



The high-potential **blind spot**

Ensure your high-potential programme doesn't miss the **people** that power future success





Future growth relies on your next creators, innovators, and leaders. Ensuring your high-potential programme doesn't miss the people that power future success means looking beyond what they can do today to what they are capable of tomorrow. As role expectations change rapidly, over-reliance on past performance to identify high potential can limit growth.

This guide clarifies the distinction between high performers and high-potential employees, revealing how a focus on the right indicators of future readiness can **strengthen** your talent pipeline.



High-potential (HiPo) employee identification is one of the most critical talent decisions leaders and HR professionals make – shaping the strength of the future leadership bench, the resilience of succession pipelines, and the organisation’s ability to adapt and compete.

When HiPo decisions are grounded in reliable, predictive data, companies can confidently invest in people who accelerate innovation, scale teams, and lead effectively through complexity.

When influenced by bias or missing a full view of the employee’s capabilities, organisations risk leadership gaps, stalled growth, costly turnover and misallocated development resources.

In a landscape where talent provides a competitive advantage, getting HiPo identification right becomes a foundational driver of organisational performance and long-term readiness.



REFERENCE LINK

Talogy’s latest research, [High Potential, High Impact](#) showcases the importance of HiPo programmes as a critical component of forward-thinking talent strategies and highlights the risks companies take by relying too heavily on employee past performance to determine future potential.



86% + 91%
of Leaders of HR Professionals

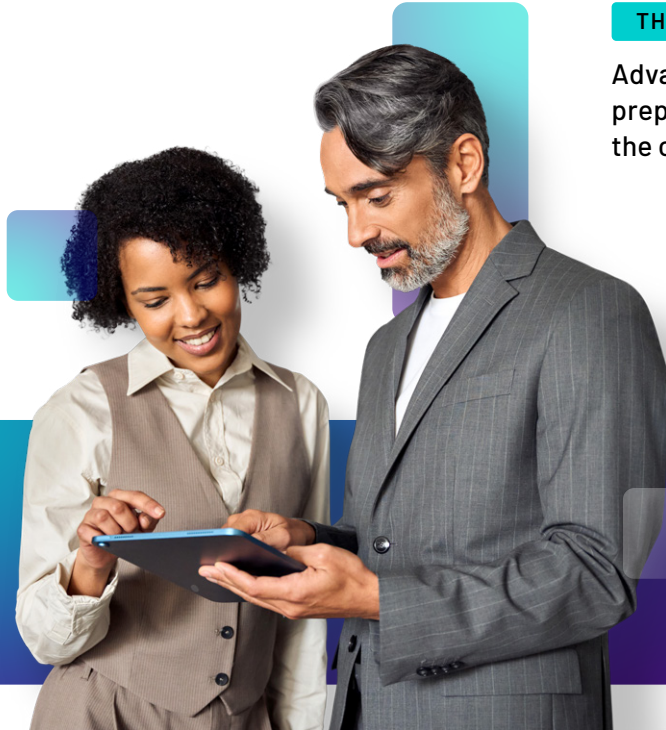
rely on performance ratings
and manager recommendations
as their main source of data to
support high-potential decisions

Although an input, performance is often subjective and provides a snapshot of how someone performs in their current role, not whether they can succeed in a higher-level role when faced with new and more complex challenges. Often HiPo identification is just the beginning of investment in development, succession planning, and career building, meaning more time and resources invested.

Manager recommendations can be subjective and inconsistent. Bias, limited visibility of capabilities, and organisational politics can determine who is selected as a high-potential employee when those that may have what it takes work behind the scenes or haven't had stretch assignments yet to demonstrate their potential and are missed.

THE RISK

Advancing strong individual contributors into roles they aren't prepared for, while the real high-potential talent – those with the capacity to grow and scale – goes unnoticed and unutilised.



Recognising how **high performance** differs from **high potential** highlights why current achievements alone can't predict future capabilities.

High performers consistently deliver results, but HiPo employees bring the adaptability, ambition, and long-range thinking required for more complex, enterprise-level roles. Because performance ratings capture past outcomes, not future readiness, they miss the critical indicators of genuine potential.



Six key contrasts:

1

Future capacity *versus* present contribution

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Excel in current role and delivering required objectives

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Capacity to go beyond current role and grow into broader, more complex and strategic roles

2

Leadership promise *versus* technical strength

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Often demonstrate deep expertise and technical skills in their functional area

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Capacity and qualities to lead people, whether in a formal leadership role or through informal influence across teams

3

Agility *versus* stability

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Demonstrate consistency and dependability in their current role

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Open to change, able to navigate ambiguity, adapt quickly and show cross-functional versatility



4

Strategic outlook *versus* task execution

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Task-oriented and focused on delivering quality work efficiently

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Think beyond the task in hand, looking ahead to the future, by showing enterprise thinking and seeking innovation

5

Organisational influence *versus* impact in role

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Concentrate on their individual objectives and their impact on their own team or function

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Show desire and ability to influence across the organisation, align to wider goals and contribute to long-term organisational success

6

Stepping out of their comfort zone *versus* 'staying in lane'

HIGH PERFORMERS:

Tend to stick to work and projects they know well, focusing on building depth of mastery in their existing functional skills

HIGH POTENTIAL:

Willing to step in to the unknown, take risks and embrace new challenges as a way of stretching themselves and developing

More than 60% of leaders and HR professionals agreed that HiPo identification typically takes place when an employee is new to the workforce (with less than five years of experience), an individual contributor, or first-line supervisor with at least five years of experience.

Most HiPo employees are identified in early stages of their career, but early-career individuals bring limited experience and evolving skill sets – particularly as these employees operate in rapidly shifting roles shaped by AI. While early identification supports ongoing targeted development, it also demands greater rigour and transparency.

THE ⚡ RISK

Assessing potential early helps engage employees and put them on a development path sooner. However, decisions at this stage must rely on objective, holistic measures to avoid mislabelling talent or overlooking true high-potential employees due to biased decision making.



From blind spot



Effective HiPo identification demands more than one-dimensional data. Using structured assessments alongside performance metrics and manager recommendations enhances fairness and accuracy.

to bright spot

Objective tools like personality assessment feedback and simulations complement existing role feedback from direct managers to reduced bias and smarter decisions, ensuring investment in the right people.



A multi-trait, multi-method approach

Personality assessments + Cognitive ability tests + Behavioural simulations

This well-rounded approach supports stronger prediction and supports more confident decision making. Our research revealed that organisations using more comprehensive approaches to HiPo also experienced greater stakeholder trust in HiPo decisions.

With a full view of employee potential, leaders can draw on a wide spectrum of metrics, including ROI, to gain a clear picture of how well HiPo talent is developing and where to invest next. This multifaceted approach sets the foundation for leaders to monitor progress, demonstrate impact, and sustain results over time.

Read more of the latest insights on HiPo strategies and what leaders and HR professionals are saying about their programmes and outcomes in Talogy's global research '[High Potential, High Impact: Insights to Build Better Programmes](#)'.



Talogy helps you discover high potential in your organisation.

Connect with us to shape a HiPo programme that drives lasting **impact**.

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