



[CHARGED WITH INNOVATION]™



Case Study

Tracking Performance in the Global Age: A Success Story

ION Paces Performance Using SilkRoad WingSpan™

According to the HR consultants at Mercer, "talent is now the only sustainable form of competitive advantage for companies."¹ One Mercer executive goes so far as to describe the situation today as "an ongoing war for talent." As a result, companies are increasingly going abroad to fill positions. However, that solution only works as long as HR is prepared for the challenges that come with the creation and management of a global workforce.

Multinationals can face a tricky reality when it comes to tracking employee performance among diverse employees who work in different time zones. Varying workplace cultures, even within a single corporation, can lead to serious HR headaches when it comes to streamlining performance appraisals and creating a unified sense of corporate culture. In addition, even among companies who only work in one location, the perception that employer feedback is an arbitrary, top-down or even pointless exercise often undermines the usefulness and clarity of such evaluations. The need for simple, effective and universal management solutions has never been greater.

The fact is that today, companies with a strategy for clear, useful and evolving performance appraisals will be the ones who retain their talent.

Employee Life Cycle Management on a Global Scale: ION

Headquartered in Houston, Texas, ION provides seismic imaging, data acquisition and data processing around the world. Since its inception in 1968, the company has grown to 1,300 employees spread throughout the Americas, Europe, China, the Former Soviet Union, the Middle East and Africa.

Deanna Newsome HRIS Manager, describes the distinctive HR challenges that come with the territory of being a truly global company. "ION looks like a conglomerate of small companies acting very independently from one another." As a company with multiple

locations and multiple hiring managers working simultaneously around the world, the key to ION's continued success is not only finding but also keeping the best talent in the field. The main goal, she says "is to become a single, co-operatively operating company despite the vastly different international regions and countries we work in." As part of their efforts to better assimilate offices in disparate regions, the company recently began to search for a Web-based performance management tool capable of meeting ION's demands.

Having successfully adopted SilkRoad technology's OpenHire recruiting management solution, Newsome had in mind a similarly user-friendly yet customizable employee performance management tool. "ION had already developed a set of proprietary HR products. What we didn't want to do is bring on a new product that would be disconnected from our existing process," she explains.

ION's HR department wanted something everyone could work with but could still get the job done on time. Finally, the solution also had to be hosted elsewhere, since the IT department could not support an internal HR product. "Using a web-delivered product was critical to ensure easy access by any of our 200+ managers around the world," Newsome explained. Ron Colley, Manager of Corporate Services, says that another sensitive issue was how to find a new solution that was not "too different." "Like most large companies," Colley explains, "change can be challenging to implement." ION's HR department wanted something everyone could work with but could still get the job done on time.

SilkRoad's WingSpan Makes a Perfect Match

WingSpan is a highly flexible employee performance management solution with a unique blend of functions that maximizes employee talent and achieves business success. SilkRoad technology's performance management software allows companies to utilize their workforce more effectively and productively, turning business strategy into action. WingSpan is a full-featured and fully integrated solution with multi-rater assessments, competency and skill management, development planning, goal setting and performance planning, performance and appraisal reviews, and career development with succession planning.

www.silkroad.com

¹ "Steady as You Go: Managing Human Capital in an Economic Downturn," <http://www.mercer.com/referencecontent.htm?idContent=1300555> (March 18, 2008)

Results

Ron Colley characterized the initial meeting with SilkRoad like this:

"SilkRoad came in, we met with them one time and they showed us their products and their functionality. In an afternoon's time, we went to SilkRoad and told them what we wanted. We faxed their developer the Appraisal form that we were already utilizing (in a manual fashion). The next day they had created the form with the same calculations in the WingSpan product. It was exactly what we had requested."

"With WingSpan, ION was able to adapt it to be one more intuitive part of its employee appraisal process. WingSpan was capable of molding itself to our needs, our process, and our forms, rather than us having to basically conform to another company's performance management product," she says. Colley was impressed with the transition (of moving from a manual appraisal process to an automated one): "Our original implementation went so well it's unbelievable. SilkRoad made it simply seamless."

ION has had such positive results with that part of WingSpan that the company plans to deploy the performance objectives and the succession planning tools as well. "We've already had the developers at WingSpan reconfigure the Performance Objectives page so that it has our vernacular," says Newsome. For Newsome, this was the key factor in choosing the software. "We view the ability to better measure and implement these events as critical success factors that are vital to further development and planning."

Newsome and Colley are extremely pleased with the flexibility and ease-of-use inherent in SilkRoad's products. From a documentation perspective, WingSpan also drastically decreased the amount of paper forms floating around in ION's files. Explains Colley, "The system itself is so intuitive and so user-friendly—all the information required to complete the appraisal is right in front of the manager and accessible on the Web."

WingSpan's built-in ability to evolve with a company's HR needs leaves no doubt in the ION team's mind that the return on investment will extend into the future. "At the end of the day, it comes down to having a product that is just so easy to use," says Colley. Newsome couldn't agree more: "These products are about change management, getting everyone on the same page so that we're all evaluating everyone on the same levels and scales that allow us to transfer human resources and capital as needed." By finding a solution that can keep pace with its diverse and globally distributed talent pool, ION is realizing concrete progress toward an appraisal process that works well for everyone.



U.S. +1.336.201.5100 | U.S. toll free 866.329.3363 | Europe +49.0.40.45.000.823

SilkRoad technology is headquartered in Winston-Salem, NC with offices in Bedford, MA, Chicago, IL, Red Bank, NJ, Jacksonville, FL, San Francisco, CA, Sydney, Australia, Edmonton, Canada, Hamburg, Germany, and Singapore. More information is available by visiting <http://www.silkroad.com> or by calling in the U.S. toll free 866.329.3363 or internationally at +1.336.201.5100. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.