

NCSA FUELS Team Member Performance with emPerform

World's largest collegiate athletic recruiting network leverages emPerform for meaningful quarterly check-ins, online performance reviews, and custom performance improvement plans.



Location: Chicago, IL
No. Team Members: 1,000
Industry: Athletic Recruitment

Overview

Based in Chicago, IL, Next College Student-Athlete (NCSA) is the world's largest and most successful collegiate athletic recruiting network. Founded in 2000 to help educate student-athletes and their families on the recruiting process, NCSA works with families, clubs, high school, and college coaches to help hundreds of thousands of student-athletes find their best college fit. With a network of 35,000 college coaches and more than 1,000 team members NCSA assists student-athletes in 34 sports find their best path to college.



Challenges

Before using emPerform, the NCSA HR team relied on their existing HRIS system to administer [performance reviews](#). Their performance management process included goal setting at the beginning of the year, mid-year reviews halfway through the year, and year-end reviews. The HR team was also using an advanced [performance improvement plan](#) (PIP) process but because their HR system could not accommodate a custom form, users had to complete and submit PIPs manually.

"As we thought about progressing and modernizing our performance management process, **we knew we wanted to put more emphasis on goal alignment and relevance, continuous feedback, and meaningful conversations with team members,**" said Meredith Norbrook, Director, Organizational Development at NCSA. "In today's work environment, goals often shift significantly or even become irrelevant over time, and our more traditional goal setting/mid-year/year-end approach didn't provide an agile approach to keep up with the changing needs of the business."

The Search for a New Performance Management System

The NCSA HR team set out to update their performance management process across the board. They called this initiative the **FUEL Program**. "As we developed our new FUEL Program, we recognized that our current performance management system did not effectively offer what we needed to execute the more modern approach. Our HRIS system was limiting and rigid, and we needed something that provided more flexibility," said Meredith.

"We needed a system that could accommodate our multi-step PIP process in an intuitive and streamlined manner."

The NCSA team met with several vendors and chose emPerform.

*"After considering many options, **emPerform proved to be the best fit for us**. The form configuration was flexible enough that we could implement our PIP process without having to compromise anything. The ability to set everything up in the configuration, from complex workflows and approvals, made the system stand out as the clear frontrunner,"*
- said Meredith.

Getting Started with emPerform

The NCSA HR team took a phased approach to their emPerform implementation, focusing on developing their online PIP program before tackling the annual review process. NCSA worked closely with their emPerform implementation consultant to plan and execute a quick and smooth launch of emPerform to the company.

"The implementation team was very thorough and walked us through every step of the way, including initially helping us understand how to navigate the system, helping us translate our vision into reality, and helping to configure every minor detail of our forms. Those we worked with were patient, knowledgeable, and readily available," said Jeralynn Makaiwi, Director of HR at NCSA.

Results

Since launching emPerform, NCSA has been able to fully automate its custom PIP process and introduce quarterly check-ins into their annual review cycle. Its entire FUEL Program is now centralized and accessible to users year-round and has resulted in better tracking and more valuable discussions with team members.

Reliability and Centralization of Performance Data

Since using emPerform, NCAS's HR team and managers have enjoyed the peace of mind knowing all performance data is secure and accessible from one place and available anytime to users.

"As simple as it sounds, emPerform is very reliable," said Meredith. "We had some challenges with our previous system where data would disappear or work would not be saved, and we have not run into any of these issues since using emPerform."

Real-Time Status Tracking of Reviews, PIPs & Development Plans

"Implementing emPerform has allowed our HR team to have direct oversight over the status of all PIPs and EVPs that were issued, which was previously a blind spot for us," said Meredith. **"With emPerform, HR and managers can manage and track annual performance reviews, quarterly check-ins, and PIPs all in one place."**

"From an administrative perspective, emPerform has made a tremendous difference to our HR Team," said Meredith. "emPerform has a great [reporting tool](#) that allows us to track the status of reviews and understand where everyone is in the process at any given time. emPerform keeps our performance management processes on track with targeted notifications and reminders and useful status dashboards."

Increased Frequency and Quality of Feedback

"One of our primary goals in designing the FUEL Program and moving to a new system was to increase the frequency and quality of developmental conversations with our teams," said Meredith, "emPerform has allowed us to incorporate quarterly conversations into our annual process seamlessly. These "light" check-ins allow teammates and managers to discuss our company's core values, and they prompt great discussions around motivation, [goals](#), and career aspirations. **We've received positive feedback and heard that these quarterly conversations have been valuable to our teammates."**

NCSA plans to leverage the additional tools in emPerform to build out their FUEL Program, including getting started with emPerform's [integrated 360° reviews](#) for multi-rater feedback.

Get started today!

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