ACCENDO

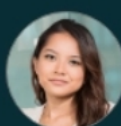# The Ultimate Guide
to Identifying, Managing,
and Developing High Potentials

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81%
Predicted Fit Score

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Introduction

People are an organisation's most valuable asset but high potentials (HiPos) are an even more valuable asset. Research shows that a HiPo is [91% more valuable and has a higher likelihood to exert 21% more effort](#) than non-high potential employees. Why are the stakes so high?

Organisations with strong leaders have a [higher likelihood of showing twice the revenue and profit growth.](#) Despite being acknowledged by many organisations worldwide as a contribution to its future leaders, [a HiPo program is statistically more likely to fail than succeed](#) – at least 50% of HR managers lack confidence in their HiPo programs and 5 in 6 HR managers are dissatisfied with the program's results.

Experience has taught Chief Learning Officers that they are better off developing a strong talent base internally as much as possible. It is also more affordable, gives them room to motivate and retain key staff, and reduces the risk of unknown hiring.

High potential employees are the future leaders of an organisation and should be identified early and developed effectively. Successfully building their leadership skills and competencies can give any organisation a competitive advantage over its competitors in the long run.

1.1 What is a "High Potential" (HiPo) Employee?

High potential employees are those among your workforce who demonstrate a high propensity for learning and growth within a current role, as well as the potential to fill an expanded role. Also known as HiPos, these employees are highlighted as staff with key qualities that portray them as highly beneficial contributors to the organisation, the business, and its future success.

HiPos have the ability to take on greater responsibilities or assume tasks and critical operations that are associated with leadership. HiPo employees may excel within their roles but it is important to note that they exhibit managerial competencies which are not shared by every top employee in your organisation.

HiPo employees also have the ability of accelerated growth throughout their careers compared to their peers. Many often aspire to move into a senior role within the business and will plan to get there as quickly as possible. However, if HiPo employees feel that their intentions and talent are not recognised and nurtured, they will not hesitate to move on.

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1.2 Importance to Organisations

The real value of high potential employees can be seen when organisations review the output and results managed by a small portion of their staff. It is these vital few employees who contribute the greatest results that significantly increases as the roles become more complex.

The ability to identify HiPo employees is mutually beneficial for both the organisation and the employee. Distinguishing between HiPo and non HiPo employees can lead to growth for the business as well as the employee and their career. An important reason for this is to find people who will be effective senior managers within the business.

Identifying the right candidates will justify greater investment into their development and shape them to become effective future leaders. HiPo employees not only have potential in the future but they are also capable of greatly [increasing the productivity of a team's performance by as much as 15%!](#)

Recognising and encouraging high potential employees to be their best can benefit the organisation in many ways, including:

Recognising and encouraging high potential employees to be their best can benefit the organisation in many ways, including:

- High performance
- High employee engagement and commitment
- Skilled leadership talent
- Reduced turnover
- Enhanced productivity and profits

At the end of the day, the more high potential talent you attract, hire, and retain, the better it is for the future of the business and the culture of adaptability within the organisation.

1.3 Corporate Practices and Adoption

High potential employees can shape and lead an organisation into the future, but identifying and retaining high potential talent go beyond assigning a label or offering promotions.

The art of identifying high potential employees requires careful consideration and examination of who they are, what their motivations are, and the optimal path of development that unleashes their full potential. As you set out to develop a comprehensive HiPo program, it will be beneficial to have some best practices in place.

Aligning strategic priorities

Your overall business objectives will ultimately guide where you want to place your HiPos and how they get there. The growth of the organisation determines the need for and the availability of leadership positions.

In that case, your HiPo development needs to be aligned with the needs of the business and given full support. It is critical to ensure that you have the support and buy-in for your HiPo program from top management for your HiPo program to be a success.

Selecting candidates as a group effort

As mentioned above, once your hiring managers and other departmental leaders are familiar with your criteria, it is easier for them to keep an eye out for HiPos and make recommendations for their advancement and development.

Regular check-ins with direct reports are the best time to give feedback, discuss goal-setting, appraise performance, and evaluate growth potential. With that in mind, your managers can nominate their direct reports to the HiPo program. At the same time, your employees should also feel empowered and encouraged to nominate themselves into the HiPo program.

Leveraging education and training

Effective HiPo programs should help to build both theoretical and practical knowledge. This will involve a combination of practical expertise, on-the-job training, and learning opportunities.

Organisations can use a strategic approach to workforce education where they have the ability to develop custom learning paths to prepare HiPos and groom them for leadership positions.

This approach does not only cater to a specific level of experience but it can also account for the different levels of experience and educational backgrounds that employees have.

Providing career outcomes and recognition

A quality that is shared by most HiPo employees is the desire to learn. Conducting a HiPo program provides the tangible and effective educational resources that equip HiPos with the expertise they need to continue growing.

Subsequently, HiPos will want to know that their time and effort spent during their training and education are worth the results. Organisations can do this by acknowledging their growth and achievements by rewarding your HiPo employees with recognition or a similar outcome.

HiPo Tools

2.1 Characteristics of HiPo Employees

According to The Harvard Business Review, HiPos consistently outperform their peer groups in a variety of settings and circumstances. While achieving these superior levels of performance, they also exhibit behaviours that reflect their organisations' cultures and values in an exemplary manner.

Additionally, they show a strong capacity to grow and succeed throughout their careers within an organisation – more quickly and effectively than their peer groups do. Yet, not all organisations take the time to identify their HiPos in a purposeful and organised manner, despite knowing that they could potentially be the next future leaders of the organisation.

High potential employees are an illustrious group of individuals, the rising stars in an organisation. How they are identified, developed, and retained will leave a huge impact on the organisation's long-term success and sustainability.

Identifying your HiPo employees

The first step to identifying HiPos is by observing them and seeing who has the management or supervisory skills necessary to lead a team in the right direction. There are certain criteria when it comes to this, including knowledge, reputation, and certainty. Other common traits include:

HiPo Characteristic	Descriptions
Initiative and desire to lead	HiPo employees are willing and able to take the reins, going above and beyond their job description to help fill the gaps in the organisation.
Entrepreneurial mindset	HiPos are forward-thinkers and are well-versed in all aspects of the business. They are always looking at the overall picture and will work towards supporting their teams when needed.

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Ability to make decisions and act on them	HiPos are employees who can make decisions and stick to them. It is important to have people who can do so and more importantly, when decisions need to be executed when needed.
Flexible in fast-paced environments	Most organisations today operate at warp speed. Thus, HiPos need to be flexible and able to adapt to changes as they come. They should be able to make quick changes when needed.
Committed and engaged	HiPos have an innate desire to learn and a curiosity to take the team to the next level. They love asking questions whether to clarify or to gain a deeper understanding of their tasks.
Foster positive relationships	HiPo employees who can develop positive and meaningful relationships to keep the team motivated and engaged are well-fitted for leadership roles.
Perform leadership duties	HiPo employees are people who need little to no direction as they are able to take a task and run with it. This means that you will spend less time guiding and supporting them along the way.
Highly talented in their jobs	HiPo employees are best equipped to be future leaders as they are always working the hardest to push themselves and their team members in the right direction.
Hungry for knowledge	HiPo employees demonstrate a hunger for continuous learning. They have the capacity to scan for new ideas, the cognitive capability to absorb them, and the strategic thinking ability that processes the information to formulate appropriate responses.
Consistently delivers results	HiPo employees earn the trust and respect of others by showing high levels of consistency and professionalism. They can be depended upon to keep their word and deliver results.

2.2 High Performance vs. High Potential

High potential versus high performance – why the difference matters. High performers are the backbone of any organisation. Roughly 80% of the growth of any organisation is achieved by 20% of its workforce. But the high performers don't just fall out of the sky. They start out as high potential employees.

So, why do many organisations still get it wrong – that a high performer is also a high potential employee? One of the problems is that managers are putting forward employees for a HiPo program without having a robust identification process in place. As a result, candidates are not being nominated for scientific reasons.

High performance	High potential
High performance refers to employees who excel in their current roles. They tend to set goals and crush them, such as exceeding their sales quarterly targets. These employees function well by themselves and have the innate ability to stay focused on the tasks at hand.	High potentials, or HiPos, refer to employees who excel in a group setting. They have the potential to be a strong asset when it comes to management roles. They have the necessary soft skills to learn the role and lead their teams toward attaining organisational goals.

Why are soft skills so important?

Soft skills are essential for employees working in a leadership role. Empathy allows leaders to connect with other employees and see situations from their perspectives. Enabling these future leaders to develop soft skills will help organisations in the long run.

A mistake that organisations tend to make is promoting high-performance employees when they should be promoting high potential employees. Almost 90% of high performers have difficulty adjusting to the higher levels of responsibilities required to lead. Mistaking high performers for high potentials can cost an organisation time, money, and even employees.

2.3 Tools to Identify, Develop, and Retain HiPo Employees

HiPo employees are individuals who always exceed their peer groups in various settings and circumstances. The work they do consistently mirrors your company's culture and values and the outputs they render are always of superior quality. They exhibit a solid and evident capacity to develop and succeed throughout the length of their careers. HiPo employees are built upon four inherent and intrinsic characteristics:

- **Catalytic learning capabilities**
- **Drive to exceed expectations**
- **A dynamic sensor in identifying opportunities and impediments**
- **A venturesome spirit**

With this in mind, it is important that organisations understand their business direction so they can define what kind of HiPos they will need to identify and achieve their strategy. Below are the four key criteria that HiPo employees display that organisations can take as a base and add on other criteria unique to their business strategy and direction.

Catalytic learning capabilities	The ability to formulate fresh and original ideas instead of working with pre-existing procedures and structures prove that HiPos are quick and efficient learners who apply their learnings in the creation and improvement of your company's operations.
Drive to exceed expectations	An individual's determination to do more than what is asked for, more than what is expected of him, and more than the bare minimum required enable this individual to exert his greatest effort and do the best he can – never settling for just enough and always aiming for way much more.
A dynamic sensor in identifying opportunities and impediments	HiPo employees understand that new ideas and possibilities come with impending risks and uncertainties. They rely on instincts that help them identify opportunities or impediments, and allow them to fully grasp certain situations, determine perfect timing, and grab every opportunity that comes.
A venturesome spirit	HiPo individuals have a great sense of self-worth that propels them to seek out opportunities that could potentially make a difference to the future and take risks for the discovery and exploration of new horizons. These add up to their boldness, certainty, and inventiveness.

If you are the kind of employer who uses their leadership 'gut feel' to identify, develop, and retain your HiPos, you might want to rethink your strategy. A more scientific approach involves a variety of assessment tools, such as the:

- **Personality profiling assessments**
- **Assessments and development centres**
- **High Performance Trait Indicator (HPTI)**
- **9-box grid**
- **360 feedback**

Personality Profiling Assessments

These assessments are used to evaluate employees for high potential, identify those with the character traits necessary for a particular role, and determine whether they are likely to excel within that role.

Establishing the benchmark in advance for HiPos within the organisation will enhance the efficacy of these tools. Prior to using personality assessments tools, it is imperative to establish the benchmark for HiPos within your organisation, people who:

- **Will perform well in a senior management role**
- **Have the ability to improve performance within the business sector**
- **Have the drive and determination to move to up the career ladder in your company**

At the same time, it is equally important to communicate this benchmark to the other staff and management teams. Prepare a structured criteria for promotion that is available to all and pick the key performance indicators, achievements, and behaviours that are likely to make someone suitable for promotion.

Assessments and Development Centres

Roleplays, simulations, group discussions, presentations, interviews, situational judgement tests, psychometric and aptitude tests are some activities of an assessment and development centre. On the one hand, assessment centres primarily match an employee to a particular role via a detailed analysis of various aspects required for job success.

On the other hand, development centres are used to develop employees by identifying their strengths and skill gaps. Used in tandem, they make excellent tools in identifying high potential employees.

High Performance Trait Indicator (HPTI)

The HPTI is another identification tool that assesses employees with prospective leadership abilities, identifies where their leadership strengths are, and determines areas for improvement. It was designed as an 'optimality' model with the assumption that certain personality traits are 'optimal' according to the requirements of a position. HPTI assessments can also help to:

Discover the next generation of leaders

Employers can use HPTI to discover their next generation of leaders and provide support to those who are already in those positions.

Boost self-awareness and resolve skills gaps

The assessment tool identifies those with strong leadership potential whom managers are able to select for leadership positions and pinpoint those suitable for fast tracking.

Increase employee retention

HPTI assists with employee retention by helping top candidates progress to more advanced leadership positions that suit their strengths.

9-Box Grid

Organisations use the 9-Box Grid as part of their succession planning process to evaluate an employee's current and potential level of contribution to the organisation.

Employers plot each employee on the grid by ranking both their performance and their potential. The intersection of the two determines the employee's current standing and where development may be required.

The grid can also be used to map current talent, identify potential leaders, and highlight strong performers who have low potential. However, this does not mean that these employees should be forgotten. A different approach might be required. As such, high performers with low potential would not be good candidates for a leadership development program.

360-Degree Feedback

More recently, it has come to the knowledge of organisations that the 360-degree feedback can also be a great tool for HiPo identification.

According to a survey conducted by Mettl, more than 30% of organisations have used a structured 360 feedback tool for their HiPo identification process. Organisations find its adoption easier for measuring potential as they are already using it for assessing employee performance.

360-degree feedback is a reliable and objective method of tracking employee performance as it is based on multiple feedback sources. When it comes to output, be transparent about team performance and offer training, support, and encouragement to those who don't meet their goals or objectives.

2.4 Best Practices

The long-term development and success of your organisation lie in the creation, identification, assessment, and cultivation of your top talents. Poorly created HiPo programs have unclear processes that can lead to dissatisfaction for the organisation and the HiPo employee. This, in turn, highlights the necessity of brushing up on the basics, continuous testing, and polishing of HiPo retention and development programs.

Here are our top three best practices you can engage in to help your HiPos reach their fullest potential.

Defining high potential employees

Your overall business objectives will ultimately guide where you want to place your HiPos and how they get there. Defining your HiPos begins with aligning their development with strategic priorities.

The growth of your organisation will also determine the availability of leadership positions and how your HiPo development will be integrated to support the business. Therefore, it is critical to have support and buy-in for your HiPo program from the hiring managers, other departmental leaders and those at the C-staff level.

Part of their job responsibility is to keep an eye out for HiPos and make recommendations for their advancement and development. Regular check-ins with your managers and direct reports are the best time to give feedback, discuss goal-setting, appraise performance, and evaluate growth potential. Once a HiPo has been determined, your managers can nominate their direct reports to the HiPo development program.

Understanding the needs of high potentials

HiPo employees are ambitious and continuously seek growth. For these reasons, they must be given the significant advancement and opportunities they need. Nurture your HiPos by extending past developmental and instructive programs with a broader focus on expanding their skills and capabilities, while also:

- **Developing them as future leaders**
- **Exposing them to points of view and processes**
- **Drawing in senior pioneers to assist in the expansion of the program**
- **Giving them first-hand experiences to advance comprehension and interdependent thinking**

Enhancing the programs intended for HiPos require your undivided attention on the following six vital areas that are central to meeting their unique needs and inclinations.

Charting career direction	HiPo employees need to have organisation voices and inputs to keep them engaged in the long run. Being future-focused and organised makes them curious about what's next in line. With this in mind, it is quite obvious that aiding them with a career outline that distinguishes their career progress, task expectations, and development opportunities will be of great help.
Effective challenges	Providing frequent and effective challenges to HiPo employees will pave the way for greater learning experiences which will, in turn, sustain their passion and enthusiasm, as well as quenching their thirst for greater achievements.
Boundless entry into self-paced advancing tools	Allowing HiPo employees to engage in constant challenges, gain additional information and skills, and undertake courses of action at their own pace will assist in the development of their ability to take initiatives.
Honest feedback	Giving honest and detailed feedback regarding the performance of a high potential employee will help in keeping and maintaining the momentum of high potential performance.
Constant exposure to higher-ups	You should always ensure there is an atmosphere that supports intellectual conversations and helpful exchanges between your HiPos and the more experienced and wiser company executives. The knowledge and wisdom introduced into the young and fresh minds of HiPos will have a profound and invaluable effect on the individual as well as your company's growth.
Network openings	Solid connections within and outside of your company will provide your high potential employees with a conclusive edge – a bigger pool of assets, more prominent access to certain people, and an increase in influence to explore office legislative issues.

Either way, learning and development allow them to develop skills and earn credentials that equip them for the next level. This approach also accounts for the differing levels of experience and educational backgrounds that your HiPo employees have.

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Giving your high potential employees what they want

A quality that is shared the most among your HiPo employees is the strong desire to learn. Your HiPo program needs to support this by providing tangible and effective educational resources that equip HiPos with the expertise they need for continuous growth.

Having said that, your HiPos will also want to see discernible results from their training and education. Tangible career outcomes and recognition further acknowledge their growth and achievements, while including career pathing and mentorships to your HiPo program can allow your HiPos to follow and manage their own development goals.

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Managing Your HiPos

3.1 Key Challenges

When it comes to high potential employees, the primary goal of the manager is to challenge them, provide them with opportunities, and give them next-level exposure. This differs from what most moderate potential employees receive, where the goals might only be to provide motivation, a variety in their projects, and the recognition so that they know they are valued.

In order to help high potential employees succeed, it is critical that the manager first identifies their potential prior to providing the personalised growth and learning opportunities for them to develop and reach their fullest potential. Here are some challenges that come with managing your HiPo employees and how to overcome them.

Challenge 1: HiPos are naturally results-driven

HiPo employees are generally and naturally results-driven and will gladly take the lead on projects and initiatives. Allowing them to take the lead will promote ownership and accountability while encouraging the leadership abilities required to lead teams and larger team projects.

Challenge 2: HiPos are motivated by challenges

HiPo employees are often motivated by the feeling of "newness" and challenges. That is why it is important to regularly set new goals for them to strive towards. These goals should also be regularly assessed and reassessed for relevance and level of stretch.

Challenge 3: HiPos are energised by the unknown

HiPo employees grow by seizing opportunities they are not quite ready for. They have the ability to problem-solve, innovate, and cope with ambiguity. As a manager, providing the right opportunities allows them to "level up" and the right support ensures that if they fail, the impact is not significant enough to impact the business or the organisation.

Challenge 4: HiPos are passionate to learn and succeed

HiPo employees are highly motivated to learn and succeed and giving them opportunities to learn outside your organisation will encourage them to keep growing in their roles. Never ever underestimate the power of reading as a means to broaden their knowledge. Encourage them to read research and build this habit into their everyday lives.

Challenge 5: HiPos are galvanised towards future growth

This strategy is often overlooked but it is one of the best ways to help HiPo employees grow into future roles. Allow for "next-level" exposure and groom them for your role. Involve them in meetings, shadow you on a strategic project, or have them go in your place if you are unable to attend.

Providing mentorship can also help accelerate their growth and allow them to receive different perspectives from a leader outside of their immediate team or function. Mentorship is less formal and less structured than management and more about coaching and advice than it is feedback and direction.

3.2 Why HiPos Tend to Leave

High potential employees are the cream of the crop. They can accomplish in a few hours what it takes others a day to do. They are fast learners, insightful, quick, and creative. Yet, they are also capable of feeling restless and easily bored. Their performance may be high but so is their attrition rate. Why does this happen?

According to Microsoft, over [40% of the global workforce consider(ed) leaving their employer](#) in 2021 because the principles for retaining HiPo employees are the same regardless of where they worked – in an office or elsewhere. And it's not as simple as giving them a better paycheck.

So, what could be the possible reason that your top talents have thoughts of quitting? Let's take a look at the top three reasons why they choose to leave.

Reason 1: Lack of career opportunities

A 2016 report by Aon titled Engaging and Retaining Top Performers says that "perceptions of career opportunities are important drivers of engagement and retention for all employees, but that importance is amplified for your high performers."

One of the main reasons HiPo employees leave is because of a lack of career development or advancement. By nature, HiPo employees need to see growth in an organisation, either professionally or personally. Organisations can fail in this area in two ways – (1) not actively building a career path for their HiPo employees, or (2) not communicating learning opportunities properly.

Studies have shown that the value of a HiPo employee grows linearly with the job level. Hence, developing and communicating a clear learning and advancement plan for HiPos lets them know that the more they grow, the more value they bring to the organisation. When HiPo employees no longer find that the job is a positive match for them, they will look for opportunities outside the organisation.

Reason 2: Lack of recognition

HiPo employees tend to take great pride in their work, put a mark of excellence on what they do, and go the extra mile. Managers who become accustomed to this level of work from a HiPo employee can sometimes forget to express gratitude and recognise the individual on a regular basis. This can make them feel unappreciated and undervalued.

A HiPo employee is often a top performer as well, and according to the Harvard Business Review, top performers can be 400% more productive than the average performers. Top performers are well aware of how much more work they are doing compared to everyone else, but are you aware?

In addition to recognition for outstanding contributions, HiPo employees also want feedback. Organisations may assume that no one craves negative feedback, but your HiPos will want to know what they can do differently or improve, and they appreciate the positive and constructive feedback.

Reason 3: Lack of coaching, supervision, and mentoring

Let's say that your organisation has identified the high potential employees. Now comes the part where you help them grow and develop by bringing them to the next level with continual, complex dialogue. Managers need to stretch, challenge, and coach their HiPo employees and make sure their assignments push them beyond their comfort zones.

The Willis Towers Watson 2016 Global Talent Management and Rewards Survey highlighted that "despite the fact that supervision remains one of the top engagement factors in Singapore, only 65% of employees said their immediate managers or supervisors treated them with respect, while 38% said that managers help employees with career planning and decisions, and 44% coached them to improve their performance."

Managers will have to work with senior business leaders and HR to clarify assessments, identify opportunities, and coordinate possible moves. Yet, all these require a lot of time and effort from the managers, which managers are already discovering that they have neither. Eventually, they hold on to their HiPos instead of helping them along the development pathway. Unfortunately for them, HiPos can interpret this as a lack of support and will be inclined to look elsewhere.

3.3 How to Design a Complete HiPo Strategy

High potential employees demonstrate value through drive, accomplishments, and vision. They maintain high expectations of themselves and others. As a result, they contribute to a high performance culture.

Prior to engaging in a HiPo, first, you need to understand them and their motivations. They are more energised by being helpful and providing support to their colleagues, gaining visibility and recognition from their organisation. They are more engaged with risk and change compared to their peers. Implementing a multi-faceted HiPo development program can help them reach their full potential and, in turn, generate real business results.

Step 1: Identify your successors for talent readiness to strengthen your succession pipeline in an agile manner.

Step 2: Assess them through a range of assessment tools on a talent intelligence platform that incorporates data, science, and technology.

Step 3: Analyse talent insights to incorporate all consolidated data across the company to sustainably deploy your HiPo program.

Accendo's Hi-Potential Framework Model provides an indicator that can help you gauge the extent to which a talent can be stretched in terms of capabilities, agility, and drive. Talents who score high are more likely to demonstrate high potential and can be stretched further to handle greater challenges.:

Capability	• Innovative Mindset • Entrepreneurial Spirit • Decisive, Bold, and Fast Actions • Digital Champion
Agility	• Catalytic Learning Agility • Cognitive Ability
Driver	• Purpose • Resilience • Passion for Excellence

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Combine behavioural insights and cognitive data

Our framework model uses behavioural, motivational, and cognitive assessments to measure a potential HiPo candidate's working style, key motivators, agility, problem-solving abilities, and decision making skills. All these insights are then accumulated and presented in an extensive and detailed manner for organisations to accurately and systematically select their successors.

Quickview

Stretchability Gauge

The stretchability gauge indicates the extent to which a talent can be stretched in terms of capabilities, agility, and self driven. Talents who score high are more likely to demonstrate high potential and can be stretched further to handle greater complexities.

YOU

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

This range shows a low stretchability score, where you be more suited to focus on your current scope of work. You may also require learning at a smaller, bite sized pace, and will generally require more help, guidance and external motivation.

This range shows a moderate stretchability, where you are able to take on some roles that are beyond your comfort zone, learn things at a moderate pace, and may occasionally require some motivation for some targets.

This range shows that you have a high stretchability, and are likely able to take on expanded responsibilities with greater complexity, able to learn things faster, as well as being self-driven to achieving set targets.

Capabilities · 4/10

Innovative Mindset	4/10
Entrepreneurial Spirit	3/10
Act Fast, Decisive, and Bold	6/10
Digital Champion	5/10
Social Acumen	4/10

Drivers · 8/10

Purpose	9/10
Resilience	4/10
Passion for Excellence	10/10

Agility · 9/10

| Catalytic Learning Agility | 9/10 |
| Cognitive Ability | 8/10 |

Most driven by:

| 10 | 9 | 8 |
| Influence Possibilities | Working Environment | Recognition of Performance |

Least driven by:

| 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Rate of Change | Fun While Working | Fairness |

Monitor, manage, and retain your HiPos

Our dashboard and reporting allows for real-time tracking and monitoring of assessment progress. The dashboard provides you with an overall view of the scores of your HiPo candidate pool, allowing you to "slice and dice" the data points to simulate multiple scenarios.
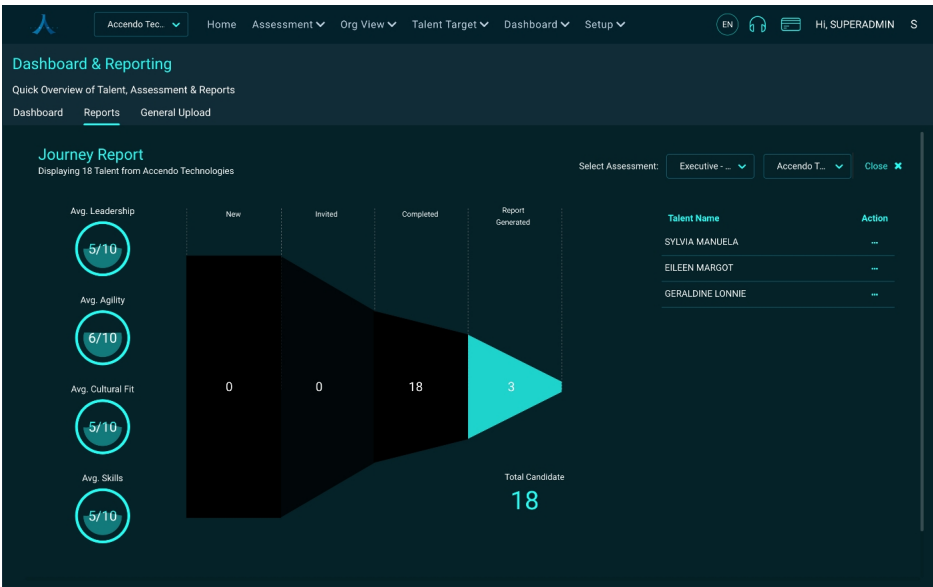
Simultaneously, you can use the 9-box grid as an evaluation method to assess your pool of talents based on the selection of parameters to be measured.
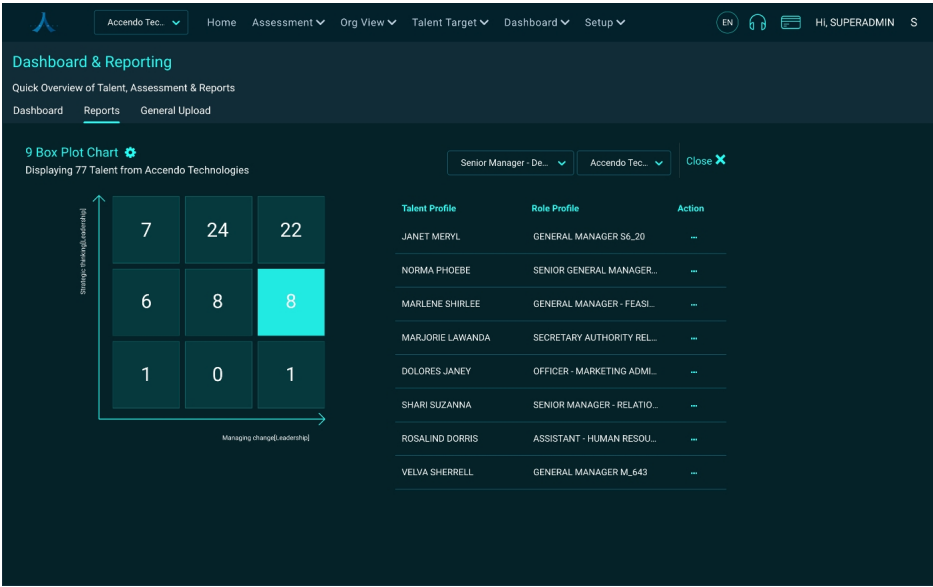
3.4 HiPo Identification in the Digital Era

The role of high potential (HiPo) employees in building a better tomorrow for organisations has never been more important than it is today. As digitisation drives more automation and computing, 75% of leaders believe that technology will significantly change the nature of current rules and will also demand new skills from talent.

In the words of [Marshall Goldsmith](#), an American executive leadership coach and author, alluding to leading enterprises of the 20th century, "What got them here will not get them there."

McKinsey estimates that not more than a third of major companies would survive the wave in the next 25 years to come. There is a pressing need for companies to remodel themselves into an enterprise of tomorrow; one that requires them to foresee market opportunities, constantly investing in HiPo development and harvesting its potential.

Assessing and identifying HiPos

The debate between performance versus potential has always been around but the advent of technology has altered the criteria for HiPo identification. There are four critical P's that a company will have to consider when identifying a HiPo – Potential, Performance, Personality, and Perception.

Competencies for HiPos to thrive in the digital age

HiPo employees typically possess the following traits:

- **Aspiration for taking on responsibilities and challenges**
- **Ability to effectively and efficiently apply skills to positively impact work outcomes**
- **Commitment to advance with an intent to stay with the organisation**

But in today's digital age, HiPos are expected to perform exceptionally well in extraordinary circumstances. Agile learning is a key requirement in a list of skills for HiPos today. It is not a new one but when talking about the digital age, this particular skill is now topping the charts.

Another competency required for HiPos to succeed today is creativity and innovation. As AI continues to take over the corporate world, creative ideas are something that comes from humans and are needed by organisations to facilitate change. Other competencies include:

- **Problem-solving**
- **Change management**
- **Data analytics**
- **Emotional intelligence**
- **Social media skills**

Organisational shift to developing a sustainable ecosystem for HiPos

After identifying your HiPos, it is essential to create a well-crafted sustainable environment for them. The first thing to do is build a culture of personalised learning and customise specific learning programmes for each employee.

Other options include assigning business critical projects, cross-functional exposure, learning through social media, inter-organisational learning, and opportunities to interact with industry experts and thought leaders.

Motivating HiPos in the digital age

High potential employees who are motivated are always willing to do more and be better. At least 89% of companies believe in dynamic career experiences (vertically and horizontally) across the organisation, 67% talk about empowering their HiPo employees to do new work, and 75% say that a focus on variety and flexibility keeps them motivated.

Other motivators include catalytic learning opportunities, career path transparency and accelerated growth, and the positive impact they are creating through their work.

Postscript: How to Identify, Develop & Retain HiPo Employees in the Post COVID Era and Hybrid Workplaces

Organisations have recognised that digital is going to be a big disruptor. Moreover, it is the post-COVID era in 2022 and the remote workforce is on the rise. A survey conducted by Upwork estimated that 23% of the US workforce (about 36.2 million) would be working remotely by 2025. This is an 87% increase from pre-pandemic levels.

Here are nine best practices you can follow to continue developing and retaining your high potential employees in a new and challenging work environment.

Understanding the remote HiPo workforce	HiPo employees are known to be highly educated, values engaging work, seeks wellness, prefers a flexible work schedule and autonomy, as well as access to good learning opportunities. It is imperative that companies develop a retention strategy that would keep HiPo employees motivated and inspired.
Traditional vs. remote workforce retention strategies	The aspirations of the HiPo workforce changes with the rise in remote working trends. As a result, companies need to revamp their HiPo management practices, building on these trends to drive initiatives and invest in digital platforms to sufficiently engage and retain this segment of the workforce.
Onboarding and role clarity	According to Gartner, one of the top engagement drivers for employees is seeing their work contribute to company goals. An employee's confidence at seeing their contributions to the success of the organisation will feel less anxious about their job security. The onboarding process is also critical to ensuring engagement of the remote workforce. Start with a robust pre-onboarding process and have continuous checkpoints over the first two weeks, and again at the later stages to continue taking feedback from HiPos.
Practise positive and continuous feedback	HiPos working fully remotely are likely to receive constructive and corrective feedback twice as often. Companies need to ensure that feedback received is two-way, more open, evidence-based, and forward-looking. Managers can set up touch points throughout the year to build accountability and help HiPos to develop adeptly.

Cultivate trust and emphasise outcomes	Another Gartner analysis found that two-fifths of HiPos working remotely want more self-directed work. Providing flexibility and focusing on output empowers teams to complete their assignments in their own way, creates greater clarity in what their role is, and helps retention by driving greater levels of engagement.
Rewarding and recognising your HiPos	Some companies may choose to recognise their HiPos for creativity and innovation, prioritising health and safety, showing compassion and care, maintaining productivity, or living company values. All are equally important in a remote or hybrid workplace.
HiPo learning and skill development	The need to keep HiPos engaged and invested is more crucial than ever today. As a result, companies should aim for the maximum flexibility in learning tools and processes, while incorporating real-work applications into learning processes to further strengthen employee development and engagement levels.
Enabling infrastructure	As companies build hybrid workforces, they need to ensure their HiPo employees are equipped with the right resources to ensure a smooth and seamless remote working and collaboration. Acknowledge that virtual communications are different and be mindful that they may be less comfortable and effective for some.
Encourage innovation	It is natural for employees to hesitate when trying new things during disruptive times. Here, managers can provide opportunities for incremental innovation or process improvements and offer options to share successes and safety for potential failures.

That is why organisations need to prepare in advance to ensure that they are able to identify, develop, and retain their HiPo workforce, even in different working environments. The future of work is hybrid, and as they focus on building a HiPo workforce for the future, they would also need to invest in ways to manage and engage the workforce, regardless of where they work.