

Chong Newztel Media_watch

talent management from the ground up



Chong Newztel Media_watch is an experienced and innovative media intelligence company with 60 years' experience in 'smart' press monitoring.

In 2005, the business changed hands and two broadcast companies were integrated into its service offering – Newztel and News Monitor Auckland. Now Chong Newztel Media_watch, the company migrated its broadcast monitoring onto a digital platform. By April 2006 it had become a fully integrated, digital media monitoring service.

Steady business development and company integration saw staff numbers increase by 50%, to 64. Yet throughout the growth process, there was no formal HR provision.

In fact, says National Sales Manager Jenna Wheaton, HR wasn't even on the radar. "We were street fighting our way through."

Street fighting?! Sooner or later someone was gonna get hurt...

Environmental Factors

After a necessary and exciting shift from manual to digital, and with business ramping up, things at Chong Newztel Media_watch were changing. The production platform was stabilising, but the people performance measures were... well, there weren't any.

Having moved from a primarily production-focused company to a production client-servicing company, there was now a sales team to consider. And their performance was critical to the business.

"We found ourselves working with two very different beasts – operations and front of house staff – and something had to be done to maximise our business integration," says CEO Jason George.

The company faced a couple of challenges: monitoring

its rapidly accelerating growth, and measuring the performance of its vastly expanded sales team.

Jason knew that meant some sort of performance evaluation, but he wasn't sure where to start. Luckily, Mike Carden – the founder of Sonar6 – did. And Jason and Mike were friends.

So the boys got talking.

"Mike told me there weren't any other talent management systems! He's a great salesman and he has a very good product."

Requirements

The consensus was that Chong Newztel Media_watch needed something to drive its performance. They talked with Sonar6 and figured out what the right talent management system might look like.

It went something like this:

1. Quick and easy to use
2. Brief and succinct – not too wordy
3. Clear, concise, measurable factors

Working in a monitoring industry, measurable results rule. So it made sense to approach the sales team in the same way.

"The hardest thing is working out how to measure each individual sales person – especially not having had anything in place previously," says Jenna.

The underlying challenge was that media, and therefore sales, fluctuate daily. But with sales people inextricably tied with revenue, there was a real need to measure and drive performance. That meant setting appropriate goals... ones that wouldn't hurt.

Results

On getting what you want

"Sonar6 produced the talent management system we wanted. It's quick and easy to use – which is great because we didn't have time to sit and write up more reports. It's not too wordy, but it gives enough information so we can talk with team members about it. And we can identify various factors and issues, which I can pull up and measure each sales person against."

On tracking the team

"You can click on each person and see their strengths and weaknesses... It means I can handle each individual on a daily basis, and manage their differences to help them perform better."

"It's good to have something visual for the team to look at, to see how I've rated them compared to how they rated themselves. The response to this approach has been really positive – it enables us to discuss both discrepancies and goals."

On pretty pictures = pretty easy

"We love the visual aspect! We're not having to read lots, and people don't get confused with jargon – it's simple."

"You can see where everyone is sitting. It's been really good for identifying the high performers and achievers, and also the gaps."

On making better managers

"I am really enjoying Sonar6. As a manager, it helps me manage people better."

"It's been really helpful – we're able to understand each individual sales person better, and how they manage their client base. We can measure what's required for each client and how we can better deliver on it."

On unanticipated benefits

"Prior to the Sonar6 performance software, I could only see how sales people were doing based on sales. As a CEO, it has helped me understand people are not money robots! There are many other factors that contribute to why sales may not be up. Sonar6 helps us to drill down to isolate and identify issues and what needs to be developed... we hadn't expected that!"

On boosting business

"I can see it's going to help the business. We've had the first round of reviews and everyone knows what the expectations are. It's given management a better understanding of where everyone's at, what's been done and how we measure performance."

"Our client retention is good and we're adding new business – whether wholly or directly attributed to Sonar6, we certainly know it hasn't hurt!"

On happy staff

"Nothing about Sonar6 is negative – not even how the questions are asked."

"Staff have been really caught up. They get excited telling me about individual wins. Sonar6 has boosted morale and lifted team confidence."

"They needed to experience performance management as a motivational exercise, where you set goals and reaching them is proof of their achievements," says Jenna.

So how do you measure revenue and individual performance against overall sales?

Sonar6 Solution

Sonar6 consultant Tanya became Jason and Jenna's talent management miracle worker. At their initial meet, Tanya suggested different measurable factors that were separate to revenue figures.

"She brought to the table fresh ideas on how to assess each individual," says Jenna.

Having discussed and agreed areas of performance and contributing, measurable factors, Jenna signed them off... and to her great delight, the data was entered onto the system for her – God bless Sonar6!

Within a couple of weeks, Jenna was ready to go. She had her talent management system, her login details and her 'basic steps' manual... she even had one week to play around on the system before introducing it to staff.

"Sonar6 was really simple to pick up and surprisingly easy. The online portal format mirrored our own digital service and offerings – that was brilliant from a business point of view."

Sonar6 proceeded with a staff demonstration. It did not incite fear or loathing. There was excitement. There was anticipation.

It was genuinely good.

"Staff were really rapt and excited about it. Sonar6 did a great job of opening their eyes to what we were trying to achieve."

And the CEO likes it too.

"The visual element is key. It gives me a really good overview, so I can see where people are at, straight away. Otherwise you'd spend half a day trying to decipher what's going on," says Jason.

Summary

Fighting smart with a talent management system is paying off for Chong Newztel Media_watch. The sales team performance is improving, business is growing, the CEO is happy... and no one has got hurt.

The next consideration is how sales and operations compare, and where Sonar6 fits.

"The plan was to set everyone up with Sonar6 – we really like the idea. It's still early days though, so we'll see how it tracks with our sales team and how it might sit with the rest of the company and make some decisions around it next year," says Jason.

Jenna is looking forward to more. "Already I can see how the system can be developed – we're keen to add more factors to measure against."