



Unit 4

Role Communication in Talent Management

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Describe the skills required to manage high potential candidates
- ✓ Recognize and foster talent within an organization
- ✓ Explain the principles of competency-based management

Unit 4

Role of Communication in Talent Management

A communication strategy must be part of your talent management plan. This strategy will be just as unique as other parts of your plan, but it must be defined and you must implement it consistently. Employees must know what to expect.

Communication options can include:

- Never notify any high potentials of their status
- Notify only the managers of high potentials, not the people themselves
- Only notify employees (or their managers) who are identified as high potentials for particular positions
- Telling each employee their status

This topic is very controversial, and there is currently no best practice or single answer. It really depends on your organization, your plan, and your culture.

Some advantages of notifying employees of their status include:

- Higher retention rate
- Ability to offer more focused training and development, since employees know what they are aiming for
- Ability to monitor goals and measure results
- Improved transparency and trust
- Improved motivation and morale

However, disadvantages can include:

- Segregation of workforce; employees who are not high potentials may feel like second-class citizens
- Sense of entitlement by high potentials
- Organization may have a reduced negotiation ability
- Focus may shift from business results to career advancement

Development Strategies

Goals with SPIRIT

If you want to succeed, you must set goals! To create good goals, remember the SPIRIT acronym, and make sure that your own goals have SPIRIT!

Specific

Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable. "Look gorgeous" is pretty ambiguous; "Lose 20 pounds" is specific.

Prizes

Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long-term. If your goal is to set up a home office, for example, you might purchase a new desk when the room is cleared out and ready.

Individual

The goal must be something that you want to do. If your spouse wants you to lose 20 pounds but you think you look fine, you're not going to want to work towards the goal.

Review

Review your progress periodically. Does the goal make sense? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

Inspiring

Frame the goal positively. Make it fun to accomplish. You could make a poster of the end result, frame it, and post it on the wall.

Time-Bound

Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. Even better, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

Writing Tips

Use action verbs in your goals, like:

- Add
- Arrange
- Assemble
- Build
- Carry
- Choose
- Collect
- Compute
- Count
- Demonstrate
- Describe
- Distribute
- Draft
- Explain
- Identify
- Initiate
- Label
- List
- Plan
- Rewrite
- Select
- Supervise
- Train
- Transform

Watch out for vague phrases like:

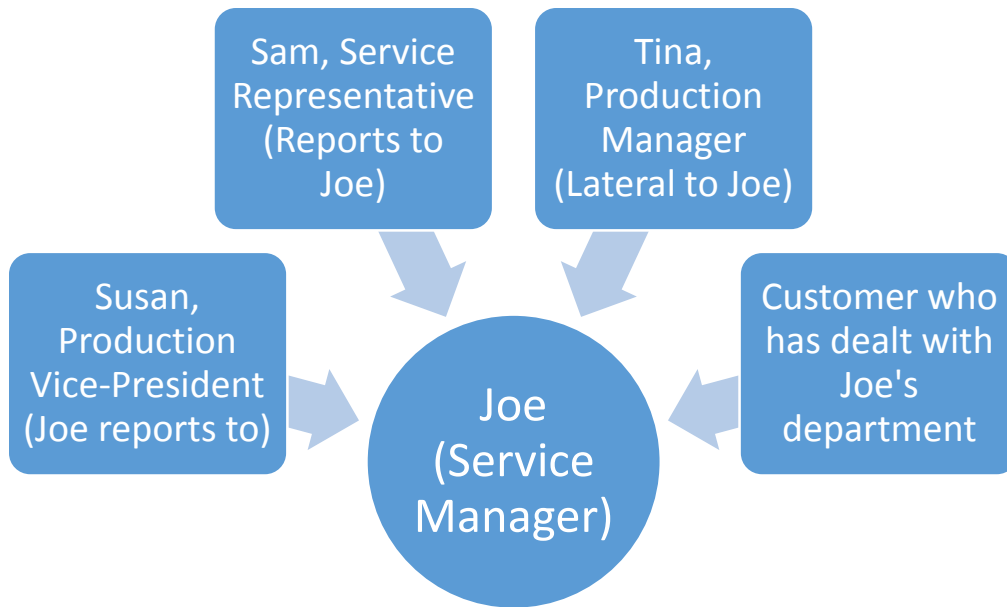
- Be familiar with
- Know how to

- Understand
- Be familiar with

360° Feedback

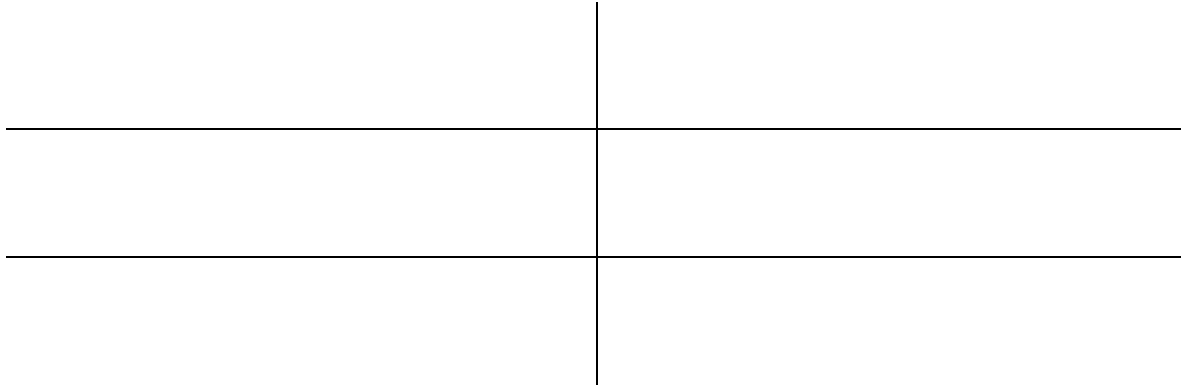
360° feedback gets its name because its method ensures that feedback comes from all around a person. It is a popular tool used for performance evaluation and development. Its origins date back to World War II, and there are many different forms that it comes in.

Let's say that Acme Widgets Inc. uses 360° feedback. Who might participate in the 360° review?



List some of the positives and negatives of this type of evaluation.

Pros	Cons



Coaching and Mentoring

Helping Skills

- Give your employees some problem solving tools, such as determining pros/cons of various options.
- Ask them to identify options and make a recommendation as to which option they favor, and then analyze the consequences of each option.
- Become good at asking questions and probing.
- Stay open-minded if their ideas aren't your ideas.

Mentoring Skills

- Find ways of introducing your employees to other people in the organization.
- Arrange for them to sit in on meetings that would be of interest to them, when appropriate.
- Help them find other mentors in areas where you have very little knowledge and they have interests.
- Talk about their future with them so you can learn more about what they want to do and help them see opportunities for getting there.
- Keep your eyes open for positions they might be interested in applying for.

Teaching Skills

- If you find yourself in a teaching position and you don't feel confident in your abilities, you might want some training in teaching skills.
- Be patient.
- When they make mistakes, use them as learning opportunities for the employee.
- Encourage them to try their new skills at every opportunity.

Challenging Skills

- Remember that your role as a coach is to help an employee reach their potential.
- Be clear what you expect the employee to do and then discuss those expectations with them.

- Spend a little time with the employee so that you have a better sense of progress.
- Help them set SPIRIT goals and put a plan in place for reaching these goals. Make them accountable.

Creative Development Ideas

Leadership development must go beyond job shadowing and classroom training. Try some of these ideas:

- Have two high potentials job share, or create a job rotation program.
- Create an exchange program to give employees the opportunity to experience a different job, work department, or global location.
- Put a high potential on a key project team.
- Ask a high potential to mentor or coach someone else in the company.
- Require high potentials to serve on non-profit boards or volunteer in the community.
- Although classroom training isn't the complete solution, workshops in time management, stress management, problem solving, leadership development, and executive presence (among other topics) are always useful. Some positions may even require certification or college re-education.
- Have high potentials develop best practice guides, standard operating procedures, training documents, etc.
- Encourage high potentials to join skill groups like Toastmasters.
- Ask high potentials to deliver company presentations at conferences and trade shows, put on training, or submit articles to industry publications.

Reality Check!

Case Study One: Avon Products

Avon Products is the world's largest direct seller of beauty products. It is a respected household name and has been in business for over 120 years.

Although Avon has seen solid growth over the last decade, they began to experience talent challenges as 1999 turned to 2000. By 2005, the problems began to ripple out and cause a decline in profit and stock prices.

In November 2005, Marc Effron used his one-page talent management process to begin a massive restructuring. He began flattening the organization, streamlining business processes, reducing expenses, and implementing a talent management process.

His talent management process had two main prongs: ensuring people were in the right place and bringing in talent where it was needed.

Each problem was solved by three actions:

1. Identify the core objective
2. Identify the leanest solution
3. Create a toolkit for managers to minimize complexity and maximize value

Three things were key in each solution: simplicity, accountability, and transparency.

For example, end of the year evaluations were one important component of Avon's performance management program. It was important that employees understood their goals and were fairly evaluated at year's end.

So, the solution involved...

- Simplifying the ratings process and the goal-setting process
- Placing an emphasis on behaviors
- Simplifying the design of the process so that fewer instructions were needed

A similar process was followed to simplify other talent management processes, such as employee engagement and 360° feedback.

Did it work?

- Engagement increased by 7% from 2006 to 2008
- Managers were rated better on talent management areas (such as feedback, professional development, and goal setting)
- Talent review discussions became more decisive and productive

Case Study Two: McDonald's

There is perhaps no bigger global brand than McDonald's. For billions of people worldwide, the name evokes images of golden arches and red-haired clowns, and the smell of cooking French fries. Mmmmmm!

From its beginning in the 1940's in California, through its transformation as a franchise in the 1950's, McDonald's has over 31,000 locations in 119 countries, spanning six different continents.

Success is not always guaranteed, however. From 2002 to 2004, McDonald's went through four CEO's, mostly due to unexpected illness and death. This coincided with their first-ever quarterly loss, major vision changes, and global economic problems.

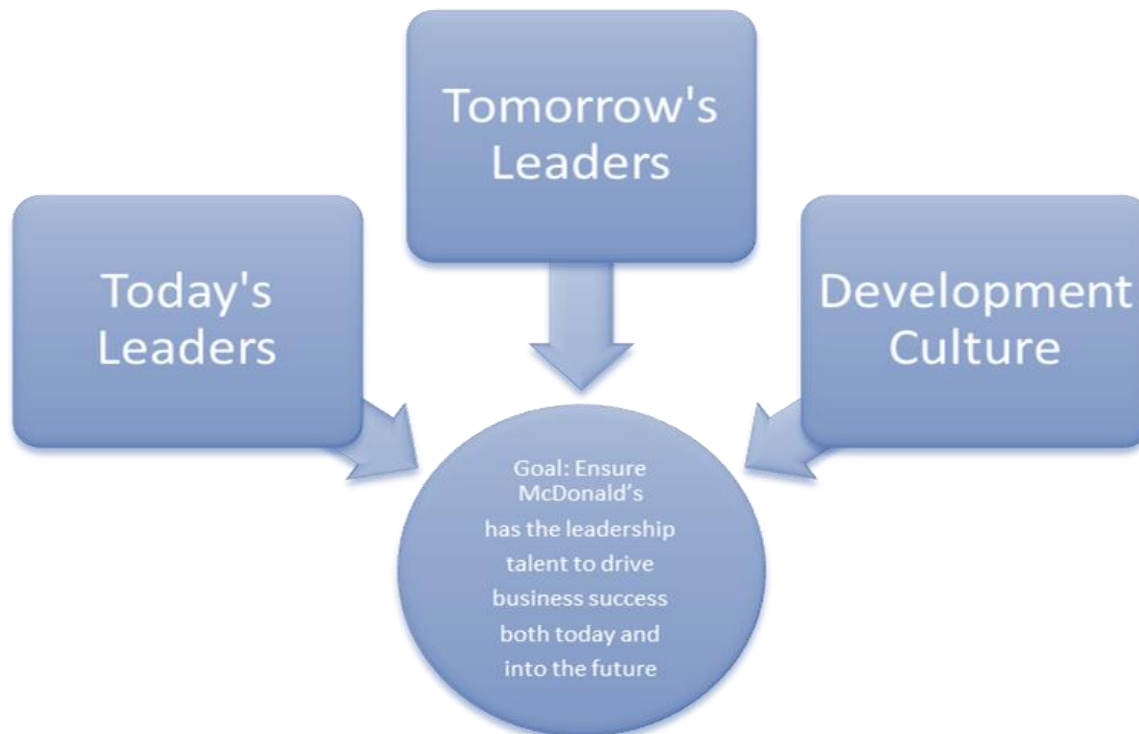
As a result, McDonald's established a talent management team in 2002. This team focused on several initiatives:

- Enhancing their performance development system
- Improving succession planning and talent development globally

- Establishing leadership programs, such as the Leadership at McDonald's Program (LAMP), the McDonald's Leadership Institute, and the Global Leadership Development Program

Although initially their focus was on executive-level positions, their focus later expanded down the pipeline, including a variety of global areas.

McDonald's talent management program is drawn as a map.



There are a few key supporting principles to this map:

- Although McDonald's invests a lot in leadership development, more is invested in the "high potentials"
- Simpler, standardized processes are always preferred
- Technology should not be a barrier

Case Study Three: HSBC

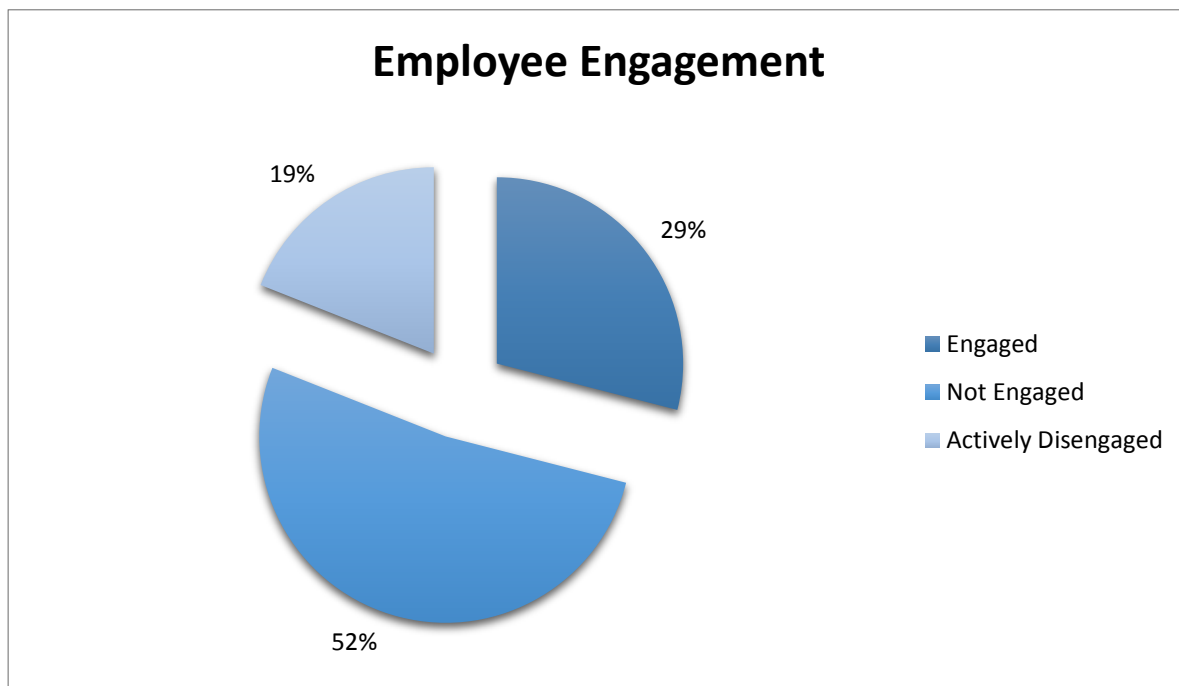
HSBC is one of the largest financial services organizations in the world. They have about 8,500 offices in 85 different countries around the world. Its founding member, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (where the acronym HSBC comes from), was established in 1865.

Fostering Engagement

There's a difference between being at work and really being there. The Gallup Management Journal places employees in one of three categories:

- **Engaged:** These employees are passionate about work and feel connected to their company. These are the innovators; the movers and shakers.
- **Not Engaged:** These are the zombies in your organization. They put in their eight hours and the bare minimum amount of effort to get by.
- **Actively Disengaged:** These employees are disgruntled. They waste away their hours on the Internet and on the phone. They may even be actively sabotaging the work of other employees.

Here is a chart showing the makeup of the average organization in 2011.



(Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/150383/Majority-American-Workers-Not-Engaged-Jobs.aspx>)

Can you guess what group high performers and high potentials are almost always found in? (Engaged, of course!) So how do we engage a higher percentage of our employees?

The Ten C's

The Richard Ivey School of Business suggests that we put the ten C's into practice.

- **Connect** with your employees. No matter what your position, take the time to speak with members of your staff individually.

- Give your employees the opportunity to advance their **career**. This means you should hold employees accountable, provide opportunities for learning and advancement, and ensure that people have meaningful and challenging work.
- Create a **clear** vision. People can't follow you if they don't know where you're going!
- **Convey** your vision, your expectations, and feedback.
- **Congratulate** employees when they make a contribution or do something positive.
- Give employees a chance to **contribute** to the organization.
- Give employees **control** over their jobs as much as possible.
- Create a **collaborative** atmosphere. Teamwork is a great motivator, and research by the Gallup organization shows that having a best friend at work is one of the biggest engagers.
- Ensure your company is **credible** and has a good reputation.
- Create **confidence** in your employees and in your company.

Evaluating the Plan

Why is Evaluation Necessary?

Evaluating your program is the only way to know if you are on the right track. Every plan requires a system of evaluation! You can adapt your evaluation model from others available; many are rooted in principles of adult learning and education.

If you cannot validate the worth of your program, chances are the program will not survive. At the same time, talent management planning can be such a complex undertaking and so difficult to measure that we actually become overwhelmed with trying.

You may find some very complex systems for evaluation; however, our goal is to provide you with a simple, straightforward tool that measures information in objective ways whenever possible. We have also resisted the tendency to focus on vague questions that would reflect individual satisfaction levels more than actual data.

Your evaluation needs to encompass the entire talent management program. Formal evaluation needs to take place quarterly, and should be conducted by a formally appointed committee that includes representatives from a cross section of the organization; managers, CEOs, and board members can all be part of this committee.

We recommend that the committee follow a six-step process like this one:

- Step 1: The committee meets for the sole purpose of program evaluation.
- Step 2: Committee members are briefed on the need for evaluation and the steps to follow.
- Step 3: Results data is presented to the committee (benchmarks from this organization as well as competitors). Make sure that you have access to the information that you need, and

that committee members find the most useful. In order to efficiently gather information for the committee members, managers will need access to a form or web-based questionnaire that quickly and effectively collects the information.

- Step 4: Analyze the results of the program, recommend improvements, and document evaluation results.
- Step 5: Share the results that identify specific goals and targets for improvement with the people responsible for talent management.
- Step 6: Sustain the program with ongoing training, management, and by sharing information with stakeholders.

List five essential questions for an evaluation form about a talent management program.

Sample Evaluation

Through the life of a program, shorter quarterly meetings that review progress should be supplemented by longer annual or semiannual meetings to keep the program on track.

Since your program is unique to your organization, your evaluation program will be unique as well. This sample is designed so that you can gather and compare meaningful data over time, while at the same time being very sensitive to people’s commitment to this program and the time that they have already invested. The following list of questions can be answered by your planning committee through the program inception and design, and then revised prior to implementation. (By revised, we mean that it will be shortened to meaningful questions that apply to your organization.)

Talent Management Program Evaluation Checklist

Evaluation committee members can complete this list independently or in consultation with other program members. You are encouraged to discuss points that need clarifying or explaining and make recommendations for improvements or modifications.

Effective Programs Contain the Following Elements	Our Program Succeeds With This At Least 80% Of The Time	Our Program Needs To Keep Or Exclude This Element
---	---	---

Effective Programs Contain the Following Elements	Our Program Succeeds With This At Least 80% Of The Time	Our Program Needs To Keep Or Exclude This Element
Talent management plan is coordinated w/organizational strategic plans.		
All successors have been identified at least 2 layers deep.		
All high performers and high potentials have been identified.		
Talent management plan is linked to internal training and development programs.		
All employees have a completed talent profile.		
There is a written mission, vision, and values statement specific to the program.		
There is a written process that is being followed.		
We have developed a budget and resources for the program.		
We have designed a method to record and develop individuals who are designated in the program.		
Management employees have attended up-to-date workshops/training about the program.		

Effective Programs Contain the Following Elements	Our Program Succeeds With This At Least 80% Of The Time	Our Program Needs To Keep Or Exclude This Element
Career development workshops have been provided to employees.		
We have established a method to compare individual skills with potential future positions.		
A method is in place to forecast future talent needs.		
A method is in place to meet succession demands by utilizing profiles and the IEP.		
A tracking system is in place to record all activity.		

Action Steps That Result From This Assessment

Goal Statement	Review Date

Note that each step should be written in the form of a SPIRIT goal:

- Specific
- Prizes
- Individual
- Review
- Inspiring
- Time-Bound

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Sims, Doris. Creative Onboarding Programs. McGraw-Hill, 2011.*
- ✓ *Sims, Doris M. Creative New Employee Orientation Programs. McGraw-Hill, 2002.*
- ✓ *The 30-Minute Guide to Talent and Succession Management. AuthorHouse, 2009.*