

Performance Assessments in an Increasingly Mobile World

White Paper



review**sn**ap

Mobility today means a lot more than employees spending more time taking business calls on their cellphones outside of the office. Mobility today means:

- A more geographically diverse workforce, as more people demand to telecommute — and as more companies offer the opportunity to work remotely to save money and burnish their employer brand
- A more fluid workforce and higher turnover, thanks to the increasing number of younger workers who have a different concept of what it means to work for one employer for “a long time”
- A trend toward workplace communication and management processes to be more consumer-friendly — to offer the same kind of ease of use and instant gratification as employees’ favorite consumer sites
- An increasing degree of connectivity and collaboration between remote locations and the company’s home-based back offices, including mobile workforce management tools and capabilities
- More learning and development is being conducted using mobile apps and cloud-based solutions

The world of performance assessments for the enterprise organization is not immune to these trends. In fact, the opposite is the case: Performance assessment must embrace every facet of what mobility means to American business today.

To keep pace with the changing world of business in general and workforce management in particular, the entire process of performance assessments, compensation management, and learning to enhance performance must become part of the mobile world.

This paper from Reviewsnap explains the trends toward mobility and how performance management is changing to meet those needs.

A More Diverse, More Fluid Workforce

The area of performance assessments, like the rest of the talent management world, is learning how to leverage a workforce that has become more diverse in several significant ways.

For starters, the workforce has become more geographically diverse. More people are demanding to telecommute, and more companies are offering the opportunity to save money and burnish their employer brand.

For example, consider these numbers, from research done in 2011 by the former recognition solution vendor WorkSimple:

- **61 percent** of U.S. companies believe they'll allow more telecommuting over the next three years.
- **56 percent** believe telecommuting makes their employees more productive.
- **62 percent** allow employees to work remotely on either a part-time or full-time basis.

Today's workforce is more demographically, socially, and psychographically diverse than ever before — and that trend is going to continue. Baby Boomers will continue to stay in the workforce longer than previous generations did. The ranks of their younger colleagues, Generation X (generally considered to be born between 1965 and 1979) and the Millennials (born after 1979 and before 2000), have, meanwhile, begun to swell.

By next year, more than one-third of the global workforce will be Millennials, according to Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd, authors of *The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop, and Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today*.

Unlike previous generations, Millennials plan to change jobs more often. They also have a different interpretation of what it means to stay with a company for "a long time." According to research conducted in late 2012 by **Modern Survey**, among Millennials who said they expected to stay with their employer "a long time," the majority also said they intend to stay with their current organization two years or less.

What this means for performance assessments is that managers and leadership need to:

- Realize that different generations have different motivators
- Use online performance management and review software that allows them to customize assessments for unique audiences

A Trend Toward Consumer-friendly Workplace Software and Management Processes

Today's workers want — and top employer brands offer — online consumer-friendly workplace experiences. Employees want the processes and online applications for managing their work life to be as accessible, intuitive, easy to use, and instantly gratifying as their favorite consumer sites. It's all about employers giving great customer service to their employees.

The trend toward treating employees as customers began with training customer-service representatives and sales personnel to “think more like their customers.” It then took hold in corporate wellness programs and online benefits administration. It’s a relatively new concept for talent management and the performance assessment process.

Why? Two overarching reasons:

- Talent management has taken marketing’s lead. They’ve learned the value of actively soliciting feedback about employees’ needs and concerns — just like marketing does with customers — and they’re building that information into their tools and programs.
- Savvy talent management leaders are also responding to the shifts in employee demographics mentioned in the previous section of this paper, to include social networking, mobile computing, and connectivity — all are a part of online consumerism.

The bottom line here is that employees, just like consumers and your customers, more and more want to be informed, connected, and empowered. This is important also when you bear in mind the multi-generational and more geographically diverse workforce.

New Values, Perceptions, and Beliefs: The Need for Consumer-friendly Online Workplace Experiences

For an example of why performance management needs to consider the trend toward consumer-friendly apps at work, look at these values, perceptions, and beliefs among the younger generations.

Generation X:

- Indifferent to authority
- Risk takers and entrepreneurs
- “Latchkey” kids; self-reliant
- Portable careers

Millennials:

- Ambitious goals and high expectations
- Strong sense of self
- Are independent workers and have difficulty with teams
- Are technologically literate

Source: Marks, Michelle. Managing a Multi-generational Workforce. 2010.

Performance management must take advantage of online software that lets it give employees consumer-like online experiences as much as possible.

Greater Connectivity and Collaboration Between Remote Locations and the Corporate HQ

When you combine the growing generational diversity and mobility of the workforce with the trend toward more consumer-like employee programs and processes, it only makes sense to expect a need for an increasing degree of connectivity and collaboration among remote locations and with the back offices at corporate headquarters. It's a trend that includes mobile workforce management tools and capabilities.

The growing trend toward remote collaboration is undeniable, global, and having an effect throughout the enterprise organization. In a December 2011 survey about remote collaboration, **Wrike**, a provider of social project management software, reported these findings from 1,074 business owners, executives, managers, and line employees.

The current state of remote collaboration:

- **87 percent** of respondents thought that online collaboration tools, like GoTo Meeting and Basecamp, are "important or mission critical" for remote teams.
- **57 percent** used social communication tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, and instant messaging, for work less than one hour a day.

Looking ahead:

- **66 percent** believed their offices will go fully virtual eventually.
- **25 percent** of all respondents thought that will happen within two years.
- **44 percent** of business owners thought the shift will occur within two years.

The need for software solutions that will enhance remote collaboration is apparent. It's how work will increasingly get done in the very near future. The differences within the multi-generational workforce — and especially among the younger generations — again speaks loudly.

They bolster the argument for organizations in general, and performance management in particular, to look for software solutions that:

- Achieve greater connectivity and collaboration among remote work sites and employees on employees' own terms
- Heighten connectivity between the mobile workforce and the corporate back offices

Different Characteristics Highlight the Need for Adaptable, Web-based Collaboration

Not only is the workforce increasingly mobile, it's increasingly fractured in how employees' characteristics affect how they want to communicate and collaborate.

Matures (born 1928-1948):

- Conformist
- Adheres to rules
- Believes in logic, not magic

Generation X:

- Independent; has difficulty with teams
- Seeks challenges
- Skeptical

Baby Boomers (born 1949-1965):

- Defined by his or her job — workaholic
- Team-oriented
- Optimistic

Millennials:

- Optimistic and confident
- "Hero" mentality
- Accustomed to being part of the decision-making process

Source: Marks, Michelle. Managing a Multi-generational Workforce. 2010.

Mobile Learning and Work Apps

Considering everything we've discussed so far, you might think that performance management — specifically the areas of learning and development — will soon go mobile. You'd be wrong. Mobile has already become the next big thing in learning and development, which means it's also affecting the world of performance management.

According to **Aberdeen Research**, U.S. business has recently seen a two-fold increase in the prevalence of mobile tools for learning. Aberdeen is very clear about what this means: Mobile is no longer a "nice to have" for learning programs but a strategic part of any comprehensive learning plan.

Research by **futurethink Innovation Institute** in 2009 found that almost 62 percent of companies believed that successful learning programs would need to include e-learning options. A whopping 85 percent agreed that most learning going forward would be collaborative. And every company in the study agreed or agreed strongly that learning was going to be done in short time frames, using “micro-modules” for more-focused learning and better results.

For example, here are four practices that are on their way toward becoming standard operating procedure for corporate learning and its cousin, performance management:

1. **Bring your own device (BYOD)**

Many companies are adopting this policy for a variety of reasons. It’s more cost-effective for the company. It appeals to the independent nature of Generation X and Millennial workers. And it encourages employees to stay on top of their roles regardless of where they are.

2. **Bite-size learning**

“Bite-size” learning breaks topics and lessons into smaller packages. The idea is that employees can grab learning on the run, often consuming a topic in a few minutes. This makes learning incredibly more effective in the age of the mobile, fluid, and multi-generational workforce.

3. **Location-based integration and workplace training**

This is the kind of learning you see in museums and tourist sites. The “student” is presented with information, on the spot, in sound (through headphones or speakers), images (on a smartphone, laptop or tablet computer, or screen projection), or as text (delivered just as images are). The rise of the smartphone has driven the recent increase in location-based learning.

4. **Cloud computing**

Cloud computing is a convenient and inexpensive way to share files, learning, and nearly every aspect of business — and performance management. It eliminates the hassle and potential security problem of attaching files to emails or uploading them to a thumb drive. It makes sharing results and data, and managing learning modules and assignments, fast and easy.

Conclusion

The U.S. workforce is changing in all kinds of ways — from how people work, to where they work, to the increasing complexity of what the multi-generational enterprise workforce feels about work, how they want to be managed, how they want to collaborate, and what they expect from their employers.

Talent management in general — and performance management in particular — must become part of the more mobile, more fluid, and more quickly changing workforce. The entire process of performance assessments, compensation management, and learning that is aimed at enhancing job performance must take advantage of new concepts and new technology:

- Concepts that range from bite-size learning and remote collaboration
- Technology that ranges from more learning via smartphones to performance management solutions that offer integrated, cloud-based content

Reviewsnap's automated Learning Content Integration (LCI) module is one example. It lets learning and development leaders extend information gathered from an employee's performance reviews to automatically develop targeted learning plans for that person.

Some of the ways Reviewsnap's LCI module makes it easier to consider expanding your learning formats include:

- Enabling learning leaders to automatically create development goals and recommend specific learning activities based on an employee's performance appraisal ratings.
- Allowing employees to easily access a full external learning curriculum, in addition to their company's custom training and learning content.
- Providing online access to a full learning management system (LMS).
- Providing real-time access to reporting analytics and transcripts of learning activities.

In a nutshell, Reviewsnap's LCI module improves talent management by integrating learning activities and performance management. It's another way business is changing how it manages employee development in a rapidly changing world.

About Reviewsnap

In times like these, growth is *earned* by companies that align their people behind shared goals. If you are working to get everyone on the same page, Reviewsnap is with you. More than performance management software, we offer true partnership through genuine customer service and support. And unlike those other guys who care more about shareholders than customers, we can't sleep at night unless you can. We are all together now. We are your performance management partner. We are Reviewsnap. Visit us on the Web at www.reviewsnap.com.



reviewsnap

6165 NW 86th St.
Johnston, IA 50131

P 800-516-5849
F 888-292-8812

reviewsnap.com