

CASE STUDY

PerformSmart helps county government build a performance appraisal process from the ground up

Location: Manitowoc County, Wisconsin
Number of employees: 435

When the Wisconsin state legislature eliminated collective bargaining agreements in 2011, Manitowoc County took the opportunity to tie pay with performance and move to a new compensation plan.



THE CHALLENGE

Employed under the auspices of collective bargaining, many of the Manitowoc County employees had never been through any sort of performance review process.

Sharon Cornils, personnel director for Manitowoc County, says, “We not only created a new pay plan, but we had to create a review and performance management process for our county.

“The elimination of collective bargaining was a huge culture shift. Under that system, all employees received an automatic annual pay increase on the date of their employment. We knew we had to find a way of dealing with that loss and still make employees feel important and needed.”

Cornils, whose responsibilities encompass compensation, labor relations, collective bargaining and benefits, began a Web search of performance management systems. Several products weren’t deemed user friendly, and some were more robust than what the county needed, and “we couldn’t justify the hefty expense,” says Cornils.

“A meaningful system had to offer coaching and guidance for our supervisors throughout the process. It also had to meet the needs of numerous county departments.”

Cornils contacted Insperty for a demo and chose Insperty® PerformSmart® for Manitowoc County.

The solution

Cornils stresses repeatedly that PerformSmart is user-friendly, a key determinant in the choice of the system.

“That’s a big plus, because the county has 27 departments, all with different needs for performance reviews. We’re able to customize PerformSmart and create templates for each. The system even has suggested text that helps managers get started.”

Manitowoc County took a long-range approach to implementing performance reviews. “We conducted eight months of supervisory training before we ever showed our managers the product. Then supervisors and employees spent an entire year having conversations about performance expectations and competencies that employees would be evaluated against in the new process,” says Cornils.

“PerformSmart isn’t a ‘once-a-year’ product. You can use it every day to document employee progress and changes, and that continual use makes performance reviews so much easier and smoother. Users can record what’s happening, and feedback helps our employees improve within a supportive environment,” says Cornils.

The value

“Performance management is really about building relationships between supervisors and employees, and many of our employees are pleased that their compensation is now linked to their individual performance,” says Cornils.

“It offers employees more say in their future, and we’re seeing increased levels of engagement. I can also run reports and gather data from PerformSmart to see which employees don’t merit increases and why.”

“That would be almost impossible with a manual performance management process, and also create the risk that managers would simply check off boxes on a piece of paper, instead of utilizing the system throughout the year.”

“And for the first time ever, we’ve been able to tell all of our employees that everyone who meets published standards will receive a merit increase.”

“PerformSmart is an affordable platform that’s easy to customize to reflect the culture and structure of any organization.”

– Sharon Cornils

Personnel Director, Manitowoc County

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