CUSTOMISED SOLUTIONS

Thornhill specialises in creating customised solutions for clients that meet their unique requirements.

The blend of psychology, software development, and administration expertise in a small team allows Thornhill to listen closely to the needs of clients and create highly customised solutions. This, together with our experience with 360° questionnaires, makes us well-placed to help you design a questionnaire and report that will best assist participants, while avoiding the common pitfalls that can lead to obscure or misleading results.

A Thornhill consultant will assist you to identify whether and how a 360° questionnaire can meet your requirements and, if so, whether to use an existing questionnaire, adapt it, or create a new questionnaire. If you would like to adapt our standard questionnaires or create a new questionnaire based on your company's competencies and current priorities, a consultant would be happy to advise you on the selection and design of suitable questions and report formats.

Different question item formats permit different kinds of feedback, and the feedback reports are designed to help the reader interpret the results and address important developmental areas identified in the report.

We offer a range of different formats that can be applied for custom questionnaires, for example:

- **Likert scales** – this scale is familiar and allows for scoring and comparison with oneself and others. We have found that negative Likert-type question items do not work, even when they are expressed as observable behaviours.
- **Sliding scales** - we have created sliding scales between two good options that represent different styles or orientations, and this scale option can be incorporated into your questionnaire and report if it is appropriate for your specific needs.
- **Text -** we include comment boxes because comments provide insight into what lies behind the ratings. Some clients focus on comments, with relatively few general questions for rating; or each question can be followed by a comment box. We find that asking specific questions for the comments elicits more useful feedback than simply inviting "comments".

In addition, we have a range of different report formats:

- **Graphs and tables** - the items in the graphs and tables are ranked in order from those rated most highly by raters at the top, so that participants can see easily which are the resources that they can draw on to be most effective. The table 'Relative Strengths and Development Areas' lists all the relevant items for the participant's convenience.
- **Range** – some questions may have a wide range between the highest and lowest rating for those items. The range helps the participant to consider what behaviour leads to particular groups or individuals experiencing him/her differently.

- **Group average ratings** - certain sections of the report display an average rating for all responses received in the group of which the participant is a member – usually colleagues in their organisation. This rating can be used to compare a participant's performance against the average result obtained for the group.

These are a few examples. The Thornhill development team can create a variety of new question items and report formats to meet your specific needs. We can also include the results from other questionnaires (e.g. psychometric tests administered in your organisation) in the final customised report.

IMPORTANCE VS COMPETENCE

This graph plots the importance of each competency for your job against your proficiency in that area. The quadrants of the graph show areas where you are leveraging your strengths in your current role, areas where you should concentrate on developing your competencies to better suit your role, areas where you have strengths not currently utilised which could benefit from restructuring your role, and areas which are not relevant to your current strengths or role.
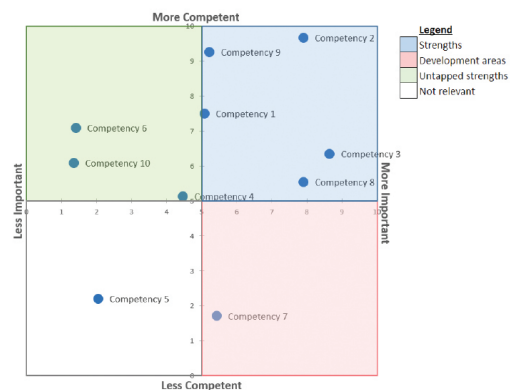
Questionnaires, emails and reports can be branded with your logo, and worded to fit into your leadership development project.

We will also discuss how you intend to provide the feedback, assist if required with ensuring that the process is supportive and helpful to the participants, and then look together at the practical implementation.

Due to the highly customisable nature of our questionnaire administration system, we can host and administer feedback instruments of all varieties, such as customer feedback, or surveys. We can also manage processes using your own customised feedback instruments.

SURVEYS

Thornhill offers the option of running online surveys which allow raters to provide feedback on an organisation instead of an individual. These surveys could provide feedback on a number of topics, such as organisational climate, transformation processes, or services.

PULSE

We also offer a short ongoing survey for organisations.

Pulse provides companies with a monthly check on the health of their organisation, by having all employees respond to a very short online questionnaire. This provides a quick check ("taking the pulse") on risk factors, including business risk, governance failures, and staff morale, thus enabling further investigation if a potential risk is revealed.

The system is ideal for industries where the majority of employees are computer-literate and respondents have online access. Even if a number of staff do not have online access, those who do will provide management with insight into most risk factors. This limitation on the extent of the pulse-taking is balanced by the ease of administration and immediacy of the information obtained.

Advantages of the online administration:
- Cost effective
- No limit on the number of raters. Instead of sampling, the company can poll the entire staff list.
- Results are available shortly after the project is closed because the responses are captured directly in the database
- Items can be added or altered easily
- Employee confidence in the confidentiality of the system is enhanced because it is offered by an external company.

The format can be customised, and could be as follows:
1. The Thornhill platform automatically sends a monthly email to all staff, asking them to click on a URL in the email
2. The URL takes them directly to a questionnaire allocated uniquely to Pulse in this company for this month
3. Depending on the level of trust in the process, staff may be asked to identify themselves in order to allow for follow-up of those who do not respond. This also facilitates obtaining a cross-section of views in different departments, in effect providing a continual mini-climate survey.
4. The staff are then presented with a few carefully constructed questions. As this is a monthly pulse, and therefore potentially irritating, there should be as few questions as possible – ideally five or six.

5. At the end of the questionnaire are two comment boxes for those who choose to amplify their multiple-choice responses. The first box is anonymous. Raters are guaranteed that their comments would not be traced back to them. The second box has their name and email attached, so that someone in management can get back to them for further information.
6. The information is collated into a report, highlighting any risks identified, and using graphs to show trends and comparisons.
7. It is recommended that management include a follow-up response to the previous month's Pulse in each new Pulse questionnaire so that employees gain confidence in the value of completing the survey.

The questionnaire could begin with two general statements of satisfaction, as an early-warning system to pick up trends in organisational climate. The questions could then move to specific risk factors, which would need to be customised for the company. One could also include questions about governance, safety and business risk. There is an option to include a small number of additional questions that vary each month and allow specific issues to be investigated.

RECURRING QUESTIONS
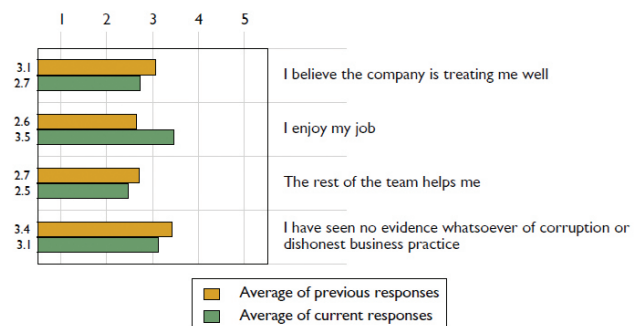
The first three questions would then be core questions and repeated each month, and then we suggest adding two questions which vary month by month. Certain questions could be repeated on a quarterly basis. The feedback is presented clearly in a report, highlighting risks, showing trends and comparisons, and includes comments from raters.

HOSTING

The Thornhill platform is hosted on our server. Our multi-rater feedback system is flexible so questionnaires can be seamlessly integrated with your own internet site, while retaining the security and confidentiality of storing the feedback on Thornhill's server.

Improving performance through feedback