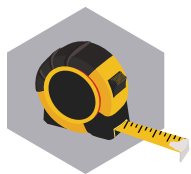# Measuring Early Talent Development Programs

A starter list...

METRICS REFERENCE SHEET

How do we gauge the success of our early talent development programs, and how do we convert their impact into solid data? This is a critical question to answer if you're building or re-aligning a program.

Ultimately the **purpose** of the program will inform what should be measured. The program's purpose should be tightly aligned with the business and talent strategy of the organization. (See this guide in the LDP Connect library for an exploration of how to calibrate a program to business strategy.)

There are many possible metrics that can be used to evaluate program performance. This document is intended as a simple "pick list" of common metrics that community members can reference in the context of their program's purpose.

Typically programs will have 3-4 core metrics that managers track, and that are reviewed with program sponsors on a regular basis as a barometer of program health. As we shall see, common metrics tend to apply to either program participants, or alumni, or both.

In addition to the list below, please see the LDP Connect Scorecard Metric Calculation Guidesheet for a look at several core metrics chosen by LDP Connect's Enterprise Council as a foundation to program evaluation.

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Participant Metrics
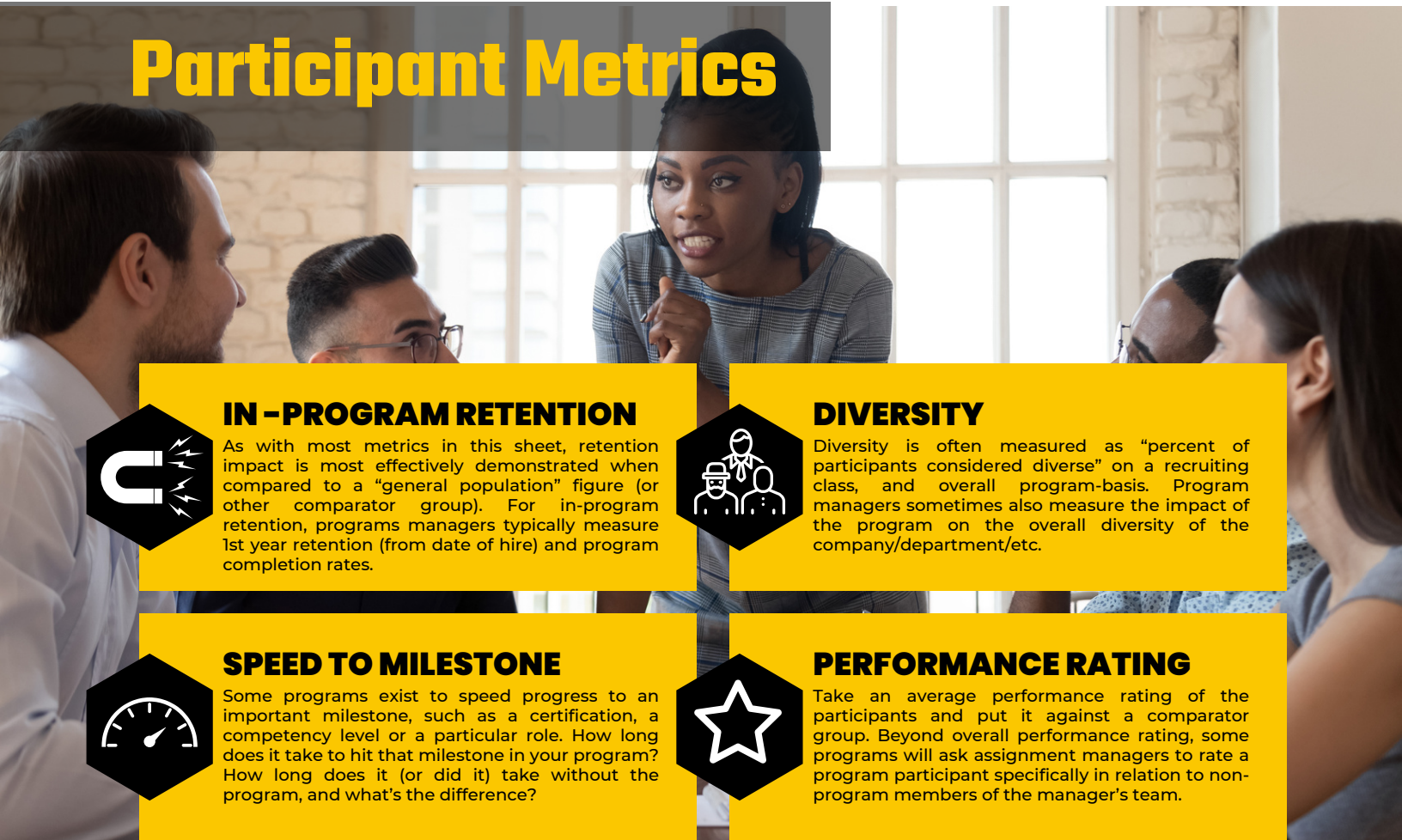
IN – PROGRAM RETENTION

As with most metrics in this sheet, retention impact is most effectively demonstrated when compared to a "general population" figure (or other comparator group). For in-program retention, programs managers typically measure 1st year retention (from date of hire) and program completion rates.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is often measured as "percent of participants considered diverse" on a recruiting class, and overall program-basis. Program managers sometimes also measure the impact of the program on the overall diversity of the company/department/etc.

SPEED TO MILESTONE

Some programs exist to speed progress to an important milestone, such as a certification, a competency level or a particular role. How long does it take to hit that milestone in your program? How long does it (or did it) take without the program, and what's the difference?

PERFORMANCE RATING

Take an average performance rating of the participants and put it against a comparator group. Beyond overall performance rating, some programs will ask assignment managers to rate a program participant specifically in relation to non-program members of the manager's team.

NET PROMOTER SCORE

Net Promoter Score is a simple, and widely accepted measure of satisfaction. I can be measured from whatever group your program was intended to "satisfy." Take the number from your program participants (or assignment managers, etc.) and compare it to the general employee net promoter score of the organization.

PROGRAM IMPACT

The impact of some roles is easily quantifiable (sales, for example.) If your program exists to deliver value in one of these areas, aggregate the overall impact of all participants in the program versus program costs. Compare that ROI figure with alternatives.

FLEXIBILITY

Your program may be tasked with creating "athletes" - employees able to work well across the organization. Depending on where the flexibility is needed, you might measure the consistency of participant performance ratings data between two rotations, geographies, departments, etc.

COST OF HIRE

Sourcing candidates from campus can bring advantages in scale and quality. Quantify the investments made in campus sourcing per new hire and compare them to the average cost per hire of the organization. Metrics like "time to fill" and "growth of applicant pool" can also factor into this figure.

Alumni Metrics

POST-PROG. RETENTION

If not an explicit program objective, most programs aspire to retain graduates beyond normal organization retention rates. The high touch of a program brings the expectation of a tighter bond between graduate and employer. 1-year, 3-year and 5-year retention rates (compared to gen pop) are common metrics for LDP's.

DIVERSITY

A program's contribution to the organization's overall diversity is a useful metric. But diversity rates are even more compelling when combined with one of the other performance-based metrics on this sheet. For example, demonstrating the program's contribution of diverse alumni to a succession plan, or into the senior ranks.

PROMOTION "VELOCITY"

Many programs aspire to accelerate the career progress of its alumni. Taking an average "time to band" figure of how quickly a program graduate moves to the next salary band in comparison to the overall employee population is a good indicator of the program's impact on promotion speed.

ON A SUCCESSION PLAN

If a program is created to build the "bench strength" for leadership roles, reviewing the percent of program alumni on a succession plan can be telling. Looking at the percent of total program graduates who end up on a plan, as compared to the general population, can also be powerful.

LATERAL MOBILITY

Some organizations use programs to retain by demonstrating breadth of opportunity. Evaluating the extent to which program alumni make lateral moves can be a powerful indicator of success - particularly if coupled with retention metrics. Measuring lateral moves also measures the extent to which a program has created "athletes."

"HI-PO" DESIGNATIONS

Programs intended to fast-track high-potential new hires can be evaluated on what percent of the program's alumni actually achieve that distinction. It may also be telling to review the percent of the organization's "hi-pos" that come from the program vs. outside the program.

GEOGRAPHIC FLEXIBILITY

For programs with a global scope, it can be telling to examine geographical moves in the context of performance indicators. For example, was an alum able to produce results in multiple geographies? How common is that for program graduates vs. non-program participants?

IN SENIOR RANKS

If a program is created to build leaders, then there is no more compelling metric than deriving the percent of your leadership ranks that come from your program. Obviously, a program will need time to make an impact in this area; and it is important to define what "leader" or "senior" means.

LDP Connect

LDP Connect is the community of professionals who lead, manage or support early-career talent development programs. With an active membership of over 400, we have been serving members with research, tools and events since 2012. Join us! See www.LDPconnect.com for details.