

SIGMA's High-Potential Development Guide

SIGMA's High-Potential Development Guide outlines a straightforward process for developing individuals who have been identified as top talent. This guide offers a comprehensive overview of SIGMA's 4-step talent development process: review talent, assess talent, support development, and develop skills.



high-potential development process

Talent development is one of the most important strategic efforts your organization will undertake.

- studies have shown that talent development increases employee engagement, job satisfaction, and performance.¹
- Talent development also plays an important role in attracting and retaining staff.

High-potential development is the process of identifying top talent and helping those individuals reach their full potential. This is important for the development future leaders, keeping top talent engaged, preventing turnover, and getting the most out of your team today.



high-potential development process



SIGMA's high-potential development process outlines four steps you can follow to develop talent in your organization.

In this guide you will find explanations for each step, as well as a general overview of what is involved in getting your high-potential development program off the ground.



SIGMA's talent development process



Step 1: Review talent

Comprehensively review the existing talent in your organization

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Step 2: Assess talent

Assess the leadership potential of employees

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Step 3: Support development

Implement strategies to support candidate growth by building internal capacity for coaching and development

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Step 4: Develop skills

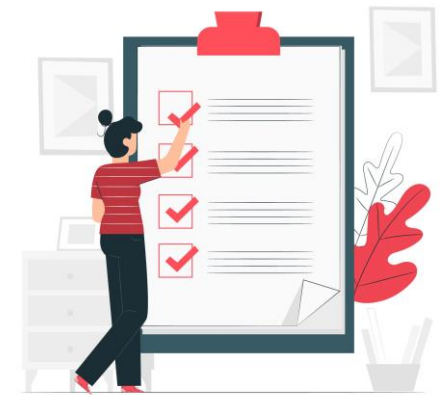
Utilize multiple supports to help participants build their skills

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step 1

review talent



step 1: review talent



Objective

Our first step in building a high-potential development program is to complete a comprehensive review of the current talent in the organization. This holistic approach provides an in-depth understanding of individual potential across the organization. This helps leaders understand the talent that currently exists within their teams and select the first cohort of high-potential candidates for development.

Goals

- create an inventory of the existing talent in the organization.
- identify and shortlist high-potential individuals who show promise for taking on greater responsibilities in the future.

SIGMALeader the 9-box grid



- the 9-box grid is a popular method of categorizing and evaluating talent.
- the grid can be used for various purposes, including talent development, performance management, and succession planning.
- the traditional 9-box grid has many strengths and weaknesses.
- SIGMA has a system for using this tool more effectively as part of a robust talent development program.

To learn how to use the 9-box grid to facilitate your talent review refer to SIGMA's guide: [How to Populate the 9-box Grid](#)



step 2

assess talent



step 2: assess talent



Objective

Scientifically validated assessments can add objectivity to the talent development process. Assessments are used to identify individual strengths and development areas, highlight shared strengths and skill gaps in the high-potential pool, and validate talent against the high potential-benchmark.

Goals

- identify high potentials by comparing individual strengths and development opportunities to the **high-potential benchmark**, a curated list of leadership competencies that are indicative of high potentials within an organization (see next slide for a sample benchmark).
- understand each candidates' skills gaps and determine where they need further training.
- use assessment data to design and tailor training programs, workshops, and other development activities for the high-potential group.

sample high-potential benchmark



High-Potential



ACHIEVEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Demonstrating the motivation to work hard, be successful, achieve difficult goals, and complete challenging tasks



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The ability to mediate and resolve conflicts and disagreements in a manner best for all parties involved



INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Relating to others in an outgoing, friendly, warm, and personable manner in order to establish and maintain effective interpersonal relationships



ACTIVE LISTENING

Taking the time to listen to others' questions, concerns, and viewpoints, identifying the relevant information, and conveying it to the other person



DESIRE TO LEARN

Embracing new challenges and the opportunity to learn, as well as demonstrating the motivation to grow and develop by responding positively to constructive feedback



OBJECTIVITY

The ability to maintain a realistic perspective and keep personal biases to a minimum



ANALYTICAL ORIENTATION

Demonstrating a preference for problems requiring precise, logical reasoning, and showing an ability to dissect and understand complex, multifaceted problems



DEVELOPING/COACHING OTHERS

Supporting the development and career goals of direct reports through work assignments, ongoing developmental discussions, and feedback



OPERATING UPWARDS

The ability to comfortably interact with senior management using their language, understanding their perspective, and responding at their level



BUSINESS ACUMEN

Demonstrating good judgment and business sense as well as the ability to understand business operations, market trends, the competition, and the bottom-line



EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Maintaining personal composure during times of stress or pressure, when things are uncertain, or when faced with conflict or disagreement



ORGANIZATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

Serving as figurehead and spokesperson for one's unit, and effectively promoting and defending the interests of one's direct reports



CLIENT/CUSTOMER FOCUS

Demonstrating a service-oriented approach, remaining open to feedback, and maintaining positive, trusting, productive relationships in order to meet the needs and expectations of internal and external customers



FACILITATING TEAMWORK

The ability to promote teamwork, cooperation, and identification with the work group



PRIORITIZING

The ability to quickly identify critical tasks and manage time accordingly to complete these tasks without getting distracted by less important matters



COMMUNICATION

Keeping direct reports and leaders informed about decisions, events, and developments that affect them



INTEGRITY

Demonstrating a high quality of character including being honest, ethical, trustworthy, and sincere, and effectively representing and respecting company values



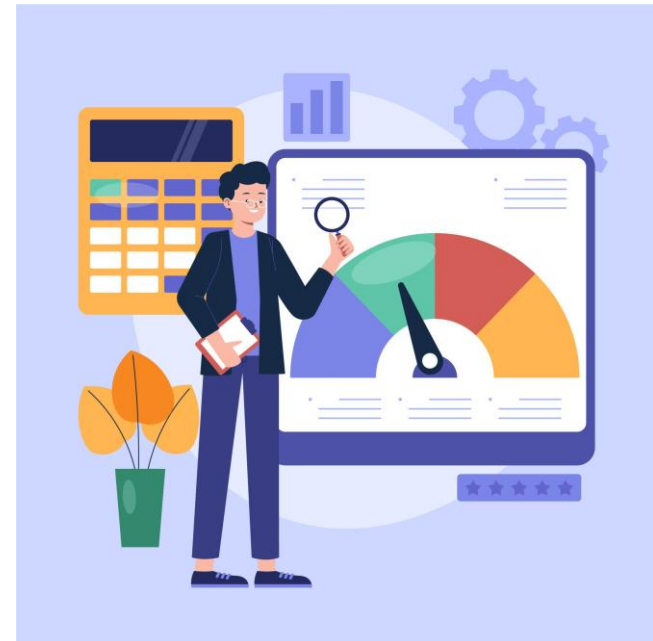
STRATEGIC PLANNING

The ability to establish a long-range direction for the organization or unit, set broad goals that align with the direction, and identify the means to reach those goals

step 2: assess talent



- before designing and launching a high-potential development program, organizations must determine which skills, abilities, or characteristics are required for someone to be considered a high-potential employee.
- curating a list of leadership competencies that are particularly indicative of high potentials within an organization is known as **benchmarking**.
- outlining these competencies in the form of a high-potential benchmark can help to pinpoint shared strengths and skill gaps within the high-potential talent pool.





step 2: assess talent

- to accurately identify high potentials, we recommend using the [Leadership Skills Profile – Revised™](#) (LSP-R). The LSP-R aligns with SIGMA's leadership competency framework and corresponds with all of our other tools and templates
- the LSP-R also meets all the criteria of a strong assessment
 - ✓ uses an evidence-based model of personality.
 - ✓ measures traits that are relevant to the job.
 - ✓ was created by experts with experience in psychometrics.
 - ✓ has been validated on a sample similar to your candidate pool.
 - ✓ has evidence for strong predictive validity and reliability.



step 3

support development





step 3: support development

Objective

Beginning a new development initiative can be challenging. In any high-potential program, the support and guidance of leaders and internal coaches is essential for success. Leaders are a valuable resource for employees and should be able to support their development via coaching, mentoring, and on-the-job training. SIGMA's internal coach training process helps organizations to build this internal capacity for talent development and foster successful skill-building experiences.

Goals

- build internal capacity by developing leaders' coaching skills.
- ensure both coaches and high potentials have access to the necessary resources and tools to facilitate effective development.

the coaching process



- high-potential employees should be supported with a formal coaching process.
- the purpose of coaching is to provide candidates with accountability and support as they progress through their development program.
- SIGMA's **internal coach training** will be used to teach leaders our scientifically-based coaching process.





step 4

develop skills



step 4: develop skills



Objective

SIGMA's high-potential development process uses multiple supports to help participants build their skills. Participants will benefit from both group-focused training and one-on-one coaching support to create development plans, build new habits, and reach their goals.

Goals

- foster individual growth and talent engagement.
- reduce skill gaps.
- encourage continuous learning.
- develop future leaders.
- drive business growth.



- there are many different methods available for developing talent:
 - training.
 - education.
 - stretch assignments.
 - job shadowing and more.
- you may use any combination of these tools depending on what works well for your high potential candidates and your organization.
- overall, the goal is to guide employees through a structured process of pursuing opportunities for growth and improvement.

To learn how to launch your own comprehensive talent development program, refer to SIGMA's guide: [How to Launch a Talent Development Program](#)



did you know?

one of the top reasons why leadership development programs fail is that they lack support from upper management.

- to help you communicate your plan, we've created an agenda that outlines key points for gaining buy-in from important stakeholders.
- SIGMA has a library of other resources we would be happy to share.
- if you would like more resources for communicating your development plan, please [contact us](#).

agenda for getting buy-in

- A. explain why your company wants to implement a high-potential development program.
- B. make a business case for the value of such programs (i.e., importance and returns).
- C. explain SIGMA's four-step talent development process.
- D. request feedback.
- E. request support/permission to implement the program.
- F. commit to giving regular updates on program progress.



are you ready?
let's get started



please contact us if you have any
questions, comments, or concerns
we're always happy to speak with you!



Glen Harrison is an organizational transformation consultant and succession planning expert. Over the course of his career, Glen has worked with one-third of the Fortune 500 list and with every level of government in Canada and the United States. Having worked with numerous clients to build robust succession plans from the ground up, Glen has extensive experience in the application of SIGMA's products and services to help organizations realize their people potential.

[Schedule a Call](#)

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¹ Achmad, Listian & Noermijati, & Rofiaty, & Irawanto, Dodi. (2023). Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement as Mediators of the Relationship Between Talent Development and Intention to Stay in Generation Z Workers. International Journal of Professional Business Review. 8. e0814. 10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i1.814



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