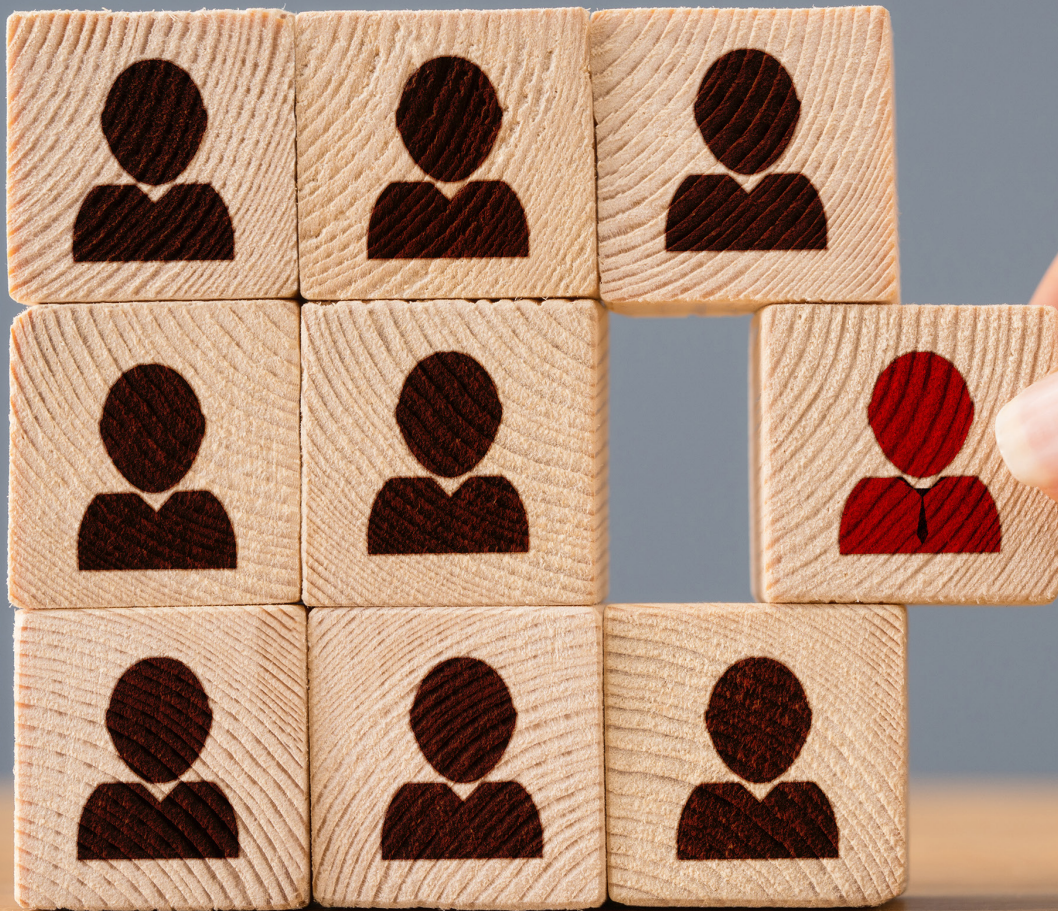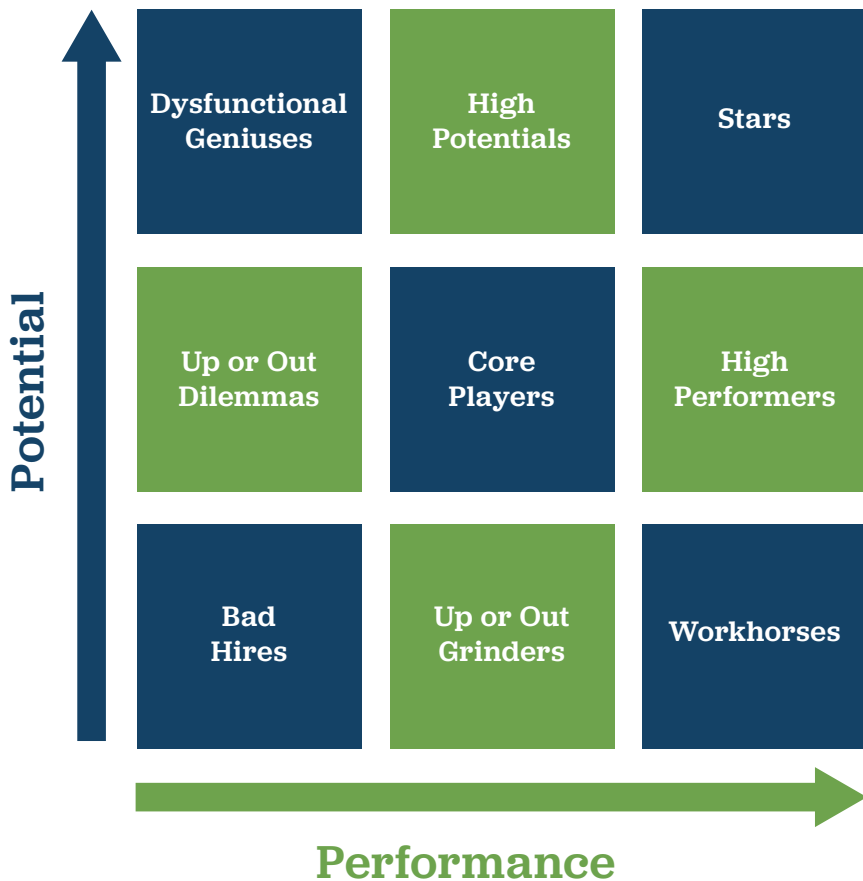# ARCORO
THE BRIDGE TO BETTER HR

Box Talent Grid
Your Guide to Creating & Using This Powerful Performance Tool

Your company's next manager, vice president or CEO could be right under your nose. Figuring out who that is can be accomplished using a 9 box grid performance tool. The 9 box grid is a performance assessment tool used by companies to discover future leaders and employees with high potential. By using data gleaned from performance reviews and other talent assessments, the 9 box grid can give companies a clear direction for succession planning.

How to Create a 9 Box Grid

The 9 box grid is made up of nine boxes with a vertical axis that indicated potential and a horizontal axis that indicates performance. The higher the boxes, the more potential for growth and the farther right the boxes go, the best performance reviews. Employees who land in the bottom left grid, are your lowest performers with the least growth potential. Those who land in the top right grid, your highest performers with the most potential.

Dysfunctional Geniuses	**High Potentials**	**Stars**
Up or Out Dilemmas	**Core Players**	**High Performers**
Bad Hires	**Up or Out Grinders**	**Workhorses**

Potential (vertical axis)

Performance (horizontal axis)

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The Performance Axis

Performance boxes go from left to right: low, moderate and high. HR Analytics proposes this structure:

- **Low performance.** Employee does not match the requirements of their job and fails their individual targets.
- **Moderate performance.** Employee partially matches the requirements of their job and their individual targets.
- **High performance.** Employee fully meets the requirements of their job and their individual targets.

Using this structure relies on a strong job description and how your employee meets the requirements of the position. Also consider other factors like meeting personal goals, working with team members and results of 360-degree feedback.

The Potential Axis

Potential boxes go from bottom to top, low, medium and high. Managers interpret performance review information to determine where employees land. HR Analytics uses this example:

- **Low potential.** Employee is working at full potential and is not expected to improve, either because they are at maximum capacity or because of a lack of motivation.
- **Moderate potential.** Employee has the potential to further develop within their current role. This can be in terms of performance, but also in terms of expertise.
- **High potential.** Employee is eligible for promotion, either immediately, or within two to three years.

Potential speaks to the employee's upward trajectory with the company. If an employee is a low or moderate employee but has high potential, experience gained from development and goal setting could put them on the promotion track in two to three years.

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Pitfalls to Avoid

Every performance management tool has its downfalls and the 9 box grid is no exception. Below are several pitfalls to avoid when using this tool to discover your company's future leaders.

Information is subjective.

- It is up to the manager as to where an employee will land.
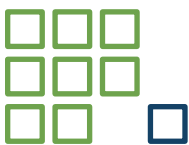- Determining potential might vary from person-to-person.

Doesn't evaluate aptitude.

- High performers may not be able to manage employees.
- Doesn't measure management skills like delegating and having self-confidence.

Lack of transparency.

- Can't share between all employees.
- Employees listed as low potential will be less engaged.

No "gray" areas.

- Not every employee falls neatly into one of nine boxes.
- Additional discussions need to be had before promoting or firing an employee.
- Employees in the lower left of the 9 box grid won't receive as much attention for improvement as those in the upper right.

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How to Use a 9 Box Grid

A 9 box performance grid can be instrumental for filling positions in the short and long term, like succession planning. Follow the steps below to

1. Prepare Your Staff

As we mentioned above, the 9 box performance grid has some serious pitfalls so you need to make sure your managers and HR understand how it should work. According to Indeed, companies need to plan ahead and give staff time to ask questions and gather their thoughts, prior to creating and using your grid.

2. Set Standards and Ask Questions

It's imperative that everyone involved in using the 9 box grid agree on its criteria and the stand each employee must meet. Assessing the performance of different employees can sometimes be like measuring apples to oranges. Having a set standard helps define what potential looks like for your company and in relation, promotion. Do you need company leaders who can think outside the box, problem solve or connect with employees? Encourage managers and HR to be objective and address concerns as they arise.

3. Plot Employees and Analyze Results

Place each employee on the 9 box performance grid. Indeed suggests considering their past experiences, training, projects and feedback and whether they've used it to their advantage. Looking at the past may help you determine future potential. Once employees are plotted, analyze their placement and get feedback from other supervisors if necessary.

4. Reevaluate

Reevaluate the grid often, especially as your staff changes. Determine if your employees have improved and met your expectations, or not. Remember, not every employee is leadership material, but that doesn't mean they're not a valuable addition to your team.

Having a set standard helps define what potential looks like for your company and in relation, promotion.

5

While a 9 box talent matrix can provide a structured picture, it may not always tell the entire story. Plus, if you're not following through with actions, all the work of assessing and plotting employees is a futile effort. Arcoro's Performance Management and Succession Planning solutions offer companies a wide variety of talent management tools, including a 9 box assessment, so you have multiple ways to review performance and correctly identify future leaders.

The Performance Management module allows managers to motivate employees with regular, actionable feedback, easily monitor both qualitative and quantitative goals, and get 360-degree feedback.

The Succession Planning module works with Performance Management to aggregate its data to identify the competencies of standout employees. While it offers a 9 box talent matrix, it also helps to identify gaps and create actionable development plans.
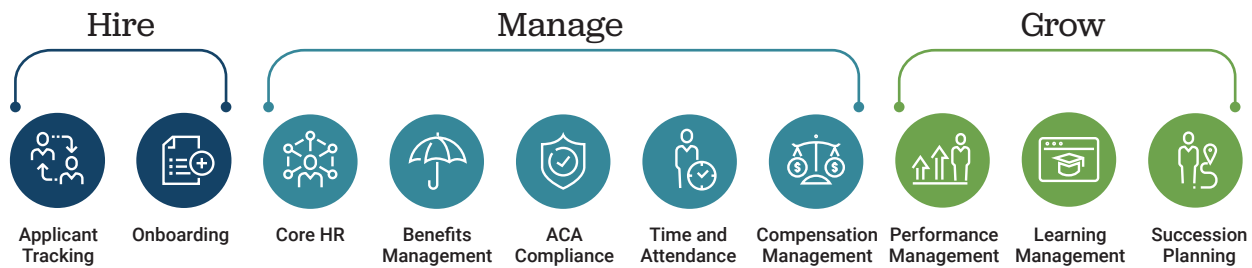
Take steps to prepare your company for the future and schedule a demo to see Arcoro's Performance Management and Succession Planning solutions for yourself.

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