



The 4 Things You Must Remember During Your Next Talent Review

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*Take my 20 best people, and virtually overnight,
Microsoft becomes a mediocre company.”*

-Bill Gates, Microsoft

The power of outstanding talent has huge benefits for a team and organization. The real question is not if talent matters, it is how to do an amazing job of focusing and furthering develop it.

For many organizations, this is the season of talent reviews, endless meetings that can take a lot of time and effort talking about and identifying the current and future positioning of leaders. Often times, the end product of these meetings are a beautiful 9 box talent grid with lots of names in each box. This grid will then sit and is unearthed at the next talent review.

How can we make the talent review and development process as stellar as the very talent we want to cultivate?

Here are four ways to avoid mediocre talent reviews:

1. Be Selective on What Positions to Discuss:

Too often every leadership and management position in the company is considered during a talent management session. Unless you've been doing this process for several years, be very selective as to the number of positions you discuss. Not all SVPs or VPs provide the same value to the organization's success. Focus on the positions that great talent can optimize the greatest.

2. Focus on Skills before People:

Instead of jumping in and describing the strengths and opportunities of each person, first identify the 3-5 skills needed for that critical position. Then

identify how the individual compares to those leadership and strategic skills or competencies. This creates a more informed conversation for current and future positions with using an agreed upon set of high performing standards.

3. Do Homework Before the Session:

To make the talent review session as productive as possible, each leader needs to come prepared. This preparation usually involves three things: 1) having the individual complete the talent profile or summary, 2) having a conversation with the individual on performance, competencies, engagement, and career aspirations, and 3) having a conversation with their boss about the individual. With this information, the 3-5 minutes that each individual has to be discussed, can be focused and informed.

4. Have Development Opportunities Ready:

During talent reviews, we often talk about if the leader is ready for the next step. Well, are as an organization ready with development tools and resources for that leader? Enter talent reviews with development ideas organized around on-the-job, social, and formal development opportunities. This can include coaching, mentoring, shadowing, stretch assignments, networking, rotations, classes, etc. Build in mechanisms to follow up on this development, so it is not forgotten. With all of the work we put into identifying top talent, we need to put the same energy into developing them.

This talent management season, let's make talent review sessions more productive and engaging. Let's make them worth the effort and time we invest.

*"People are not your most important asset.
The right people are."
- Jim Collins*

The talent management process is a fantastic way of identifying the right people and building their development for key positions to achieve the organization's results.

Let's elevate how we lead the talent management to match the high caliber of the talent we are assessing.