

Using the 9 Box Grid

Introduction

The 9 Box Grid is a simple Talent Management tool. It allows the mapping of current performance and future potential of employees.

Looking at performance and potential together, allows the Council to match what is required of the role, and what job holders can do. This includes what the employee is currently capable of doing and what they may be capable of doing in the future - with the right development and support.

The 9 box grid (where appropriate) will form part of the Appraisal process. Discussions around performance and potential should continue throughout the year in regular one to one's, but specifically at appraisals and six monthly review meetings.

Using the Grid

The 9 box grid, as the name suggests, is simply a map of 9 boxes. Each box describes the typical behaviours of an employee.

It is the responsibility of the employee to rate their performance using the 9 Box Grid, in order to aid a discussion with the manager during the appraisal, where the manager can discuss their view.

Where there is a significant difference in this rating, steps and actions should be taken to clarify this difference of view and the employee should be given the opportunity to reflect and where necessary, continuing conversations should take place.

Useful Information and Definitions.

FCC define performance and potential as follows:

Performance describes the activities employees undertake to deliver the goals of the organisation in their daily jobs. It reflects the capacity to deliver against clear objectives.

Potential - High potential individuals demonstrate the aspiration, ability, engagement and learning potential to occupy positions at a level above their current role. Potential is not set throughout a career - potential can grow or develop.

Indicators of Potential:

The following checklist looks at effective and less effective indicators of potential. The list below are examples and are linked through to Flintshire's Behavioural Competency Framework. Think about yourself or a member of your team and note how many times you would respond 'yes' to the following questions:

Effective Indicators:

- Does the person inspire people to action?
- Does the person display self awareness of their own development needs and of their impact on others?
- Are they comfortable, and can work with, ambiguity?
- Can they adapt their working style appropriately?
- Do they have, and do they use effectively, a wider network?
- Do they treat people with dignity and respect?
- Do they have a high level of resilience?
- Do they have a high capacity to learn quickly and can they apply that learning?
- Do they display creativity and innovation when dealing with issues and problems?

Less Effective Indicators:

- Is the person intolerant?
- Do they over complicate issues?
- Do they over conceptualise?
- Does the person display over-confidence?
- Are they considered manipulative or political?
- Do they give up more easily?
- Do they challenge procedures to be oppositional rather than to be creative or constructive?

In general:

- If someone demonstrates many of the effective indicators and few less effective indicators, it is highly likely they exhibit high potential and are well placed to make the most of it with the right development.
- If someone demonstrates many of the effective indicators and also many of the less effective indicators, it is likely that they exhibit potential but will need more support to make the most of it.
- If someone demonstrates few of the effective indicators and many or few of the less effective indicators, they may be a high performer rather than someone with high potential.

Supporting Evidence

The assessment of an employee's performance against objectives is well established using the current appraisal process. More challenging is the assessment of potential; where any judgement must be supported by facts.

Who does what?

As an employee, you should:

- Rate your own performance using the Grid, in order for this to aid a discussion with your manager in the appraisal
- Actively participate in discussions with your line manager
- Be honest and open about your aspirations and commitment to further development
- Take responsibility for your own development and career

Line managers should:

- Hold discussions on potential with all their team members – using the 9 box grid
- Give honest feedback to their employees regarding their potential
- Agree development plans with staff to help them acquire new skills and move forward
- Note any training or development need and discuss these needs with the Learning and Development team
- Input performance ratings onto the employees record on iTrent

Learning and Development

- Maintain and update the core learning programmes for the Council
- Provide advice and support for managers and employees on all matters relating to learning and development
- Negotiate best value from our partner organisations and other learning providers
- Provide and maintain a bank of internal Coaches to support the development of high potential individuals

HR Business Partners

- Provide advice and guidance to managers on the use of the performance management tools
- To provide advice to ensure the consistent application of standards
- To support the Chief Officers in taking responsibility for identifying opportunities for development for employees rated as High Potential or Outstanding Performer.

The 9 Box Grid Performance and Potential Map

Early Promise (R>2) (Transitional)	High Potential (R<2)	Outstanding Performer (RN)
High potential with strong initial impact. Individual may be new or inexperienced in current role.	Frequently achieves challenging and stretching goals with strong demonstration of potential to do more stretching assignments. Behaves as a leader and role model. Performance is continually improving, willing to take on additional responsibilities to support the organisation's objectives. Likely to progress to next level within 2 years with the appropriate development.	An exceptional performer who stands out from their peers. Consistently delivers to a high standard. Has realised potential at current grade and is now ready for next level. Acknowledged as skilled leader and role model.
Future Achiever (NR)	Good Contributor (R>2)	Strong Performer (R<2)
Either new to post or returning from long period of absence. Demonstrating ability but too early to form judgement. Has not yet had opportunity to demonstrate higher performance/potential Or, if the individual has been in the role for sometime then they are showing a demonstrable gap in performance against requirements of the grade.	Valued at this level and in this role. Performance is consistently good, and normal/high expectations are achieved. They make positive contributions to the goals of the organisation and have the potential to keep developing and to deliver more in either scale or complexity.	A consistently strong performer, delivering excellent results and exceeding performance expectations. Viewed as a strong leader/manager and role model by others. Is already exhibiting a range of behaviours required at the next level but not all. Likely to progress to next level within 2 years with the appropriate development.
Under Performer (NR)	Satisfactory Contributor (NR)	Very Good Performer (R>2)
Not meeting performance expectations. Failed to meet some key objectives or is demonstrating significant development needs at current level. May have competency gaps or behavioural issues which need to be addressed urgently.	Meets most normal performance expectations but may have varied performance, some minor inconsistencies in performance or behaviour, which are being addressed. No clear demonstration of potential to lead at the next level at this point in time.	Highly valued in this level and in current role. Could be an expert in their role. A consistently high performer who is a core team member but is comfortable to continue operating at their current grade level at the current time.

Key

Readiness for promotion to the next level

RN Ready Now

R<2 Ready within 2 years

R>2 Ready 2 years or more

NR Not Ready

Follow up Activities for a 9 box grid.

Early Promise (R>2) (Transitional) • Evaluate whether in right role. • Identify and address root causes of performance issues. • Possible need for training and further development. • Coach to enhance performance. • Shadowing. • On the job training. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps. • Assign mentor / buddy.	High Potential (R<2) • Coach to enhance performance. • Set stretching goals and assignments. Identify opportunities for further development. • Consider secondment / loan / lateral move to increase breadth of experience. • Coach to enhance performance. • Offer specific development opportunities. • Develop individual as Coach for band below. • Assign a mentor • Consider for appropriate Management Development Programme.	Outstanding Performer (RN) • Identify development opportunities to prepare for next step up. • Ensure exposure to key players and active corporate roles and tasks. • Coach for promotion • Offer specific development opportunities from the Corporate Programme. • Develop individual as Coach for band below.
Future Achiever (NR) • Evaluate whether in the right role. • Focus on how to stimulate higher levels of confidence and engagement. • Tailor development to build confidence and experience. • Define end date for intervention. • Consider a referral to a Coach to enhance performance. • On the job training. • Assign mentor / buddy. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps.	Good Contributor (R>2) • Performance is good, and expectations at this level and in this role are achieved, but consider what you can do to enhance this. • Coach to enhance performance. Identify opportunities to make a wider contribution. • Nominate / Cultivar for Management Development Programmes. • Provide feedback. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps.	Strong Performer (R<2) • Use stretching assignments and objectives to test potential. • Consider whether a secondment / loan / lateral move may assist. • Coach to enhance performance. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps. • Consider for appropriate Management Development Programme. • Develop individual as Coach for band below.
Under Performer (NR) • Support to address issues and improve performance within defined timescales. • Consider whether fit may be better in another role, but be prepared to undertake poor performance measures. • Agree a timed development plan. • On the job training.	Satisfactory Contributor (NR) • Work on improving and re-energising performance in current role in the short term. • Put timed plan in place for acceptable improvements. • Define end date for interventions. • Coach to enhance performance. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps.	Very Good Performer (R>2) • Explore desire to progress and develop. • Identify opportunities to pass on experience to others through coaching and mentoring. • Explore opportunities to stretch if this fits with future aspirations. • Explore their desire to progress and develop using Coaching approach, also consider a Coach to enhance performance. • Offer specific development opportunities to meet any skills gaps. • Develop individual as coach for band below.

NB:- Coaches are available from the Learning & Development department.

All of the Corporate learning programmes can be viewed on the Infonet.

If you require further assistance please contact the Learning & Development team on 01352 841053.