

Case Study 4: Retail & Lifestyle – Designing a High-Potential Program

Challenge Statement

A fast-growing retail & lifestyle brand was losing its top performers in critical functions like merchandising and supply chain to competitors. The lack of a clear career path and structured development for high-potential employees (HiPos) was leading to disengagement and high turnover, risking the company's expansion plans.

Client Brief

- **Industry:** Retail & Lifestyle
- **Employee Strength:** 3,000 employees
- **Geographic Coverage:** 150+ stores across India and the Middle East.
- **Business Revenue & Status:** Revenue of ₹900 crores. In an aggressive expansion phase, making the retention of key talent a top business priority.

Proposed HR & Business Solution

We co-created and launched a structured "**HiPo Accelerator Program**" to identify, develop, and retain future leaders.

1. **Talent Management & Succession Planning:** Implemented a robust process for identifying HiPos using a 9-box grid, combining performance data with leadership potential assessments.
2. **Talent Development:** Designed personalized development journeys for HiPos, including stretch assignments, cross-functional projects, and exposure to senior leadership.
3. **Leadership Development:** Partnered with external coaches to provide one-on-one leadership coaching focused on strategic thinking and influencing skills.
4. **Career Framing:** Created clear and transparent career paths for HiPos in merchandising and supply chain, outlining the competencies required for advancement.
5. **Talent Engagement:** Established a retention strategy for HiPos, including regular career conversations with senior leaders and tailored compensation reviews.

Results

The HiPo Accelerator Program successfully lifted the retention rate of identified top performers by **18% within the first year**. Internal fill rates for critical mid-senior level roles increased from 40% to 65%, significantly reducing recruitment costs and building a stronger internal leadership bench.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Success KPIs Demonstrated:

- **Retention:** Increased HiPo retention by 18%.
- **Internal Mobility:** Increased internal fill rate for critical roles to 65%.
- **Program Effectiveness:** 95% of HiPo participants rated the program as "valuable" or "highly valuable."

Future Challenges & KPIs to Address:

- **Identification Bias:** Initial demographic data showed under-representation from certain functions in the HiPo pool, indicating a potential unconscious bias in the identification process that needs to be addressed.
- **Manager Resistance:** 15% of managers were reluctant to release their top talent for cross-functional projects, highlighting a need to align managerial goals with talent mobility objectives.

Relevant HR Sub-functions Earmarked for this Intervention:

- Talent Management
- Succession Planning
- Talent Development
- Leadership Development
- Career Framing
- Talent Engagement
- Performance Management