

# Centralized Performance Reviews, Merit Planning & Employee Feedback at Connexus Energy

Minnesota's largest electric cooperative set out to modernize and streamline its manual process for performance reviews and merit planning with a flexible online solution. Using emPerform's complete performance management solution, Connexus Energy now enjoys consistent scoring, fairness in rewards, improved visibility into goals, and more thoughtful employee feedback for its valuable talent.

## The Company

Based in Ramsey, MN, Connexus Energy is Minnesota's largest electric cooperative, providing electricity and related products to member residents and businesses. The company serves more than 138,000 members in Anoka, Chisago, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Sherburne, and Washington counties.

Connexus Energy serves its members by providing cost-competitive, reliable electricity and related services, with an environmental commitment, affirming the value of member cooperative ownership. The organization is member-owned, giving members a voice, putting profits back into operations, and employing local staff to serve alongside the members they serve.

## Employees First

**Connexus Energy focuses on creating a culture of respect, appreciation, career growth and development, and employee success.** "Our average employee tenure is 15 years, and more than 80% of our employees recommend Connexus Energy as a great place to work," said Jen Tyson, Manager, Employee Services at Connexus Energy "Employee success is at the heart of everything we do, and our HR programs are aligned to help us hire, engage and retain top talent."

## The Challenge: Manual and time-consuming performance management processes

Before using emPerform, Connexus Energy relied on a performance review template in Word. "The document was updated at least three times per year during goal setting, mid-year reviews, and annual reviews," said Jen Tyson, Manager, Employee Services at Connexus Energy. **The HR team struggled to ensure goal setting and mid-year reviews took place on time and had no visibility into reviews or check-ins during the year.** The review structure and lack of standardization in measures also resulted in inconsistencies in reviews across the organization.

"There was also a lot of manual tracking of reviews which lead to additional work and follow-up from HR. The review forms also did not have an overall score calculation built into it, which resulted in a much more objective review score and inconsistencies across different departments," continued Jen.

The company also relied on spreadsheet templates in Excel for [merit planning](#) and approvals. "We completed our annual merit process using Excel spreadsheet templates that were manually created and distributed to leaders. There was a lot of manual manipulation needed with the spreadsheets, which increased our chances for error and incorrect data."

**Connexus Energy needed a better way to streamline performance management and merit planning for improved visibility, accountability, and fairness in performance and rewards.**

## The Solution: Flexible, intuitive, & automated performance and merit planning

**"We wanted a consistent review process and scoring system deployed across the entire company,"** said Linda Maegi, Vice President, Employee Services at Connexus Energy. "We also wanted visibility into the status of reviews to ensure they were being completed on time and employees were getting the feedback they needed on a regular basis. For the annual merit process, we wanted different levels of leadership to be able to see recommended increases throughout the process. We also wanted to remove some of the manual efforts to limit our chances of errors."

Linda and Jen set out to find a performance management solution that could meet their needs and offer the flexibility to define their processes for their workforce.



**“We chose emPerform to help us streamline and automate our performance and merit management program. We evaluated many systems but liked emPerform’s clean look of the user interface, its flexibility, and the fact that the compensation planning module is included in the base price.”** Jen Tyson, Manager, Employee Services - Connexus Energy

### The Results:

**Since launching emPerform in 2019, Connexus Energy has realized several benefits:**

- Improved visibility into performance and results
- Consistency in reviews across the organization
- Time saved administering assessments and [merit plans](#)
- Better employee feedback and accountability

#### Improved visibility into performance and results

emPerform gives Connexus Energy employees ongoing access to reviews for better documentation and updates throughout the year. **Connexus managers now have real-time visibility into who is completing their goals and reviews in a timely manner.** This visibility has led to more frequent conversations around performance.

“emPerform helped to facilitate deeper performance feedback on soft skills and has also encouraged more leaders to have conversations with their team leads regarding employee performance,” said Jen.

#### Consistency in reviews across the organization

Having standardization and consistency in [reviews](#) and performance scores has allowed Connexus Energy to **draw better insights into the performance health of their organization and better support employee growth.**

“Employees like that review scoring is now consistent across the company, so they can be sure their efforts are recognized and that they are being evaluated fairly,” added Linda.

emPerform’s centralization and secure online access have also reduced the potential for manual errors in their merit processes, increasing the quality and consistency of merit reviews.

#### Time saved administering reviews and merit plans

Due to emPerform’s ease of administration and automated workflows for status and approvals, Connexus Energy’s HR teams are spending significantly less time collecting and filing performance reviews and merit plans.

“emPerform has definitely reduced the time needed to administer performance reviews, and emPerform’s Compensation Module has shaved more than 15 hours off rolling out the merit increase process,” said Linda. “This is time we can spend on developing our talent.

#### Better employee feedback and accountability

Year-round accessibility and the ability to keep all performance records in one place, means that Connexus Energy employees and managers can collaborate on goals and document achievements and progress throughout the review cycle in emPerform.

**“Employees like that they are now involved in the goal-setting process and can contribute input and feedback during the mid-year and year-end reviews,”** said Linda.

**emPerform has also given the HR team visibility into progress throughout the process.** They can now have meaningful conversations with leaders during the merit review period and not just when final recommendations are submitted.

#### The Future of emPerform at Connexus Energy

Connexus Energy plans to expand the user of emPerform across union staff and start using emPerform’s [On-Demand](#) form capabilities for other performance-related processes, including development and corrective action forms.

**“emPerform is a great product with an amazing team. All the implementation staff we have worked with are good listeners and problem solvers and help us to make sure we are always getting the most from our investment in emPerform.”**

Linda Maegi, Vice President of Employee Services

**Get started today!**

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