

Investment company earns high yield results with Performance Pro

Employee communication and content customization key to ongoing success



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From 1968, when the company was founded, up until 2004, Lincoln Investment Planning documented their employee performance evaluations the old fashioned way—with pen and paper. Over time, the company staff grew to 193 employees working from 8 locations throughout the northeast. As a result, administering employee performance appraisals in a timely and consistent manner became problematic. HR management recognized that they needed a more efficient system and began to research potential solutions in early 2004. Initially, they were simply looking for a better set of appraisal forms, but soon realized there were more automated options available.

Lincoln Investment Planning HR Administrator, Alison Proffit, joined the company in 2005 just as they were beginning the transition from the legacy pen and paper process to an automated online performance management system. She recalls, “The company definitely did their homework. A decision matrix was developed and completed for each of the nine vendors being considered. At the end of the research phase, results were compiled and the pros & cons of each solution evaluated. Based on the results, Performance Pro came out on top and a recommendation was made.”

Since that time, Ms. Proffit has been responsible for administering the company’s performance management program.

Needs Assessment

During the research and evaluation period, Lincoln Investment Planning compiled a matrix of desired features, rating criteria, and operational characteristics that would meet their current and long term needs. Topping the list of requirements was:

- Ease of customization for their industry, positions, and organization
- Allow secure online access without requiring internal IT support
- Ease of use—user friendly
- Low cost – had to be affordable

What ultimately swung the decision in favor of Performance Pro were affordability/value—everything included in one cost without need for add-on services—and the ability to easily customize built-in financial industry competency and position content to the exact needs of the company.

Implementation

Once the decision was made to go with Performance Pro, the first step of the implementation was to develop a staff communication plan to inform our employees about the changes that were going to take place. Ms. Proffit stated, “We knew the direction we were going. We realized this wasn’t simply a matter of selecting an application and training the staff. We were embarking on a fundamental and significant change that would affect each employee at every level. Everyone needed to understand the ‘what’s’ and ‘why’s’. We made an effort to include the employee in each stage of the process.”

HR and management staff met with all company employees to provide an overview on the philosophy and new direction of their employee performance management program.

In conjunction with the communication program, Lincoln Investment HR staff worked with their dedicated HRN customer support specialist to plan their implementation. The first stage required the most planning and coordination. Focus groups comprised of Lincoln Investment staff were organized to customize existing Performance Pro performance factors and assign weightings appropriate for their specific culture and position responsibilities.

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Alison Proffit,
Human Resources Administrator
Lincoln Investment Planning, Inc.

Ms. Proffit explained, “It was important to the success of the program that when each employee saw the criteria that defined success for their position that it was relevant and meaningful to their specific function.”

Once the performance factors (or competencies) were completed and configured into Performance Pro, the system was previewed by the executive team. Next, the employee

communication and training phase began which included a workshop on effective goal setting. All staff training was conducted by Lincoln Investment Planning HR staff, who had quickly become expert users of Performance Pro.

The first company-wide annual evaluation period took place in 2005. Because of the newness of the system and its introduction late in the review period there were limited employee goals in place and the completing of self-appraisals¹ was optional by department. The overall response from appraisers and employees was positive with nearly all appraisals being completed on time and with few user related problems.

Ms. Proffit remembers that first evaluation period, “The most common feedback I heard from appraisers was related to Performance Pro being very fair and objective in its rating criteria. We had a few bumps in the road but HRN helped us work it through and overall things went quite smoothly.”

Since then, Lincoln Investment Planning has completed two appraisal cycles and is starting on its third. In addition to annual evaluations, all new employees and each employee who is promoted or transferred to a new position is evaluated following a 90-day period.

Across the Board Benefits

When asked about what benefits Performance Pro has brought to Lincoln Investment, Ms. Proffit was quick to offer, “For appraisers, convenience, ease of use and accessibility are key benefits. As for me and our HR staff, we love that it is not software we have to install and support and that we have control over the entire system. From the administrative side, the most significant benefit is that we can quickly track the status of reviews to make sure evaluations are being completed on time. This past review period we achieved 100% completion and on-time merit increases within 30 days of due date. This is a huge accomplishment.”

Exceptional Customer Support

Further bolstering the overall Performance Pro value proposition is expert and knowledgeable customer support at no additional cost. Ms. Proffit concludes, “The biggest surprise and a huge bonus to selecting Performance Pro is the knowledge and friendly responsiveness of their support staff. We love them! They are so nice and helpful and really care that we are happy. Based on improvements they have made to Performance Pro it is clear they listen to their customers and value our feedback.

“I used to work for a very large corporation that did performance reviews with handwritten forms and probably still do to this day. I was so impressed when I came to Lincoln, and even though they are a relatively small company, they had this awesome system in place to conduct appraisals and invest in their staff. Since I have been here, employee retention remains very high and turnover is a non-issue.”

Performance Pro Customer Benefit Summary

Customer requirement	Performance Pro capability	Result	Customer benefit
1. Ease of content customization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 customizable position templates and 150 customizable performance factors • Company specific content • E-mail notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased relevance and acceptance • Customized program and features readily deployed by authorized client administrator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and fairness in performance rating criteria • Evaluations completed on schedule
2. Secure, online access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 128-bit password/data encryption • Secure hosted 24/7 HRN server • Off site remote data co-location • Secure administrator level access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anytime, anywhere, secure online access • Secure and complete employee performance history record • Centralized and secure data storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual password protection • No customer IT administration or hardware/software overhead • Complete administrative reports
3. Ease of use – user friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, uncluttered interface • Simple, intuitive instructions • Electronic signature/paperless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast implementation and deployment • Minimal training required • Consistent rating scale across all job functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved manager efficiency and employee communication • Increased productivity • Reduced administrative resources
4. Low cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value priced • Free customer support • Complete usage reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase price considerably less than other competitive products • Fast ROI and low total cost of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent overall value proposition • Expert customer support included in purchase price

¹ Self appraisal feature is standard with Performance Pro and can be turned on or off at the administrative user level.



HRN Management Group
802 East Winchester Street, Suite 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84107-7533
801-747-1170
www.hrnonline.com
E-mail: info@hrnonline.com

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