

Gaining Workforce Insight with Talent Management Technology

By Kimberley Kasper

Healthcare organizations constantly face a unique need to add new staff while challenging and satisfying their existing employees. By harnessing the power of integrated talent management systems, health care institutions can successfully address both issues.

Owensboro Medical Health System (OMHS), a 447-bed hospital and the largest employer in Western Kentucky, used a talent management process to shed a cumbersome job application process and gave a new lease on life to its recruiting, onboarding, and performance management functions. Employing over 3,000 people, OMHS serves an 11-county region in western Kentucky and southern Indiana. The hospital has received awards for clinical excellence, patient safety, and outstanding patient experience, placing it among the five percent of hospitals in the nation for quality. A subsidiary also operates a fitness center and a number of clinics and diagnostic centers.

The organization receives a large number of applicants each year— but its existing applicant tracking system did not interface with its HRIS system and did not offer easy customization. Wading through hundreds of applications each day took an exorbitant amount of time away from other activities.

OMHS found that they needed a new talent management system that could perform several functions: recruiting, onboarding, and performance management. The hospital also needed to update their applicant process: the previous process was so cumbersome that 70 percent of online applications were left incomplete because candidates didn't know they needed to click through to the next page. The old process didn't interface with their HRIS, which meant re-keying applicant data, and there was no way to search resumes or applications.

Additionally, onboarding was a paper-heavy process. New hires had to arrive an hour early on orientation day to fill out the standard information and legal forms packet. Additionally, the Owensboro board had created cascading goals as part of a long-term plan, but there was no way to tie individual employee performance to overall organizational business goals. "We were still using spreadsheets to track employee goals," says Pamela Oliver, who works in organizational development. OMHS clearly needed a comprehensive solution.

A New System=Better Performance, Sharper Insight

After reviewing various solutions, OMHS chose a platform that included an applicant tracking system with onboarding and performance management modules. Key factors in its choice included the ability to integrate with its existing HRIS system and full applicant tracking functionality. Customization was also an important factor. "We wanted a system that would work for us instead of us working for the system," says Angie Dennis, Owensboro's employment manager. "The suite not only replaced the disparate parts that

we already had, but also gave us the new parts we needed.”

The new suite enabled Dennis to create a better online experience for candidates with a branded, easy-to-use career site. Recruiters also benefit from resume searching and can add notes to candidate profiles, so she can easily monitor the hiring process. Automation frees up HR staff from administrative tasks and gives them more time with new hires and potential candidates. Dennis is also able to gather vital data to create more effective sourcing and recruiting strategies. This functionality provides better insight into the workforce to drive strategic business decisions—and puts HR in a position of adding value, rather than being viewed as a cost center.

Performance management got much-needed enhancements as well. Oliver went from using a manual, “siloe” tracking approach to a transparent and flexible system that reaches across the organization. Managers and employees can see how personal goals align with business unit and corporate goals and objectives; these goals can then be easily transferred into performance reviews. Such openness and ready access to information saves the time and hassle of coordinating performance progress meetings across multiple locations.

A cloud-based interface ensures that managers, peers, and other stakeholders can provide daily feedback to each other to accelerate performance improvements. This fosters a performance management culture, one in which Oliver is able to gain more complete insight into her workforce and to retain top talent based on their performance.

So far, the new platform has enabled Oliver and Dennis to streamline their processes and gather the intelligence they need by connecting new hire performance and retention data with sourcing strategies and ongoing performance management.

Continuous Improvement and a Plan for the Future

Since implementing the talent management platform from Taleo Business Edition, OMHS’s recruiting, onboarding, and performance management processes have improved significantly. “There’s less paperwork and less jumping between two computer systems,” says Oliver. “You open the system and you have everything you need for your daily work. Continuous improvement is what our organization is all about, and that’s what we’re getting.”

The health care organization is currently working on its next five-year workforce development plan and forecasting what their needs will be in the near future. “We’ve discovered, for instance,” said Dennis, “that a third of our nurses are [age] 50 or over. This tells us that we need to find more nurses—soon.” Having an integrated, automated solution already in place will help Owensboro’s team gather the necessary intelligence that will allow them to forecast workforce shortages and create hiring strategies to avoid them.

With a streamlined, efficient talent acquisition process and cloud-based performance management, OMHS is equipped to meet the ongoing staffing challenges so common in the health care industry and ensure that employee goals align with business objectives. HR staff can spend more time focusing on people than on paperwork and implementing strategy, rather than filling out spreadsheets. OMHS is now equipped to ensure current and future success by providing key analytics and insight into the organization's single greatest asset—their talent.

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