



**FOSWAY  
GROUP**

# Fosway 9-Grid™

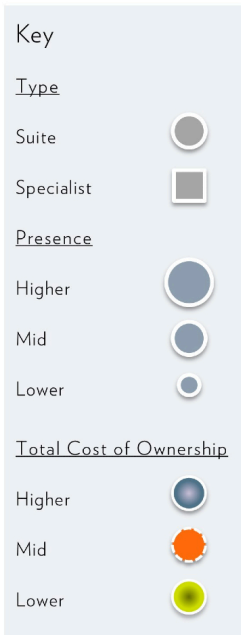
## VENDOR COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

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

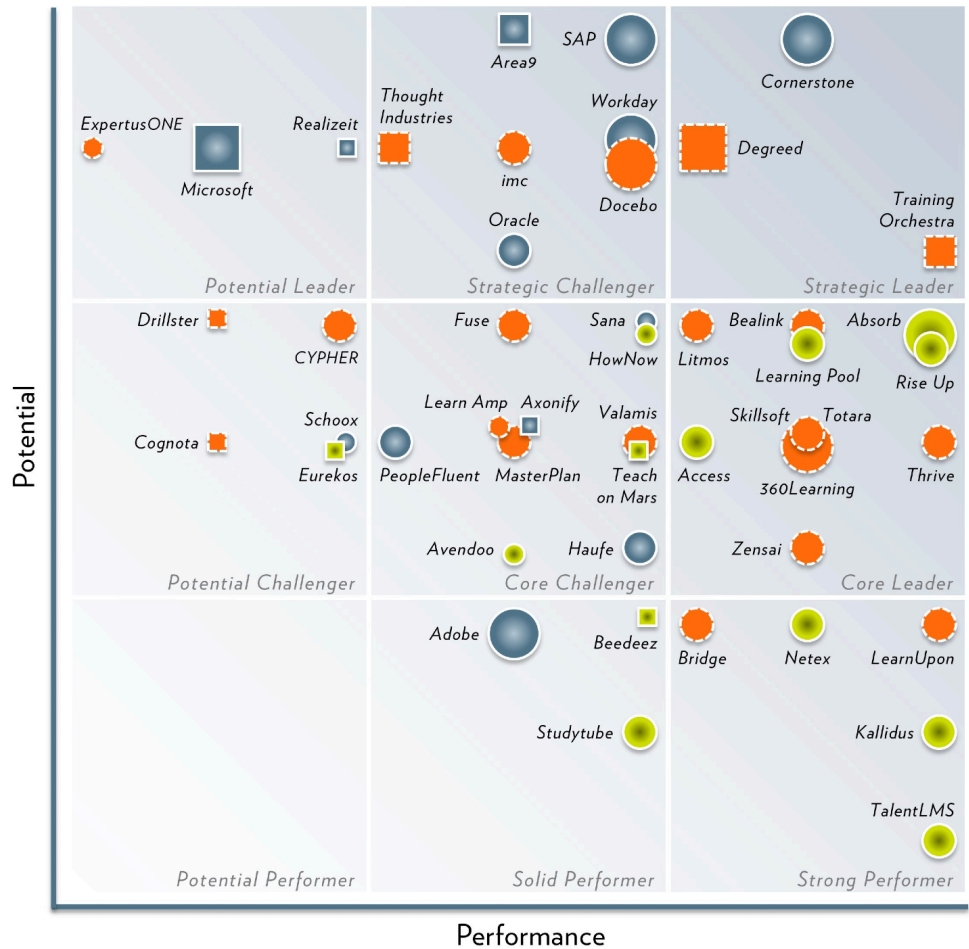
### Fosway 9-Grid™ - Example

#### Learning Systems

2025



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# Key information

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on supporting 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 Trajectory.
- **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 the Fosway 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 Fosway 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 Fosway 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 Trajectory across the market. It is unique, because the model shows value in **all 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 Fosway 9-Grid™ publicity, you need to explain the unique aspects of your solution that have placed you on the Fosway 9-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 the Fosway 9-Grid™ to make decisions about vendors in all areas - not just 'top right'.



For vendors, the most effective Fosway 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 headlines 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 solution could be exactly what they are looking for. For example, not all organisations require enterprise-level complexity; many would rather understand if there were simpler solutions that meet their needs at a lower total cost of ownership.

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*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.*

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## 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 some ground rules of what to say, and what not to say later in the document.



# 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 Fosway 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 Fosway 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
<b>Potential Performer</b>		<p><b>Potential Performers</b> 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><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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
<p><b>Solid Performer</b></p>		<p><b>Solid Performers</b> typically have sustained market performance and a track record of customer advocacy.</p> <p><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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>
<p><b>Strong Performer</b></p>		<p><b>Strong Performers</b> typically provide higher levels of market and customer performance but have limited solution scope and sophistication.</p> <p><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> Your communications should focus on customer advocacy and your solution’s ability positively impact your customers.</p>
<p><b>Potential Challenger</b></p>		<p><b>Potential Challengers</b> 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><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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>
<p><b>Core Challenger</b></p>		<p><b>Core Challengers</b> 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><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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
<p><b>Core Leader</b></p>		<p><b>Core Leaders</b> provide a strong suite of capability but may lack some of the sophistication or scope of higher potential solutions.</p> <p><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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>
<p><b>Potential Leader</b></p>		<p><b>Potential Leaders</b> 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><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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>
<p><b>Strategic Challenger</b></p>		<p><b>Strategic Challengers</b> 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><b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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>
<p><b>Strategic Leader</b></p>		<p><b>Strategic Leaders</b> 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.  <b>Suggested Communications Focus:</b> 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 highlight *our view of YOUR 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 considered to be materially equivalent in terms of their Fosway 9-Grid™ banding. So, no solution can be termed to be ‘better’ or ‘further ahead’ than any other solutions represented within that Zone.

Also be aware, even though you may be shown in a corner with a diagonal trajectory, it is unlikely for a solution to actually 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 as it used to, for example).



# Fosway terminology

The Fosway analysts use very specific language and terminology in the Fosway 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 <b>Zone</b> your solution appears in	Focus on the fact your solution is 'top right' if it appears in the Strategic Leader Zone
Focus on <b>the aspects of that Zone</b> 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 <b>Presence</b> . 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 <b>Total Cost of Ownership</b> , 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 <b>not</b> 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 ' <b>Fosway 9-Grid™</b> ' 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 kinds of areas. That is not the depth of analysis provided by the Fosway 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 <b>9-Grid™ image</b> and <b>vendor badges</b> in your collateral or on your website. We will normally make an official version of the Fosway 9-Grid™ image available on our website for you to link to. Vendor badges will be sent to both FVP and non-FVP vendors in advance of publication	Amendments or changes to the Fosway 9-Grid™ image or vendor badges 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 of the original images supplied by Fosway Group
Reference the detail from the full Fosway 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 Fosway 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



# Licensable 9-Grid™ Report

## ‘Reasonable Use’ terms and conditions

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- *Cloud HR*
- *Learning Systems*
- *Digital Learning*
- *Talent Acquisition*
- *Talent & People Success.*

*The frequency of the 9-Grid™ publication is determined by Fosway and subject to change without notice. A vendor-specific Licensable 9-Grid™ Report is an extension of one of the Fosway 9-Grid™ reports in one particular segment. A vendor-specific Licensable 9-Grid™ Report contains Fosway’s analyst viewpoint, and the detailed rating of this vendor and their solution assessed in this specific 9-Grid™.*

*A sample Licensable 9-Grid™ Report for a hypothetical vendor is available on request. This document outlines permitted uses and restrictions for the vendor-specific Licensable 9-Grid™ Report.*

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# 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 do's 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 but can be limited in terms of scope i.e. 280 characters on Twitter. Leave room for others (including the Fosway account) to retweet your message and share your Fosway 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 Fosway 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 Fosway 9-Grid™. We are keen to work with you to maximise the impact of the Fosway 9-Grid™ and can provide supporting quotes for example, upon request. So, before you issue any news relating to the Fosway 9-Grid™ please send a copy to **Jon Kennard**, Content Editor, in advance for approval. Email:

[jon.kennard@fosway.com](mailto:jon.kennard@fosway.com)

## Fosway 9-Grid™ boilerplate

Please use the standard Fosway copy for third party boilerplates 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](http://www.fosway.com) for more information on Fosway Group's research and services.



## Fosway Group backlinking guidelines

Backlinking is, put simply, getting other sites to link back to your website. Done correctly, it strengthens the bond between both parties and offers opportunities for growth and better visibility. Through backlinking, Fosway Group can help contribute to your growth and authority through a better user experience and stronger analyst relationship.

### Benefits for FVP members and non-members:

- Credibility through association – helping support your message and providing additional context
- Access to high quality analyst content – signalling authority and relevance
- Improved search ranking – improving visibility
- Wider industry recognition – enhancing value and content reach
- Content trustworthiness – increasing trust and engagement

**Ensure your content adds value** to the Fosway audience while naturally linking back to relevant Fosway content or reports.

**All collaborative partnerships** to include backlinks to [www.fosway.com](http://www.fosway.com) in promotional material and web publications.

**Visually appealing resources** such as infographics, benchmark reports, or case studies that are highly shareable are in scope for backlinks and will provide value to Fosway's target audience.

**If required**, Fosway can suggest pages for FVP members to link to and reference in their own content.

**All relevant news stories to include a backlink** to Fosway as the original source of the data or insight where appropriate.



**Inclusion of Fosway's website** or relevant pages to any HR and learning tech directories, lists of top HR resources or analyst firms.

**Where appropriate**, please use branded anchor text (e.g. 'Fosway Group' or 'Fosway 9-Grid™ for Learning Systems') rather than generic words and phrases.

**Ensure that backlinks** are pointing to the most relevant Fosway page (e.g. specific reports or services), rather than just the homepage, for improved SEO impact.

## Steps for creating a valuable backlink:

**Find opportunities where Fosway content could add value.** Check the content will enhance or support the points made in the article. Pages to link from include:

- Blogs
- News stories
- Research papers
- Resource pages
- Case studies
- Guides and tools

**Choose 'anchor text' to link from.** Select keywords or phrases in your content that will serve as the anchor text ie the text that is linked from. This should naturally fit within the context of the page.

**Insert the link.** Add the hyperlink to the chosen anchor text by linking it to the URL of the external content. Make sure the link opens in a new tab to prevent users from leaving your site immediately.

**Test the link.** After inserting the link, ensure it works properly and leads to the correct page. Broken links can negatively affect your site's user experience and SEO.



# 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.

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