SunPower: Turbocharging HR Talent Management with SAP® SuccessFactors® Solutions

With HR staff in different regions using isolated systems, SunPower Corporation lacked a single, consolidated, global view of its workforce. By switching to the SAP® SuccessFactors® HCM Suite and SAP Jam™ Collaboration, SunPower can adopt a comprehensive talent management strategy that aligns and optimizes its workforce, so it can deploy the right people at the right time.
“In such a dynamic and competitive industry, ensuring that we have the right talent, in the right jobs, in the right locations is crucial to success.”

Jennifer Galbraith, Vice President of People Operations and Technology, SunPower Corporation
Supporting a growing workforce

With more than 30 years’ experience, SunPower Corporation designs, manufactures, and delivers solar electric systems all around the world, offering high-efficiency systems for residential, commercial, and industrial use. Headquartered in San Jose, California, SunPower operates across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

Over the last three years SunPower experienced significant growth, and over 3,000 new employees joined the company. Faced with this increase in people, SunPower recognized that its existing HR solutions would not support the rapid growth. Each region had its own HR applications and processes in place, and the company struggled to gain a holistic view of its workforce.

Jennifer Galbraith, vice president of people operations and technology at SunPower, comments, “Having regional HR teams using disparate applications and relying on different data severely limited visibility into the employee lifecycle and activity, and was a real deterrent to collaboration.”

She continues, “Without a comprehensive, global workforce view and with very limited cooperation between HR teams, managing talent was a real challenge. We wanted to make sure that HR as well as our processes and tools were enabling employees, not getting in their way.”
Introducing a one-stop shop for HR

SunPower was using disparate employee intranets for HR, as well as a series of different HR systems (including Oracle, iCIMS, and some SAP® SuccessFactors® Talent solutions), which the company felt was at the core of many of its challenges. Realizing the value in its SAP SuccessFactors solutions, it decided to establish a single, integrated platform for end-to-end HR delivery with a consistent view by going with a landscape made up entirely of SAP SuccessFactors solutions.

The company then implemented the complete SAP SuccessFactors HCM Suite, including SAP SuccessFactors Employee Central solution as well as recruiting and other talent solutions. This became the foundation for its new employee portal known as “the grid.”

Galbraith elaborates, “The grid is a one-stop shop for all things HR. By having everything available in one place, HR teams are able to work a lot more productively. In addition, newly enabled self-service capabilities mean that instead of having to call the HR team to request information or action, employees can access the resources themselves – freeing up time for HR staff.”

And finally, to boost internal communications and idea exchange, SunPower deployed SAP Jam™ Collaboration, fully integrated with the grid, to make it easy for all employees – not just HR staff – to communicate and build relationships with one another.

“SAP Jam is a tool to connect individuals and allow them to share information, and I see so much empowerment from that. The collaboration enabled by SAP Jam has been a real game-changer.”

Jennifer Galbraith, Vice President of People Operations and Technology, SunPower Corporation
Empowering both managers and employees with easy-to-use tools

With the unified suite of SAP SuccessFactors solutions in place, and easy access to HR resources via the grid, SunPower is able to manage its personnel more effectively than ever before.

Galbraith explains, “Since everything HR-related is available via a single platform, managers can log in to the grid and get an instant, up-to-date overview of their team, covering everything from their location to their quarterly performance objectives. This visibility helps us manage our workforce more successfully.”

By enabling employees to easily find one another and share knowledge through SAP Jam, SunPower has seen significant productivity gains. Galbraith remarks, “Employees from different regions are able to instantly connect, share knowledge, and collaborate on projects across geographies. This accelerates employee productivity and really helps maximize employee engagement.”

She continues, “Thanks to SAP Jam, employees from all departments and all regions are engaging with each other in new ways. Our online forums are rich with discussion covering everything from new solar technologies to organizing meet-ups and soccer games. Being able to easily interact with and learn from fellow employees is driving new levels of engagement and enabling collaboration on all kinds of projects – with outstanding results.”

Users can also access the grid from their mobile devices. Being able to get information and complete transactions quickly drastically improves productivity for the workforce. Galbraith adds, “Previously, transactions were sometimes being held up for days or weeks – now things are getting approved within two to three hours. This completely changes the game for us; we’re getting people assigned to projects and roles in a much more efficient manner.”
Extending talent management to the next level

To manage its growing contingent labor needs, SunPower is looking to SAP Fieldglass® solutions to help manage and onboard temporary workers for immediate short-term projects. Galbraith says: "As we move into new markets, SAP Fieldglass solutions will help ensure we have the talent we need for each project and are always using talent efficiently. We will be able to track how contingent workers are spending their time, while allowing workers to manage their timesheets anytime, from anywhere via mobile. From an HR perspective, we can stay on top of compliance issues, and make sure we are managing all of the different payroll rules."

Keen to make even smarter workforce decisions moving forward, the company recently purchased the SAP SuccessFactors Workforce Analytics solution. Galbraith comments, "With this solution, managers will gain powerful insights and a deeper understanding of their employees, enabling them to make more effective decisions about how they manage their teams to improve performance and maximize engagement."