

Strategic workforce planning tools

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Designing a procedure inside your organization that [proactively predicts](#) current and future employment needs is the foundation of strategic workforce planning. This will ensure that your company has the resources it needs to achieve its objectives. It also entails ensuring that the appropriate person is in the right position at the proper time.

[Workforce management](#) is incomplete without strategic workforce planning. This is why businesses utilize workforce planning technologies to create an agile workforce, uncover performance deficiencies, close workforce gaps, and make more informed business decisions to meet their objectives.

According to TalentX, a workforce planning tool is a tool that assists with [workforce planning](#). It's all about its capability of using data to analyze the current capabilities and the future needs of the workforce. Workforce planning tools may help an organization discover gaps in existing and future workforce needs and performance shortages and help establish an [agile workforce](#) by reducing workforce gaps and making more intelligent business decisions to achieve company goals.

Here are the Top 5 workforce planning tools available today:

1. Strategic workforce planning map

Strategic workforce planning maps make use of a top-down approach. The mapping starts from the executive level to the shop floor employees, understanding how each group and department communicate and operate. However, before creating strategic workforce maps, HR must first understand the ultimate goal of the organization.

To have a complete view of your workforce, you need to understand where they work, whom they work with. With this information, HR can effectively plan and make decisions about strategy or priorities.

Mapping is the process of obtaining accurate and relevant information about the workforce systematically. If done properly, it can form the basis of most successful workplaces with recruitment, retention, communications, training and development, and [succession planning](#) issues.

Most organizations in the developed world make use of strategy mapping software to help them undertake the process. This type of software links everything that HR does to the organization's goals. A strategy map tries to create a graphical strategy representation that can be used to communicate and align all of your personnel as critical contributors to the company's strategy. It can ensure that what the company wants and what HR requires are clear, integrated, and communicated.

The best software and methodologies for building strategic workforce maps should take the data-driven approach. It should gather and make use of data for both soft skills and behavioral competencies. This method ensures that you can spot emerging leaders and produce the finest hiring selections possible. As a consequence, you'll have a well-thought-out succession and career strategy.

2. 9-Box Grid

HR professionals and leaders are well aware of how difficult defining a person's performance can be. How do you assess an employee's potential for advancement or identify the leadership skills that qualify them for succession roles? How can you, as a company, establish a baseline that allows you to evaluate all employees honestly and fairly?

The answer is a 9-box grid. The [9-box grid](#) is a personal assessment instrument that assesses an employee's current performance and potential contribution to the company. The horizontal rows of the grid indicate whether the employee is currently performing below, meeting, or exceeding performance objectives, and the vertical columns represent growth potential. The junction of the two marks the employee's current position and potential areas for improvement.

The 9-box grid is typically used in succession planning to assess an organization's present talent and identify future leaders. When leadership performance and potential are reviewed and plotted on the graph, those in the upper right quadrant are identified as [high-potential candidates](#) for succession, whilst those in the lower-left quadrant may need to be transferred or removed from the organization.

The boxes on the grid show where money should be spent to develop future leaders. Those in the upper right quadrant should be ready for top leadership within 6 to 12 months; those in the other close boxes will take longer but can be nurtured for future advancement to the upper right quadrant.

How HR professional leaders can use 9-box diagrams;

- **Prepare early**

It's a good idea to start planning early. Prepare everyone to be involved in the 9-box planning process. You prepare people involved by giving them plenty of time to understand what's involved and letting them gather their thoughts before the session. Engaging a facilitator who can help coordinate everyone and ensure they're prepared before the session is one of the best options.

- **Set criteria**

While it might be easy to pick the 'good' and 'not so good' performers, the leadership team may struggle to place people in the other categories. That's why it's essential to set the criteria for each box and agree on the standards employees should meet. But, again, it's always best to make use of data. For example, you can take average employee performance over the years and align it with their [soft skills](#) and [cognitive ability](#).

- **Ask questions**

In most cases where there is no data, it's essential for the leadership team to ask questions and remain objective throughout the 9-box rating process. To provide consistent, relevant results, the ratings must be neutral and objective.

- **Analyze results**

Once you have gathered data for performance and soft skills, the HR analyst can perform the analysis.

Both understanding and [soft skills](#) data should be put into categories to enable the 9-box grid to be created.

If data isn't being used, your leadership team should take a step back and do another sweep to ensure that employees are being positioned based on their performance and potential. This is the moment to have good placement debates. This allows the leadership team to speak up for their employees.

- **Schedule catch-ups**

The number of meetings held by leadership teams should not be restricted to one per year. Instead, consider it an opportunity to plan monthly catch-up meetings with the leadership team to discuss any changes, especially if your company's staffing levels have changed significantly.

3. HR Dashboarding

An [HR dashboard](#) is a tool that enables Human Resource professionals to monitor, analyze and report on [Human Resources Key Performance Indicators](#). Modern, interactive dashboards make use of an HR analytics platform that makes it simple to mix data from several systems and study it in depth right within the dashboard. This way, HR teams can quickly find insights that will improve recruiting, [optimize workplace](#) management and enhance employee performance.

The HR dashboards can be categorized by major key functions within HR such as Executive, Recruitment, Training and Development, Employee Retention, Remuneration, Performance, etc.

Executive dashboards enable HR executives to review and analyze all critical KPIs in one place quickly. The dashboard shows high-level metrics such as employees by role and location and critical ratios such as gender, performance, and training.

Recruitment dashboards are meant to identify bottlenecks and opportunities in the hiring process to improve efficiency, avoid lost revenue and additional costs, and reduce the time it takes for the organization to hire new employees.

Remuneration dashboards help HR professionals understand how the salary their company pays compares to what competing employers provide their employees in similar positions. This gives them insight into the competitiveness of their company as potential employers. Companies want to ensure that they offer a salary that is fair and competitive on the one hand while avoiding inflated salary costs on the other hand.

Employee retention dashboards help organizations make sense of the significant investments they make when hiring new employees. For example, there are recruiting costs, training costs, salary, etc. Hence, retention dashboards help organizations find ways to reduce employee turnover rates and prevent valued employees from leaving the company.

Employee performance dashboards help HR professionals and executives understand how the employees are doing concerning performance.

Building these dashboards from scratch can be challenging, but the good news is that the latest HR software systems are made up of easy to discern dashboards. Some HR dashboards include:

1. Dayforce
2. Gusto
3. Paycor Perform
4. UltiPro
5. BambooHR
6. WebHR

4. Compensation and job analysis benefits

Wages are only one aspect of [compensation](#). Health insurance paid time off, and even stock options are all included. A pay analysis can help you better understand what compensation packages are suitable for your staff. To get a complete view of the competitiveness of your salaries, a compensation survey should be conducted first.

Compensation surveys are tools for determining the median or average pay for employees in single or

multiple jobs. Data on pay is collected from numerous employers and analysed to determine the amount of compensation paid. Failure to remunerate employees comparably may result in high employee turnover because of unfair or inequitable remuneration and inability to attract key talent to your organisation. Therefore, your organisation must thrive to ensure that its salaries are comparable or better than what competitors are paying.

Each organisation should ensure overperforming employees are compensated adequately, and your underperforming employees are paid accordingly. Any disparity between the two could result in losing your best employees because you are underpaying them or just keeping your worst employees because you are overpaying them (often referred to as the golden cage).

5. Scenario planning

Scenario planning is a type of strategic planning that involves creative thinking. Scenario planning entails establishing assumptions about the future and how your business environment will evolve due to those assumptions.

In strategic workforce planning, scenario planning can be used to identify a specific set of uncertainties, different "realities" of what might happen in the future of the workforce. It assists HR in making informed decisions about how to deploy resources, train employees, and so on effectively.

According to TalentX, here are some ways scenario planning works as an excellent tool for workforce planning:

1. Predict possible future conditions
2. Shift employee thinking about the external environment
3. Think of alternative strategies
4. Picture out the consequences of all actions and decisions in the future
5. Develop alternative plans and long-range plans
6. Develop gap-closing strategies in skills

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We have discussed the 5 most important strategic working planning tools that organisations or HR professionals can take advantage of. The choice of which one to apply now in your organisation depends on your capabilities and your stage on the workforce analytics journey.

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