

Maternal and Child Health Consortium:

Creating a Sustainable Organization Using Reviewsnap's Performance Reviews



No matter how unique a business or organization's structure is, performance management will always be essential for the organization's success. That's the lesson the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County (MCHC) learned when it needed to create a strategy to build a leadership team to ensure the future sustainability of the organization.

MCHC, founded in 1991, is a nonprofit organization in suburban Philadelphia with a Mission to improve maternal and child health through the collaborative efforts of individuals, healthcare providers, and policymakers. MCHC's programs include ensuring that pregnant women deliver healthy children and secure well-baby care, as well as supporting families as they prepare their children to enter school. The organization serves an incredibly diverse population of women and families in the Chester County community, so the consortium needs to support a diverse workforce.

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Pamela Bryer, MCHC

MCHC is dedicated to developing a process for continuous quality improvement, leadership development, and alignment of its Mission and Core Values with its performance management system to infuse greater accountability into the organization's culture, but it needed a tool in order to achieve these objectives. "We knew we had to integrate a focus on leadership development into the organization's culture to have a sustainable Mission," said Pamela Bryer, former Executive Director of MCHC.

MCHC began by evaluating how its diverse multilingual and multicultural workforce was managed, including understanding what was and wasn't working with their current performance management processes. Focus groups were conducted with both managers and employees. It was discovered that managers were experiencing difficulty creating and updating performance reviews. Employees expressed that they found the existing performance review system lacked clarity in communicating how their performance was truly being measured.

To find the right software, MCHC then carefully searched for a performance management solution that fit with its needs. Some vendors included costly implementation fees or couldn't get MCHC up and running quickly. Fortunately, Reviewsnap offered a solution that was a great fit for a small nonprofit organization like MCHC — it's cost-effective, easy to deploy, and easy to use.

In order to effectively implement the new review system, MCHC had to start changing the way managers and employees thought about performance — the leadership team, working with HR Consultant Barbara Fitzgerald-Turner, carefully identified Mission-critical metrics that supported the achievement of MCHC's program outcomes and then aligned those metrics with the competencies that lead to employee behaviors that supported the achievement of those metrics. In addition, using the "Performance Plan for Upcoming Review Period-List of Goals" function in Reviewsnap, managers developed specific goals (since employees had indicated goals were too vague in the past) and development plans for each employee (e.g., "Ninety-five percent of caseload contacts completed as required by program"; "Complete training on Active Listening").

Customizing the solution to meet the organization's unique needs was paramount, especially given the nature of the organization's Mission. Reviewsnap provided a library of competencies to start from, and the organization could easily customize from there. MCHC developed two appraisals: one for individual employees and one for managers.

Employees were excited to have clarity, because the competencies provided direction and understanding. The competencies were also tied to Core Values (e.g., "Uphold MCHC's Core Value of maintaining respect and compassion for the clients served") that supported the Mission, which all tied back to critical outcomes. "We were able to create goals related back to the Mission that everyone could work toward, regardless of their role," said Milena Lanz, Senior Director of Healthy Start and Family Benefits. "We're able to gain consistency with a diverse work population."

"Reviewsnap is rich in functionality and an excellent fit for small and nonprofit organizations. The support you get from the Reviewsnap team is outstanding, and the ability to customize performance competencies and goals ensures that every employee in the organization understands how what they do every day supports the goals and Mission of the organization."

Barbara Fitzgerald-Turner, HR Innovations

3 Maternal and Child Health Consortium: Creating a Sustainable Organization Using Reviewsnap's Performance Reviews

For managers, these competencies and goals included those that supported the development of strong leaders (e.g., "Regularly meet with staff to review their progress on assignments and redirect efforts as needed to achieve performance standards"; "Participate in Employee Coaching training").

To ensure that the new system was embraced by managers once a draft of the two new performance review appraisals were developed, a pilot period of six months followed where every manager tested out the new Reviewsnap system. A follow-up survey of both managers and employees validated what worked in the new system and how else to improve the process. Then final adjustments were made.

Within a year of implementation, MCHC saw a 60 percent increase in the completion of on-time performance reviews, and employees and managers expressed how valuable the new process had been to their career development. Now two years after the launch, MCHC is on track for 100 percent timely completion of performance reviews.

Reviewsnap has also provided additional benefits to MCHC. Since it's a Web-based solution, it has given MCHC managers and employees a way to focus on performance feedback regularly instead of once a year. "MCHC is a learning community," said Bryer. "We really believe in building a culture of continuous feedback so our staff can develop skills and talents throughout the year." It has also enabled MCHC to illustrate to nonprofit funders (to which MCHC must apply for funding) the direct correlation that has been created between employee performance metrics and the program outcomes the organization commits to deliver.

As a result of implementing Reviewsnap, managers have embraced the sense of being a good coach, being specific with feedback, and addressing wins and employee challenges. Seeing how goals could be "cascaded" from the overall MCHC Mission, to MCHC program goals, to department goals to manager goals to an employee's individual effort was an "aha!" moment for both MCHC leaders and employees.

"A focus on leadership was a North Star for us," said Bryer. "Performance management is important in order for us to grow future leaders." With a focus on building a sustainable future, Reviewsnap helped MCHC align its performance management to the organization's Mission and established a leadership development process, ensuring that the organization could continue to deliver on its promises to make a difference for women and children in the community.

"Reviewsnap is allowing MCHC to maintain its commitment to excellence."

Pamela Bryer, MCHC



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