

CASE STUDY:

Three steps to spot high potential contributors.

Even experienced leaders too often fail to match talent with organizational needs which leads to turnover and sub-par financial performance.

“Everyone is a genius.
But if you judge a fish by
its ability to climb a tree, it
will live its whole life
believing that it is
stupid...”

– Unknown, but often credited
to Albert Einstein

Learn and apply these three skills from an insightful executive who helped a direct report go from being nearly fired to one of five top sought after experts. Zander was the General Manager for a \$20M business unit with over 500 employees. A performance evaluation determined he was the lowest among peers. He was days from being replaced. The CEO was convinced Zander needed to go. However, one leader took a closer look and spotted unseen, underutilized talent and helped Zander become one of the company’s top 5 sought after experts. If the company had lost Zander, then tens of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs would have been at risk. Here are three important tips to spot valuable potential that many leaders overlooked:



- 1. Identify each direct report’s unique value proposition** through regular one-on-one mentoring sessions. Identify what each person can do that others cannot. Understand each person’s passions, skillsets, and career aims.
- 2. Know your organization:** Network to see talent gaps in other teams and use “volunteering ” to introduce your mentee.
- 3. Advocate for your direct reports.** Fill talent gaps with the unique value of your team members.

This leader identified Zander’s rare and valuable ability to combine operational experience with deep analytical thinking to create highly accurate financial forecasts. Few others had years of operational experience. Even fewer had the analytical depth of thinking. No one within the company was better positioned to fill this talent gap and need. Zander moved from a people and client facing job to a forecasting position in business intelligence. He now daily provides consulting to a member of the Board of Directors, the CEO, CFO, and VPs to architect and monitor long-term budgets and strategies.

PUT IT TO WORK...

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LIST YOUR TOP FIVE POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	IDENTIFY SKILLSETS What have they done exceptionally well? What results have delivered compared to peers?	NETWORK What cross-function meetings can you attend? What other leaders can you speak to in order to uncover talent gaps or business needs?	ADVOCATE How will you tactfully advocate for this person? How will you influence others to see this candidate has a solution?
<i>Zander</i>	<i>Accurate financial forecasts, strong operational background.</i>	<p><i>I will speak with Tom, head of business intelligence, so we when I can join his monthly organizational Town Hall, listen for needs that his leaders discuss, and take notes.</i></p> <p><i>During my SVP's weekly call I will listen to cross functional updates to understand business challenges and gaps and see where Zander can help.</i></p>	<i>I will work w/ Zander on a "one page" to highlight his results, leadership, and background in operations and finance. I will talk to Zander during our 1:1 to share my observations of his skillsets, how much I value his work, and that I have an idea to help him make that promotion he's been talking about. After I get Zander's approval I'll call Tom and let him know Zander will be a great fit within in his team.</i>
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