



Improve Your 9-Box with a Two-Pronged Approach that Works

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Many organizations use a 9-box as part of their leader assessment process. A typical 9-box assessment is a three-by-three grid. The x-axis indicates performance, and the y-axis is an assessment of future potential. Performance and potential are the two essential aspects of an effective talent management system: leaders have to perform on the job now, and HR must know which leaders have potential to move up to higher Role Levels in the future.

Performance

High Performing Systems, Inc. (HPS), defines performance as a function of motivation, competencies and resources. If any of those components is missing, performance won't be at the highest possible level. Competencies can be improved through training and development. For example, front-line supervisors need basic leader competencies such as communication, conflict resolution, etc., for working directly with a team to accomplish goals. When leaders receive training to develop competencies, they increase their overall performance.

Potential

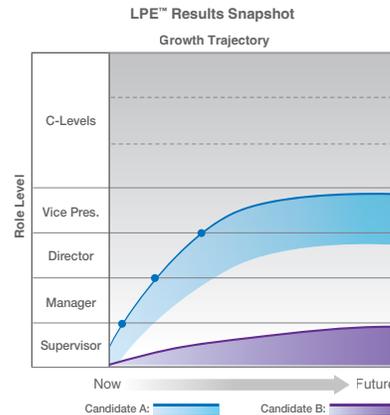
One of the biggest challenges to using a 9-box effectively is that most organizations do not have an objective, validated process to determine a leader's potential. Many talent review processes are based on an evaluation of leaders' past performance. Many talent management teams often rely on guesses and hopes that past performance will equate to future potential. However, when pressed on the issue, most talent managers have anecdotal evidence to show that past or current performance does not necessarily predict future success. They have many examples of times when they've promoted a leader beyond his/her capability. Yet many organizations still assign leaders to a "high potential" group without validating whether they can truly succeed at the next Level.

To rate potential accurately on the 9-box model, organizations must have an objective measurement of what potential really means. Each Role Level in an organization requires specific Innate Abilities and competencies. Once an analysis has been completed to determine the Role Level requirements, each leader should be assessed and compared to the requirements. In addition, the assessment must reveal growth trajectory to identify how high a leader can advance and when. This process

ensures an accurate and objective assessment of a leader's true future potential.

Putting It All Together—Two Steps to Success

Organizations can improve their 9-box process by focusing on its basic components of performance and potential. **Step One (Performance)** includes training and competency development to raise the performance level of all employees. HPS clients use the **High Performance Leadership System™**—the only completely integrated and sequential leader development training system available. Building from front-line leader competencies in the Level I training in a sequential process all the way to the CEO Role Level, the HPS training system provides the competency development that leaders need to excel on the job.



The LPE identifies which candidates are a match for a specific Role now and will pinpoint their growth trajectory/transitions within a 2-year timeframe. For example, Candidate A has the potential to be successful in higher Roles, while Candidate B is best suited to the current Role.

Step Two (Potential) involves using a scientifically-validated assessment like the **Leadership Potential Equation™ (LPE™)** to clearly identify high potentials and align their talents to an organization over time. HPS clients use the LPE to assess employees and candidates at all Role Levels; identify current ability and future potential (for the 9-box or other talent management needs); identify training and development needs, and more.

Appropriate use of training and assessments as part of your 9-box model will ensure that your organization raises the leadership bar with every hire and every promotion. As a result, you will have the right leaders in the right roles at the right time—with the training they need—to take advantage of potential and increase performance.

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