

Selection Checklist for a Web-based Performance Management System

Organizations that are considering a Web-based performance management system need to gather a great deal of information besides just the system's cost and functionality.

To begin, a Web-based system must incorporate all accepted best practices in performance management, and not merely facilitate the annual performance evaluation and discussion event. An effective system will smooth the progress of tracking and routing, notifying all concerned parties of key dates — and missed dates — in the process.

One of the great potential benefits of a Web-based system is its ability to provide comprehensive reports, not only on performance management activities, but also on the actual quality of performance management in the organization. Even more important, a good system will allow easy reporting on the success of the organization's overall talent management efforts.

For a system to be well used by its users, the user interface must not only be graphically attractive, it must be designed to make the flow of performance management activities easy and intuitive. For the system to be well-used by system administrators, it must allow an easy interface with the company's existing HRIS system, require little down time, and ensure bullet-proof security. Finally, of course, the system must fit within the organization's budget.

This selection checklist is designed to provide organizations with a summary of all of the important elements so that they can choose a Web-based performance management system that is ideal for their organization.

Functionality	Response
A. SUPPORT OF THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS	
1. Does the system guide managers through the steps of the overall performance management process and assist in completion of all steps in that process, including:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the four phases of an effective performance management system: Performance Planning, Execution, Assessment, and Review?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing for the identification of organizational core competencies and assessment of individual performance against these competencies?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing for the identification and assessment of specific job-related competencies?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing for the identification and assessment of key job responsibilities (specific "job description" elements)?	

<input type="checkbox"/> Setting goals and tracking goal attainment?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifying those competencies, key job responsibilities and goals where development is necessary?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Informal “management by walking around” performance communications with associates?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Preparing for monthly/quarterly performance discussions?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conducting monthly/quarterly performance discussions?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Preparing for annual review performance discussions?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conducting annual review performance discussions?	
B. SYSTEM OPERATION	
2. Can managers input notes of effective and ineffective behavior in the system as they observe it throughout the review period?	
3. Does the system automatically notify them of the need to enter notes at pre-determined intervals?	
4. Are these notations described in number 2 above available (in both online and printed format) for use in monthly/quarterly discussions and the annual performance review?	
5. Does the system allow managers to note results of monthly or quarterly discussions so the results are available (online and printed format) for use in subsequent monthly/quarterly discussions and the annual performance review?	
6. Is the system configured so that some text is visible to associates and some text is visible only to the manager and/or the reviewer?	
7. Can associates use the system to note achievements in key job responsibilities and progress on goals prior to each monthly/quarterly discussion and annual performance review, and the manager review what the associate has written?	
8. Does the system provide a comprehensive help function that provides system users with information on both system operation and effective performance management practices?	
9. Does the system assist managers in writing effective performance reviews?	
10. Does the system provide performance descriptive text for the different organizational and job-specific competencies which can be selected and customized?	
11. Does the system allow the organization to customize the number of performance levels?	

12. Does the system allow the organization to use its own wording for the descriptors for the different levels of performance (for example, “Exceeds, Meets and Does Not Meet Expectations” or “Unsatisfactory / Needs Improvement / Fully Successful / Superior / Distinguished”)?	
13. Does the system provide descriptive text for the different performance levels (for example, a description of performance at “Exceeds, Meets and Does Not Meet” performance levels)?	
14. Does the system allow:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers / appraisers to rate performance and note comments on the annual performance review form? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees / appraisees to self-rate their performance and note comments on the performance review form? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewers (the appraising manager’s supervisor) to make comments on the individual’s performance on the performance review form? 	
15. Does the system allow for ratings on various individual elements of the performance appraisal form to be tracked and compared against the final performance rating assigned?	
C. TRACKING AND ROUTING	
16. Does the system have a central electronic repository for storage of historical performance management documentation that:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is easy to use in accessing (online and in printed format) and storing documentation? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has controlled access for various internal users (for example, managers, associates, HR)? 	
17. Does the system allow flexible (by region / function / demographic group / level, etc.):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking of completed and outstanding performance reviews? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of reports summarizing completed and outstanding performance reviews for various areas of the company or managers in the company? 	
18. Does the system have communications features that support a streamlined, automated, enabling performance management process? Will it:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind managers (and HR) which associates are due for a performance planning / goal-setting discussion? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind managers/HR which associates are due for performance assessments? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind managers/HR which associates are due for performance review discussion? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route performance reviews and provide electronic email notification and electronic signature? 	
D. REPORTING AND ANALYSIS	
19. Does the system allow production of customized aggregate reports at a region / function / level / demographic group, etc. level on <i>system operations effectiveness</i> (for example, assessments completed on time and overdue, reviews completed on time, reviews rejected by reviewer and returned for revision, etc.)?	
20. Does the system allow production of customized aggregate reports at a region / function / level / demographic group, etc. level on <i>performance management effectiveness</i> (for example, average ratings on competencies, development needs identified, average appraisal rating by organizational level, etc.)?	
21. Does the system allow production of customized aggregate reports at a region / function / level / demographic group, etc. level on <i>talent management effectiveness</i> (for example, high performer retention, poor performer turnover, long term potential, etc.)?	
E. USER INTERFACE	
22. Does the system provide intuitive navigation?	
23. Does the system include a spell checking feature?	
24. Does the system provide for continual display of the organization's logo and mission statement?	
25. Does the system provide a navigational guide on all screens of the application?	
26. Does the system provide a home page or "dashboard" displaying the current status of all performance management activities?	
F. USER CUSTOMIZATION FLEXIBILITY	
27. Can the system be configured to provide for an assessment of perceived long term potential?	
28. Can the system display a recommended or required distribution of performance appraisal ratings?	
29. Can the organization's competencies be accommodated in the system?	
30. Can common organizational acronyms or technical terms be pre-loaded in the spell checking feature?	

<p>31. Is the system offered in languages other than English?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it have screens, etc. in these languages? • Does it accept input in these languages? 	
<p>G. OVERALL SYSTEM FEATURES</p>	
<p>32. How reliable is the system? How much down time would the organization be likely to experience?</p>	
<p>33. How secure is the system? Please describe the provisions made to assure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The security of individual performance data • Hosting security 	
<p>34. Does the system interface effectively with other systems (import and export capabilities)? Can it:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be populated with data from PeopleSoft, SAP, and similar applications? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export data to PeopleSoft, SAP, etc. after final approval of performance rating is given? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import data from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Business or other metric tracking systems? ➢ Competency online tools for use in setting objectives? ➢ Training databases for use in determining if associates have attended required courses? 	
<p>H. Cost</p>	
<p>35. What is the initial set-up fee for your system?</p>	
<p>36. What is the first year fee?</p>	
<p>37. Does the fee include training and consulting services?</p>	
<p>38. How much are your renewal fees in subsequent years?</p>	

Source: Dick Grote, chairman and CEO of Grote Consulting Corporation and developer of the Grote Approach. He can be reached at dickgrote@groteconsulting.com.