

Action Learning Project #6, 2006-2007
System-wide Performance Evaluation Tool

Problem:

At present, we have no consistent web-based templates to use for tracking annual performance reviews. Data from the staff development survey reveals that a full 30% of respondents do not have their performance evaluated annually and 70% do not have a formal individual development plan that they discuss with their supervisor. Without effective tools and a system approach to conducting performance evaluations, we are less effective at improving performance and developing employees for leadership opportunities across the system.

Team Charge:

Research and recommend a web-based performance evaluation tool that can be used across the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Considerations include:

- 1) flexibility to adapt tool according to varying positions and for individual campuses as needed
- 2) use of a system-wide competency model
- 3) tracking mechanism to flag excellent performers for leadership development opportunities
- 4) training preparation needed to roll out to institutions
- 5) integration into supervisory training
- 6) tracking mechanism to indicate individuals interested in leadership opportunities
- 7) moving to a performance management style of review process

Team Sponsor: Associate Vice Chancellor Linda Skallman

Team Advisor: Anita Rios, Director, Staff and Leadership Development; Staff and Leadership Development Steering Committee

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Summary of the Process:

The Action Team met with the executive sponsor in August to gather background information and to clarify the problem. Utilizing action learning skills learned at the Academy, we spent many of the next meetings asking questions and approaching the problem from several angles. After several months of discussion and fact finding, we had clearly defined the problem and had a plan to move forward. We discovered that a team from MnSCU has been studying staff and leadership development for the past few years. We used some of their data collection as talking points and as a starting place for our project. Team members then investigated many aspects of performance appraisal and employee evaluation.

The team decided that we needed to survey the HR directors at the colleges and universities to determine the current performance appraisal processes and problems within the system. This survey was conducted in March 2007, with the following results:

- Many institutions do not have a tracking mechanism for performance appraisal, therefore, most (67%) report estimated completion rates
- There is no consistent trend for supervisor training regarding completing performance appraisals
- 63% of HR directors believe an automated performance management and evaluation system would improve compliance rates on their campus
- The overall satisfaction rate with the current evaluation process at their campus is 5.5 on a 10 point scale.
- In response to how much direction the HR director wants from MnSCU regarding **how** the campus implements the performance evaluation process is 4.6 on a 10 point scale
- In response to how interested the HR director is to attempting to **change the focus** of performance evaluations from evaluation to management the score is 7.5 on a 10 point scale.
- In response to how interested the director would be in having an automated system-wide performance management program available the average score was 7.0 on a 10 point scale, with 11 out of 24 recording a “Very Interested” rating.
- When asked which features in a software tool are desirable the following features were checked (in order of highest response)
 - Communication module which would allow for:
 - Automatic notification when evaluations are due
 - Automatic reminders to update performance notes so evaluation is more reflective of year-long performance
 - Allows supervisors to provide feedback more frequently and to check progress toward goals identified during the evaluation process
 - 360 degree and multi-level performance analysis
 - Customizable. Each campus decides what features to use or not to use.
 - Web-based and secure. Could be accessed and updated from any secure internet connection.
 - Creates an ability to identify top performers for recognition or years of service awards.

Using the results from this survey along with the Staff and Leadership Development Report and Action Plan, the team decided to develop a Request For Information to send to a few of the researched software companies. The RFI was designed to explore the cost of implementing a web-based performance management tool that could address the above stated needs. The RFI is attached to this report.

Recommendations:

Whereas Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has adopted the following Employee Development Philosophy Statement:

“We are committed to developing the talents of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities’ employees. We value our employees and understand that continuous learning benefits the entire system by developing and maintaining employee skills that

link directly to achieving organizational goals and objectives. Supporting successful leaders at all levels also builds institutional capacity to better serve our students and our communities. This commitment is realized as a shared responsibility between each employee and each college, university, or the Office of the Chancellor.” and

Whereas the MnSCU Staff and Leadership Development Steering Committee has stated the following beliefs:

“Performance management is the foundation for effective employee development. It provides an opportunity for employees and their supervisors to discuss goals and jointly create a plan for achieving those goals. Effective performance management includes establishing position descriptions, developing annual goals, setting performance standards, observing performance, giving appropriate and timely feedback, and formally evaluating employee performance.”

The action team, as a result of this project, makes the following recommendations to the Human Resources division:

- Continue to share the MnSCU Staff and Leadership Development Steering Committee Action Plan from February 2006. Ensure all MnSCU Colleges and Universities are familiar with this plan and are aware of the efforts to implement the priorities listed.
- Utilize a committee of diverse individuals to drive this priority forward. The committee should include not only Chief Human Resources Officers, but also individuals from Student Services, Information Technology, ISRS Development, Teaching and Learning and appropriate Labor Relations groups. This committee would act as the channel by which each campus would be able to provide their input, ask questions, and offer feedback. The committee would take responsibility for conducting further research to identify specific software features desired by end-users and look at long range possibilities for integration with the existing SEMA4/SCUPPs systems.
- A few campuses should pilot 2-3 software-based products during the next 1-2 years and report on the effectiveness of each and whether processes had an impact on performance management at their campus.
- Based on this pilot project the Office of the Chancellor will determine whether to recommend the use of the leading software at all campuses and at what level to fund the initiative.
- Use managers from the pilot campuses as trainers on the other campuses.

Attachments:

Leadership and Staff Development Steering Committee Report
Survey
Request for Information