

Fosway 9-Grid™

VENDOR COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

A guide to vendors on how to maximise Fosway Group's independent analysis of the EMEA HR, talent and learning markets

Fosway 9-Grid™

Cloud HR

2023

Key

Type

Suite

Specialist

Presence

Higher

Mid

Lower

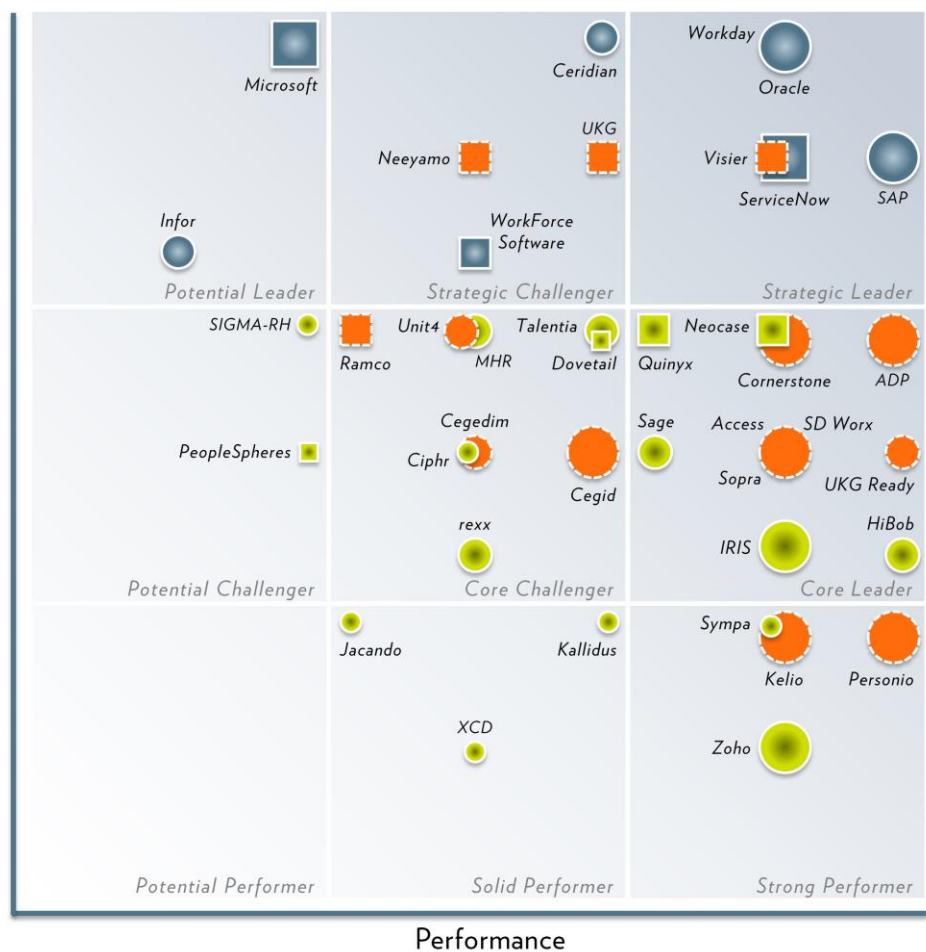
Total Cost of Ownership

Higher

Mid

Lower

Potential



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Key information

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on support vendor communications related to the Fosway 9-Grid™ market analysis. It should be used by your communications team as they create press and content around the Fosway 9-Grid™, and provides answers to many of the questions that are raised by vendors about how best to promote their inclusion.

At a summary level:

- **Why it matters:** The Fosway 9-Grid™ matters to corporate buyers of Next Gen HR, talent and learning solutions because it is the only European-centric research and analysis that enables them to evaluate their procurement options based on five critical factors; Performance, Potential, Market Presence, Total Cost of Ownership and Future Trajectories.
- **Why this guide matters:** Sometimes marketing teams can be rather one dimensional in their view of analyst research – what we call ‘top right’ syndrome. But being included in a Fosway 9-Grid™ is of itself worthy of mention because we filter inclusion strictly based on relevance to EMEA corporate buyers. This guide aims to help you create a positive position regardless of your location in the Fosway 9-Grid™, breaking down key buyer benefits for each individual Zone and rating.
- **What are the do’s and don’ts:** Included here is also a list of the main do’s and don’ts when publicising your inclusion in the Fosway 9-Grid™. The models are formal outputs based on extensive research by our analysts. They must therefore be treated properly when used in your communications. But our goal is to also help you make the most of 9-Grid™ as a promotional opportunity.
- **How to position your publicity:** We are keen for you to maximise this opportunity across your numerous communications channels. So in the last section of this guide are some sample headlines and tweets that might be of use when creating your outputs relating to the 9-Grids™.



Introduction

Maximising the impact of the Fosway 9-Grid™

This guide is designed to support vendors whose solutions have been included on one or more of the Fosway 9-Grids™. The aim of this guide is to help you explain the merits of your position on the 9-Grid™ and how the different dimensions can provide benefits to both current and potential customers.

For a full overview of the Fosway 9-Grid™ models and the background to the analysis, please refer to the [9-Grid™ Introduction](#).

Why Fosway 9-Grid™ matters to customers

The Fosway 9-Grid™ is a five-dimensional model that can be used to understand the relative position of solutions and providers in a particular learning and talent systems market. It allows readers to compare different solutions based on their Performance, Potential, Market Presence, Total Cost of Ownership and Future Trajectories across the market. It is unique because the model shows value in **all of its Zones**. It not only provides an understanding of the market, but also identifies the high-level actions that can help corporate organisations get the best from vendors.

Unlike other analyst models, the point of Fosway 9-Grid™ is not about appearing in a 'top right' position. To maximise the impact of your 9-Grid™ publicity, you need to explain the unique aspects of your solution that have placed you on the grid. The aim of the model is to provide a practical reference and comparison point for all customer organisations, not just those that need the most sophisticated solutions or have the largest budgets. Corporates come in many shapes and sizes, with varying degrees of organisational complexity, fragmentation and multi-nationality. As well as being built for European-centric organisations with European data and research, Fosway 9-Grid™ is also unique in providing the contextual information for customers with differing needs to make positive decisions. Customers use 9-Grid™ to make decisions about vendors in all areas - not just 'top right'.



For vendors, the most effective 9-Grid™ communications must go beyond *'My company featured in Fosway 9-Grid™'* or even, *'My company ranked as Strategic Leader in the Fosway 9-Grid™'*. These types of headline actually tell readers very little about your solution or why it might be the right one for them. This guide is designed to help your customers and prospects get beyond the hype and reach the reasons why your solution could be exactly what they are looking for. For example, not all organisations require enterprise-level complexity; many would rather understand if there are simpler solutions that meet their needs at a lower total cost of ownership.

There is so much more to every single story and every Zone.

Ultimately, what organisations care about, is does your solution fit their needs, their aspirations and their ability to extract value from at a viable cost.

Promotional activity

Inclusion in a Fosway 9-Grid™ lends itself to a number of marketing and PR opportunities, with the most popular including:

- Press releases
- Updates on social media channels
- Mentions on company websites
- Slides in standard presentations
- References in the selling cycle and sales materials
- Blog entries

We will discuss examples of each of these in the document as well as some ground rules of what to say, and what not to say.



Understanding the 9-Grid™ model

One of the most important aspects of the model is that **all** positions have merit, just as they do with a 9-box model for talent assessment that the Fosway 9-Grid™ model is based upon. Each Zone is **more** than just a rated position identifying the relative potential and performance of the vendor, it is an opportunity to fit a range of customer profiles.

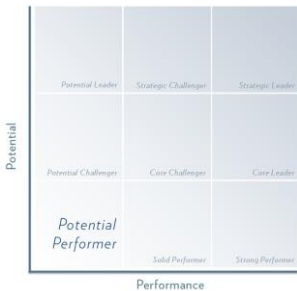
Zones are banded not linear

Positioning in the 9-Grid™ model is based on banding for all dimensions of the model and is not a linear scale. Each dimension has three bands – lower, mid and higher, and solutions within the same band are considered materially equivalent in terms of that dimension as far as the analysis model is concerned. (Our experience shows it is not accurate or even sensible to consider that an abstracted analyst model can always determine that one solution is better than another regardless of customer context).

This means that Fosway is very sensitive about the language vendors use to describe their 9-Grid™ positioning. If you are unsure after reading this guide, please check with us in advance.

Talking about Zone positioning and related comms focus

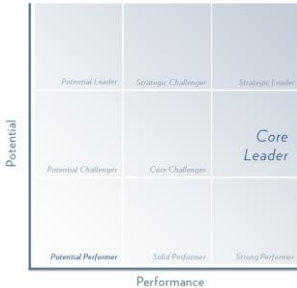



This table provides guidance on how to maximise the potential communications benefits for each Zone.

| Zone Label | Position | Explanation |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Potential Performer |  | <p>Potential Performers are likely to be new or emergent solutions, or alternatively more mature solutions with lower innovation and possible issues over customer advocacy/impact.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: If your solution is a new addition, focus on the initial growth, early adoption and innovation that led to its inclusion. If your solution is more mature, concentrate on positive use cases where possible.</p> |



| Zone Label | Position | Explanation |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solid Performer | | <p>Solid Performers typically have sustained market performance and a track record of customer advocacy.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Any communications here could reference stability, reliability and case study work from satisfied and retained customers, for example. Or highlight the more straightforward aspects of your solution's implementation and usability that make it appealing to new customers.</p> |
| Strong Performer | | <p>Strong Performers typically provide higher levels of market and customer performance but have limited solution scope and sophistication.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Your communications should focus on customer advocacy and your solution's ability positively impact your customers.</p> |
| Potential Challenger | | <p>Potential Challengers typically have solutions with capability across a wide functional range, but have limited customers e.g. new entrants, or lower customer advocacy and market performance.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Solutions in this space are often new entrants, but even if your solution is well established, communications activity for Potential Challengers can concentrate on the features, functions and innovation that make it noteworthy.</p> |
| Core Challenger | | <p>Core Challengers are mid performing solutions with a strong core suite of solutions capability but may lack the sophistication of higher potential solutions to cope with more complex enterprise-scale customers.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Core Challengers should highlight their good track record of customer advocacy, and ability to performance in enterprise organisations without some of the complexity of the solutions found at Leader level. Remember, not all organisations need those additional features and functions, nor do they want to pay for them.</p> |



| Zone Label | Position | Explanation |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core Leader |  | <p>Core Leaders provide a strong suite of capability but may lack some of the sophistication or scope of higher potential solutions.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Core Leaders can highlight a very good track record of enterprise win rate, customer delivery and advocacy. Focus on the differentiated benefits of your solution and how customers are using it in practice.</p> |
| Potential Leader |  | <p>Potential Leaders provide sophisticated solutions with comprehensive suites of capabilities that are well suited to complex organisations but lack current market performance or have limited customer advocacy. This might be because they are highly capable emerging solutions, or because they are an established vendor with lower current market success than they have had historically.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Communications should appeal to complex enterprise-scale customers and underpin your solution's ability to meet their sophisticated needs with strong innovation and a broad feature set.</p> |
| Strategic Challenger |  | <p>Strategic Challengers provide solid performance with solutions that have a richer and broader suite of capability than most other solutions in the Fosway 9-Grid™.</p> <p>Suggested Communications Focus: Vendors should communicate the capability of their solution to meet the needs of complex enterprise-scale global customers. Your customer advocacy should also feature, particularly referencing case studies wherever possible.</p> |
| Strategic Leader |  | <p>Strategic Leaders are higher band performers and provide their customers with higher band potential. They provide a rich suite of capability across a broad scope of features and have the sophistication to meet the needs of complex enterprise-scale customers. Strategic Leaders also have strong market performance and customer advocacy. As a result, they are frequently short-listed and selected by such organisations, and consistently</p> |



| Zone Label | Position | Explanation |
|------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | meet the needs of those organisations. Suggested Communications Focus: Strategic Leaders should <i>not</i> focus on being in a so-called ‘top right’ position on the 9-Grid™, or on being the ‘best’. Instead, your message should highlight the comprehensive nature of your solution and its proven ability to deliver innovation, adoption, advocacy and customer satisfaction. |

Talking about your In-Zone positioning (Trajectory)

Within each Zone, solutions are placed in a certain position. It is important to remember that these relative positions within a Zone only highlights *our view of YOUR Future Trajectory* within the Fosway 9-Grid™ analysis. It is not about your position relative to other solutions in that Zone. Your trajectory is based on your progress relative to your own position and relative to the market as a whole, not the other solutions in the Zone

All vendor solutions within a single Zone are materially equivalent in terms of their 9-Grid™ banding. So, no solution can be termed to be ‘better’ or ‘further ahead’ than any other solutions represented within that Zone.

Useful terms to apply to a solution’s trajectory including its ‘acceleration’ or the fact it is ‘advancing’ on the 9-Grid™ for example. Such terms refer only to your individual solution – not the competition around it.

Also be aware, even though you may be shown in a corner with a diagonal trajectory, it is unlikely for a solution to move diagonally out of a Zone in any direction. A more likely scenario is for a solution to move either up or right if it is following a positive trajectory (or potentially, down or left if a solution is perhaps struggling in the market or is not innovating like it used to for example).



Fosway terminology

The Fosway analysts use very specific language and terminology in the 9-Grid™ reports and this **must be mirrored in any subsequent communications by vendors**. The table below highlights some simple do's and don'ts. This is not an exhaustive list so if you are unsure, please speak to a member of the Fosway team.

| Do... | Don't... |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reference the Zone your solution appears in | Focus on the fact your solution is 'top right' if it appears in the Strategic Leader Zone |
| Focus on the aspects of that Zone that will appeal to your prospects e.g. low barriers to entry, strong customer advocacy or enterprise capabilities, for example | Refer to Zones as categories, types, titles or anything other than the word 'Zone' and its particular name e.g. Core Challenger Zone |
| Highlight your solution's Presence . If it's higher then great, but if it's lower and growing then emphasise your current growth and adoption | Reference your competitors in any communications. Your 9-Grid™ position is <i>your</i> position - maximise the positives of that and not how your solution appears relative to others |
| Mention your solution's Total Cost of Ownership , particularly if it is lower and your target customers might be price sensitive. Challenger-level solutions with a lower band TCO will be a great choice for many customers | Be tempted not to put out formal communications if you are in one of the Performer or Challenger Zones. There is great value in these, particularly for new and growing entrants or for solutions with lower TCO |
| Always refer to the analysis as the ' Fosway 9-Grid™ ' or the '2016 Fosway 9-Grid™' | Refer to the analysis and break up the correct title of Fosway 9-Grid™. For example, don't write the 'Fosway 2016 9-Grid™' or 'Fosway 9-box grid' |
| Always include the ™ symbol | Forget to use the ™ after 9-Grid™ |



| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In your communications, do reference any current investments, innovation plans, roadmaps or any other supporting activity that strengthens your brand message | Infer that Fosway Group analysts have referenced these kind of areas. That is not the depth of analysis provided by the 9-Grids™. So for example, X supplier might discuss their Core Challenger position then reference new investment into the solution that will help make further improvements in the future |
| Use the 9-Grid™ image in your collateral or on your website. We will normally make an official image version available on our website for you to link to. | Amendments or changes to the 9-Grid™ image in any way are NOT permitted. A great deal of time is spent creating the images and positioning the solutions on each grid. Any aspect of change is not allowed, and you will be asked to remove or destroy any variations on the original 9-Grids™ supplied by Fosway Group |
| Reference the detail from the full 9-Grid™ reports if it supports any current themes or topics you are championing | Any sample text or quotes should be fully referenced to Fosway Group and the 9-Grid™ model and not used out of context. Only short quotes should be used – whole sections or paragraphs from the reports should not be recreated in full |



Sample headlines

Below are some sample headlines that build on the suggestions of highlighting the positives of whatever your solution's position on the 9-Grid™. They also work within the parameters of the dos and don'ts above but provide interest for the reader and the recognition required by vendors for appearing on the 9-Grid™ in the first place.

ACME SOLUTION'S continued growth and adoption recognised by 2022 Fosway 9-Grid™

Fosway 9-Grid™ analysis identifies ACME SOLUTION as Core Challenger following sustained market performance

ACME SOLUTION'S global enterprise capabilities earns Strategic Leader status on 2022 Fosway 9-Grid™

Positive client feedback delivers recognition on the 2022 Fosway 9-Grid™ as a Core Leader

Innovation and feature set distinguishes ACME SOLUTION on 2022 Fosway 9-Grid™

Sample social media updates

Using social media is clearly a great way of getting your communications out of course, but can be limited in terms of scope i.e. 140 characters on Twitter. Leave room for others (including the Fosway account) to retweet your message and share your 9-Grid™ recognition. Note, retweets and mentions from Fosway must not be seen as a direct endorsement of your solution. We are keen to actively support all 9-Grid™ related communications but our independence is key. Any mentions or retweets on social media channels must not be taken out of context.

Discover what marks ACME SOLUTIONS out as a Strategic Leader on the 2022 @fosway 9-Grid™ <LINK TO YOUR PR>

Why sustained customer focus is key to ACME SOLUTION'S status as a Core Challenger on the 2022 @fosway 9-Grid™ <LINK TO YOUR PR OR CASE STUDIES>



Learning innovation and new technology contribute to inclusion of ACME SOLUTION on 2022 @fosway 9-Grid™ <LINK TO YOUR PR>

Where ACME SOLUTION appears on the 2022 @fosway 9-Grid™ <LINK TO YOUR PR>

See how ACME SOLUTION's Total Cost of Ownership is recognised on the @fosway 9-Grid™ <LINK TO YOUR PR>

Fosway PR support

The Fosway team actively encourages engagement and support of your communications around the 9-Grid™. We are keen to work with you to maximise the impact of the 9-Grid™ and can provide supporting quotes for example, upon request. Please contact Jon Kennard or Ian McKenna for any additional requirements or queries.

Fosway 9-Grid™ boiler plate

Please use the standard Fosway copy for third party boiler plates or for any additional reference copy for digital and printed media.

About the Fosway 9-Grid™

Fosway Group is Europe's #1 HR industry analyst. The Fosway 9-Grid™ provides a unique assessment of the principal learning and talent supply options available to organisations in EMEA. The analysis is based on extensive independent research and insights from Fosway's Corporate Research Network of over 250 organisations, including BP, HSBC, PwC, RBS, Sanofi, Shell, and Vodafone.

Visit the Fosway website at www.fosway.com for more information on Fosway Group's research and services.



Fosway approval for PR

The Fosway team is keen to work with you to support your PR activity. We can support your press releases with the correct input. So, before you issue any news relating to the 9-Grid™ please send a copy to **Jon Kennard**, Content Editor, in advance for approval. Email: jon.kennard@fosway.com.



About Fosway Group

Fosway Group is Europe's #1 HR Industry Analyst focused on Next Gen HR, Talent and Learning. Founded in 1996, we are known for our unique European research, our independence and our integrity.

For over 25 years, we have been analysing the realities of the market, and providing insights on the future of HR, Talent and Learning. Fosway analysts work extensively with our corporate clients to understand the inside story of the challenges they are facing, and their real experiences with next gen strategies, systems and suppliers. Our independent vendor analysis also provides a vital resource when making decisions on innovation and technology.

And just like the Roman road we draw our name from, you'll find that we're unusually direct. We don't have a vested interest in your supplier or consulting choices. So, whether you're looking for independent research, specific advice or a critical friend to cut through the market hype, we can tell you what you need to know to succeed.

Example clients include: Alstom, Aviva, Boots UK, BP, BT, Centrica, Deutsche Bank, Faurecia, HSBC, International SOS, Lloyds Banking Group, Novartis, PwC, Rolls-Royce, Royal Bank of Scotland, Sanofi, Shell, Swiss Re, Telefonica, Thomson Reuters, Toyota Europe, and Vodafone.

Contact Us

Fosway Group Limited

Purlieus Farmhouse, Ewen, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 6BY, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7917 1870

Email: info@fosway.com

Web: www.fosway.com