

New findings highlight gaps in how leaders assess high-potential talent

Time to swap subjectivity for structured talent assessment

- **91% of HR and 88% of leaders use subjective performance ratings**
- **Just 45% of HR and 30% of leaders use psychometric assessments**
- **67% of high potential (HiPo) employees say identification has a significant impact on career goals**

New research from [Talogy](#), a global leader in talent management, reveals a significant gap between organization's commitment to high potential (HiPo) programs and their reliance on subjective identification methods, increasing the risk of bias and limiting predictive accuracy.

The [global study](#), drawing on feedback from **over 1,000 professionals** as well as insights from expert consultants, found that while **70%** of organizations use a customized definition of HiPo, the methods used often depend on subjective judgment rather than structured assessment.

The HiPo Paradox: relying on subjectivity and gut feeling

The research points to a reliance on less structured, perception-based approaches that can overlook objectivity, with **91%** of HR professionals and **88%** of leaders using performance ratings and manager recommendations to select HiPo talent.

In addition, a large majority of HR (**79%**) and leaders (**72%**) rated their programs as effective, despite the study finding that evaluation is often limited to tracking promotions, rather than linking HiPo success to business outcomes.

Just **45%** of HR and **30%** of business leaders currently use psychometric assessments, the most structured and validated method available to identify future leaders.

"This is one of the most critical takeaways from our research," said [Dan Hughes](#), senior director of R&D at Talogy.

"Organizations are investing significant time and resources into HiPo programs, but are often using methods such as manager recommendations and performance ratings - which can be prone to subjectivity - to identify talent.

"While these approaches can provide valuable perspectives, they also highlight the need for more comprehensive and reliable identification — combining these existing methods with rigorous, science-based assessments to more accurately pinpoint high-potential talent who can be significant drivers of their organization's future success."

Building stronger, future-ready talent pipelines

With over **50%** of HiPo employees reporting that being identified has increased their commitment to their employer, and **67%** saying that their HiPo status has impacted their career goals, it's clear that HiPo programs boost retention rates.

However, the study warns that this retention boost is quickly lost if development is inconsistent. While mentoring and coaching are common, cross-functional training and job shadowing are underused, with **83%** of HR professionals stating mentoring as the most common, compared to just **38%** reporting e-learning as their most used development method.

Hughes continues: "To truly harness the boost in motivation that comes from being identified as HiPo, organizations must move beyond informal practices and implement structured, science-backed tools with meaningful development opportunities that ensure fair identification and support targeted development."

"By closing this gap and putting engaging and impactful development programs in place alongside fair, predictive, and scalable assessment strategies, organizations can maximise the potential of their top talent and reap long-term benefits."

[Russ Becker](#), CEO at Talogy added: "In today's work environment, shaped by; rapid change, evolving skill demands, and increasing role complexity, organizations are being challenged to do more with less and stay lean. That's why high-potential programs are more important than ever for companies that want to stay ahead and build a workforce ready for the future."

Conducted in 2025, the research employed three methods:

- rapid evidence assessment of independent scientific literature
- surveys administered to international HR professionals, leaders and HiPo employees from a variety of industries and sectors
- focus groups with experts at Talogy operating in the HiPo space

By examining the topic from the different perspectives of HR, leadership and HiPo employees, the research provides a fully balanced and carefully considered insight into existing HiPo programmes.

Read the report: <https://info.talogy.com/en-us/hipo-executive-summary>

[High Potential employee image](#)