

Staff Development Grant – Final Report

Joint Project:

Web-based performance management system pilot testing

Brief Description:

Five (5) campuses within the MnSCU system piloted a web-based performance management system called TrakStar. TrakStar provides a simple, fast, easy to use and customizable appraisal system. TrakStar allows managers to easily communicate specific goals to their employees along with the competencies that will lead to their success. TrakStar 1) automates the planning and appraisal process, 2) improves the quality of plans and appraisals, and 3) establishes uniform performance standards.

Project Sponsors:

- Don Mercado, Chief Human Resources Officer, MnSCU, Office of the Chancellor
- Betty Mayer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Century College
- Mary Nienaber, Chief Human Resources Officer, Lake Superior College
- Keith Balaski, Chief Human Resources Officer, Minneapolis Comm. & Tech. College
- Celeste Ruble, Chief Human Resources Officer, Riverland Community College

Project Leader:

Don Mercado, Chief Human Resources Officer, MnSCU, Office of the Chancellor

Project Re-cap:

Our Project outline was:

Seek Grant Money = \$7,500	November 5, 2007
Receive Initiative Funds	November 16, 2007
Pilot TrakStar:	December 2007 - May 2008
Evaluation of TrakStar:	Mid- May 2008

The sponsors of this project piloted the TrakStar Performance Management software with 25 of their employees between the months of December 2007 and May 2008. Each pilot campus was awarded \$1,790 for the pilot (total amount of award was \$9,200).

Impact:

Our objective was to find a web-based tool that would allow campuses to quantify work related behaviors, develop better managers and staff, and document actions related to compensation, employee performance and promotions. Users of the software indicated that the system was very user friendly and provided for a more comprehensive evaluation. Both supervisors and employees commented that they liked having comparison information all on one sheet. Supervisors further commented that the

system could be helpful in identifying additional training needs for employees and in moving in the direction of developing more individual development/growth plans.

This pilot has furthered staff development at each of the pilot institutions by providing the ability for more comprehensive evaluations/reviews to be performed. The pilot also facilitated discussion between managers and staff on competencies necessary for success. Both staff and supervisors can work on the evaluation throughout the year with minimal time spent and with quick and easy access.

Reflection

We learned that 6 months was not an adequate amount of time to pilot a project of this nature. A few campuses indicated that they were unable to fully pilot the project or were in the early stages of training their users. As a result, we were unable to clearly identify the potential benefits of this software.

Some of the apparent benefits were:

- Ease of use
- On-line and automatic process

Some of the benefits or features that were discovered from using the system were:

- Automatic notification and reminders to supervisors and employees to complete the appraisal, and especially reminders to write performance notes for the next appraisal cycle.
- Staff and supervisors can work on the evaluation throughout the year with minimal time spent with quick and easy access.

Each of the pilot campuses strongly supports the MnSCU system moving forward in using a web-based performance management system; however, we can not recommend at this time that TrakStar be the software of choice.

If grant money is available next year, we could explore opportunities for the current pilots to be continued and also for other software products to be tested, perhaps by other campuses. Doing so, would allow better analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each product.