each student will have one week to write the plan, which will include an analysis of the 360-degree feedback process and goal setting for the future. The officer will meet back with the advisor to share the plan, discuss the process, and display the goals that will be set.

- These plans will be kept on file, confidentially, with the advisor who conducted the feedback process.

Follow-up Feedback

- At the conclusion of the fall 360-degree feedback session, each student will be expected to work towards the goals identified, as each person will be expected to be accountable to those areas for improvement.

- The process will continue in the spring session of the school year.

- Throughout the school year, officers are encouraged to work with advisors to continually strive for personal and professional success.

<u>Conducting the Rating</u>

Initially, each DECA officer will be required to meet with an advisor before the 360-degree feedback process begins to ensure that all questions have been answered and the officer is comfortable with the process. The agenda for the preliminary meeting is as follows:

- Review the purpose and rationale of 360-degree feedback. Identify and discuss any concerns or issues with the process.

- Provide the officer with the self-rating packet. Discuss the importance of honesty and fairness. The advisor and officer will review the directions of the self-rating packet.

- The officer will choose four other officers to provide feedback for them, as well as one advisor of Kimberly High School DECA. In a brief discussion, the officer will provide rationale as to why s/he chose those individuals and identify any concerns with these peer raters.

- The student will receive the introductory letter and peer evaluation packets. Within a three-day period, the student will gain permission from raters, provide an informative introduction letter to the other raters (Doc 3.2), as well as the rating packer, and answer any questions.

(Doc 5.2)

Sample introduction memorandum for peer evaluators

TO: (Name of raters)

FROM: (Name of DECA officer) **write initials here**
                  (Name of DECA advisor), DECA Advisor

DATE: (Provide date)

RE: 360-degree feedback packet

In order to fully develop as a professional and leader, it is important to obtain honest insight from respected colleagues and supervisors. The DECA organization is utilizing 360-degree feedback as a developmental tool to allow the DECA officers to learn more each other's personal strengths and weaknesses. The process involves a self-evaluation and the cross examination of input from other people.

Attached please find a Life Styles Inventory from Human Synergistics, International. The form has 240 different characteristics in which to draw insight. When finished, please seal in an envelope and place in (DECA advisor's) mailbox in the staff workroom. We ask that the completed form to be turned in by (two weeks from memorandum date).

Thank you so much for your time and willingness to help young professionals grow and learn.

- The advisor will share with the officer the following timeline for the 360-degree feedback process:

o   The officer will have one week to complete the self-rating packet and must return the completed version, in a sealed envelope, to the advisor.

o   The other raters are provided with two weeks to complete the assessment.

o   The advisor will use two weeks after the receipt of rating sheets to compile and analyze the results.

o   The feedback and analysis will be shared with the officer at the stated date.

Once the advisors receive all six of the Life Styles Inventory forms back from participants, compilation and analysis may begin. The self-rating data is compiled and placed on the Life Styles Circumplex. Utilizing the profile supplements provided Human Synergistics, comparative data will be retrieved based upon the numerical value of the Life Styles Inventory and cross referenced by traits. The five peer evaluations will be averaged into one set of numbers and will follow the same process as the self-rating.

The advisor will then take the numeric values of the rating forms and shade in the appropriate numbers in the proper trait category on the Life Styles Circumplex. This document serves as a visual aid for both advisor and officer to identify the differences between self-perception and the perceptions of peers. Once these differences and similarities are noted, analysis can begin to take place. The profile supplements will help the analysis, and although the students will receive the same packet of information, it allow for the "why" to be delivered to the students. The students may either not know what the feedback really means or know what to do with the information; therefore, it is imperative that the profile is identified early and considered heavily before providing the feedback to the officers.

Delivering 360-Degree Feedback (Analysis of the results)

The feedback meeting is extremely sensitive in nature, and must be treated so. The results should be given to the officer in a quiet setting, free of distractions. All efforts should be made to ensure that the officer is comfortable. The feedback meeting will follow this agenda:

- Discussion of the 360-degree process. Insight about how the officer felt the process was conducted. Officer predictions about the self-evaluations.

- The advisor will share the results of the self-evaluation. The advisor will share the analysis, question regarding the pros and cons of each area, and discuss the implications of the self-evaluation.

- The student will have the opportunity to share any feelings or insights about the self-evaluation.

- The advisor will question the officer regarding the predictions about the peer evaluations.

- The advisor will share the results of the peer evaluation. The advisor will share the analysis, question regarding the pros and cons of each area, and discuss the implications of the peer evaluation.

- The student will have the opportunity to share any feelings or insights about the peer evaluation.

- Discussion about the similarities and differences between the self and peer evaluations.

- The advisor will provide the officer with the developmental action plan, as well as a description of the plan's purpose and a timeline for completion.

In the feedback meeting, the results will be shared and the student will have an opportunity to provide verbal feedback. At the conclusion of the meeting, the student will be given a self-evaluation form and a developmental plan worksheet to complete. The advisor and the student will meet again to discuss further self-analysis, review the self-evaluation form, and review the developmental plan. The review of the developmental plan will include the areas of strength and improvement, manners in which to improve, and an action plan in which to implement the goals.

<u>Development Plans</u>

Each student will be responsible for creating a development plan at the conclusion of the 360-degree feedback analysis. Students will have one-week to complete the developmental action plan: enough time for the students to self-reflect on the information learned, but not too much time to forget about the evaluation and its personal impact.

The officer will meet with the advisor one week after the feedback was given and will present to the advisor the developmental action plan. (Doc 5.3)

(Doc 5.3)

Officer Developmental Action Plan

360-Degree Feedback for DECA Officers

Name _____

What are your strongest areas of strength in the self-description?

What are your strongest areas of strength in the description by others?

What does this tell you about yourself? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

What are your largest areas for improvement in the self-description?

What are your largest areas for improvement in the description by others?

What does this tell you about yourself? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Are you more people-oriented or task-oriented?

What can you do to capitalize on your strengths and improve your weaknesses, based on orientation?

As identified in the self-description, what are three highest styles and three lowest styles?

(Highest)   (Lowest)

What can you do to capitalize on your strengths and improve your weaknesses, based on styles?

As identified in the description by others, what are the three highest styles and three lowest styles?

(Highest)   (Lowest)

What can you do to capitalize on your strengths and improve your weaknesses?

How do the self-descriptions coincide with the descriptions by others?

At this point you will need to set goals for improvement for the next four months. Make sure that your goals are SMART (simple, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely)
Goal #1

This goal will be attained by this date _____.
I will know that I have achieve my goal when _____.

Goal #2

This goal will be attained by this date _____.
I will know that I have achieve my goal when _____.

Goal #3

This goal will be attained by this date _____.
I will know that I have achieve my goal when _____.

Please refer to your Self-Development Guide. Complete the worksheets on pages 70-73.

Follow-up of 360-Degree Feedback

The 360-degree feedback process will require an on-going relationship between the DECA advisor and officer. After the process has been completed and the developmental action plan has been put into place, it is the responsibility of the officer to work towards the identified goals and the role of the advisor is to provide guidance along the way. With encouragement to help achieve the goals, it may also become necessary for the advisor to reprimand the officer if s/he has gotten off-track. Since the behavior changes will not take place immediately, patience must be lent to both the officer and advisor.

Recommendations

Since the program will be implemented as a pilot program for the first few years, the researcher recommends tracking the results of the 360-degree feedback system for at least five years. During this tracking phase, any positive or negative contributions will be documented and analyzed. Once 360-degree feedback has been in place for the recommended five-year period, discussions can then determine if the ideal evaluative format has been achieved, or if further research into evaluation methods is necessary. It would be beneficial for the researcher to study the long-term effects of 360-degree feedback on leadership development and teamwork.

The results will be shared with other marketing education teacher-coordinators at various conferences and via publications. Based upon the information learned throughout the study, the researcher feels that the benefits of 360-degree feedback, as well as the case study results of Kimberly DECA, should be shared with other professionals. The researcher will provide professional, informative presentations at the National Career

Development Conference for the audience of advisors and students leaders. Another

conference where 360-degree feedback will be shared is at the annual Marketing

Education Conclave. This conference draws secondary and post-secondary marketing

instructors from all over the United States.

Ideally, the researcher would then create a 360-degree feedback device for the

DECA organization to be used specifically for the student officers. The recreation of the

rating forms could provide more accurate insight for the officers regarding the actual role

in which they are providing leadership. In an entrepreneurial venture, the researcher feels

that it would be profitable to, after the pilot of the DECA rating sheets, make the specific

360-degree feedback for DECA officers available for sale to other organizations within

the international marketing education community.

In yet further applications, other student organizations within the school setting,

as well as teachers, could be included in 360-degree feedback process. The inclusion of

these individuals could provide the developmental platform for students and teachers to

strive for higher personal achievement.

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