

Worksheet for Using the Performance and Potential Grid

Use this tool to assess your employees' performance and potential and to start to develop a plan for their growth.

NAME OF EMPLOYEE:

Part I: Defining Performance

Question	Yes	No
1. Does this employee <i>exceed</i> expectations in at least one area of performance?		
2. Would you say that this employee exceeds expectations in <i>most</i> (or <i>all</i>) areas of performance?		
3. Does this employee meet or exceed expectations in <i>all</i> areas of performance?		
4. Is the employee a key contributor to the team and the organization?		
5. Does the employee act on corrective performance feedback in order to improve performance?		
6. Have you provided significant, specific performance rewards to this employee (special bonus, formal recognition, etc.)?		

TOTALS

*To evaluate this employee's **performance**, calculate the total number of "yes" responses and use the following scoring: 0-1 = Low; 2-4 = Medium; 5-6 = High*

Part II: Defining Potential




Question	Yes	No
1. Could the employee perform at a higher level, in a different position or take on increased responsibilities within the next year (consider the person's ability only, not whether there is a position available to support this growth)?		
2. Could the employee perform at a higher level, in a different position, or take on increased responsibilities within the next three years (consider the person's ability only, not whether there is a position available to support this growth)?		
3. Can you envision this employee performing two levels above his or her current position in the next five to six years?		
4. Is the organization likely to value growth of the skills and competencies of this employee over the next several years?		
5. Could the employee learn the additional skills and competencies he or she needs to be able to perform at a higher or different level?		
6. Does the employee demonstrate leadership ability—by showing initiative and vision, delivering on promised results, communicating effectively, and taking appropriate risks?		
7. Does the employee demonstrate an ability to comfortably interact with people at a higher level or in different areas?		
8. Does the employee demonstrate comfort with a broader company perspective than his or her job currently requires?		
9. Does the employee demonstrate flexibility and motivation to move into a job that might be different than any that currently exist?		
10. Does the employee welcome opportunities for learning and development?		

TOTALS

*To evaluate this employee's **potential**, calculate the total number of "yes" responses and use the following scoring: 0-3 = Low; 4-7 = Medium; 8-10 = High*

Part III: Plotting the Results on the Performance and Potential Grid

Use the number of “yes” answers from Parts I and II to determine the employee’s placement on the grid below.

Key	
	Top employees
	Solid contributors
	Underperformers

Performance	Potential		
	Low 0 – 3	Medium 4 – 7	High 8+
High 5+	1	2	3
Medium 2 – 4	4	5	6
Low 0 – 1	7	8	9

Part IV: Strategies for Action

For employees in Cells 2, 3, and 6 (top employees):

Use the following suggestions to create a development strategy.

Top Employees

- **Recognize performance**—Acknowledge the employee’s achievements. Consider whether you are able to provide a special bonus, an opportunity to work on a special project, or some other form of reward. In the case of a person falling into cell 6, however, don’t overly praise performance, since this person might be capable of achieving even more if properly motivated.
- **Explore the employee’s interests and values**—What types of work excite them? What do they enjoy doing? Are there types of projects they haven’t worked on that they would like to try? What motivates them at work (e.g., challenging assignments, financial reward, public recognition, etc.)? Are they interested in taking on more responsibility? Are there outside constraints that might limit their ability to take on certain roles?
- **Define the employee’s skills**—What is the employee good at? Are there any skill gaps (especially for employees in cell 6)? Are there skills you would like to see strengthened or developed?
- **Explore creative opportunities for growth**—Consider assignments that match the employee’s interests and might help him or her learn new skills.
- **Be honest about career possibilities within your organization**—Is there a likely opportunity for advancement within your company? If not, what are other possible opportunities (e.g., working in a new area or leading a special project) for this employee in the long-term?
- **Create an individual development plan**—Once your discussions are complete, outline suggested next steps and get agreement from the employee on the recommended course of action. Continue to follow up with and support your employee.

For employees in Cells 1, 4, and 5 (solid performers):

Use the following suggestions to create a development strategy.

Solid Performers

- **Focus on performance**—Recognize and reward good work. These employees are of great value to the organization—let them know it. In the case of employees in cells 4 or 5, also clarify your expectations going forward. How might they be able to achieve even more?
- **Explore the employee's interests and values**—What types of work excite the employee? What does he or she enjoy doing? Are there types of projects the employee hasn't worked on that he or she would like to try? What motivates the employee at work (e.g., challenging assignments, financial reward, public recognition, etc.)? Is he or she interested in taking on more responsibility? Are there outside constraints that might limit his or her ability to take on certain roles? Test for evidence of more potential.
- **Define the employee's skills**—What are the employee's strengths? What skills does he or she need to further develop?
- **Focus on motivating and engaging employee in his/her work**—What opportunities match this person's interests and development needs? If this person is interested in taking on more responsibility, how will you support his or her efforts? Perhaps look for special projects to test for motivation. In the case of someone in cell 4 or 5, watch for change in both performance and potential.
- **Discuss career opportunities and limitations**—Identify a possible career path. Don't make any promises at this point—just discuss the possibilities. Recognize any limitations in potential (e.g., is an advanced degree or supervisory experience required?). Be honest about the possibilities. If it is unlikely that the person will advance within the company, what other opportunities exist?
- **Create an individual development plan**—Once your discussions are complete, outline suggested next steps and get agreement from the employee on the recommended course of action. Continue to follow up with and support him or her.

For employees in Cells 7, 8, and 9 (underperformers):

Use the following suggestions to create a development strategy.

Underperformers

- **Focus on performance, not potential**—Your conversation with individuals in this group should be about performance improvement, not about development. Provide honest feedback about performance. Explore the reasons why this person is not performing (Do they dislike this particular job's responsibilities? Do they feel like there is no opportunity for advancement? Are there personal issues that are impacting their work?).
- **Clearly define your expectations for improvement**—What changes will you be looking for? What are the consequences if the person does not improve? Work with your human resources department to develop a strategy for addressing poor performance.
- **Define potential if performance is addressed**—If the person has the potential to do more (i.e., is located in cells 8 and 9) consider what other opportunities might exist if the poor performance is addressed. Is this person in the wrong job?
- **Create a performance improvement plan**—Once your discussions are complete, outline suggested next steps and get agreement from the employee on the recommended course of action.