



The Four Key Indicators of Talent Potential

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“Are they ready for the next level?”

This is a common question on the minds of great leaders and HR professionals. But the answer may not be as easy as we'd like.

Determining talent potential and readiness is vital to putting the right people in the right positions at the right time; but it can be a tricky business. No wonder we immediately default to looking at past performance, and assume that a strong track record will continue in the future, even in new, elevated, or enlarged positions.

But performance really is only part of the equation — performance is not necessarily an indication of future returns.

So to assist you, we've compiled a list of four key indicators and attributes of talent potential that will provide a foundation for leaders and decision-makers during talent management and leadership development conversations.

These four attributes should always be considered when attempting to determine if someone has leadership potential and is ready for the next level.

1. Self-Awareness

The first step in any leadership development effort is self-awareness.

Do they know how they react in good and stressful times? Is the person aware of how their actions impact others? Are they able to adjust their behaviors to fit the needs of the situation?

This involves a powerful combination of IQ and EQ. Too often successful people are technically gifted (IQ) but may lack the experience or awareness of how that translates in a team or peer setting (EQ).

Being able to be aware, to reflect and to manage the perceptions others have of them is a key indicator of someone who has potential for more.

2. Translating Learning-to-Action

People often like to learn and hear about new findings and trends. However, it is something quite different to hear a new idea and then find ways to try it out, to tailor it, and to implement it.

This involves a willingness to take risks and a keen understanding of the future (and often unmet) needs of customers. It requires an ability to quickly see the value in something new and the boldness to turn it into something useful.

This ability often involves a searching for newness and a preference for variety, resulting in thought leadership for the team, organization, and industry.

3. Drive to Succeed

Sometimes called “fire in the belly,” it is the motivation to achieve and to meet high standards of excellence.

These standards are often internally set and managed. They don’t shift or become diluted when times get tough, but are championed so others are inspired as well. Challenges are exciting and rewarding experiences.

Opportunities to develop are viewed with a sense of optimism and confidence. Yet, this drive needs to be tempered so it is not just about them. This indicator describes leaders who bring themselves and those on their teams to consistently deliver high quality results.

4. Reading the Room

This is a sixth sense that enables a person to know when and how to introduce an idea into the organization to optimize adoption.

It describes an ability to know the needs of others and the right timing to share feedback on an initiative. This is more an art than a science and involves a keen understanding of organizational culture and relationships.

Far more than just preparing for and facilitating a successful meeting, it speaks to cultivating trusting rapport with key decision makers and being agile with the cadence of projects and ideas.

The Talent Potential Key Indicator Checklist

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1. Self Awareness

- Do they know how they react in stressful times?
- Are they aware of how their actions impact others?
- Are they able to adjust their behaviors to fit the needs of the situation?

2. Learning to Action

- Do they find ways to quickly test their ideas?
- Are they willing to take risks?
- Do they have a preference for variety and/or for new solutions?

3. Drive To Succeed

- Do they value excellence?
- Do they view opportunities to develop with a sense of optimism and confidence?
- Do they consistently deliver high quality work?

4. Reading The Room

- Do they display a sixth sense and intuition on politically sensitive topics?
- Do they display good timing with their feedback?
- Do they cultivate trust and rapport with key members of the organization?

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