

Driving Quality Conversations

How American Farm Bureau Federation shifted to simpler and open-ended reviews.

At a glance

A flexible check-in model with quarterly conversations and semiannual reviews focused on open-ended questions.

Industry

Government Relations

Location

Washington, DC

Size

51-200

Highlighted Features

- Custom review cycles
- Qualitative goals
- Open-ended forms
- Automated workflows

"PerformYard is polished, user-friendly and the sign-off process and workflows are excellent features. Aligning individual, team and organizational goals was also important to us."

Customer case study

American Farm Bureau Federation

Meet Stephanie

Stephanie Gambrell is Executive Director of Human Resources at the American Farm Bureau Federation. She started her career with the organization as an economist before transitioning to HR. Over the past 10 years she has served as an HR Generalist, Manager, Director and now Executive Director of HR.

Stephanie says her role does not always fall into "neat defined buckets, which makes the work interesting." She continues to help the HR team execute on the day-to-day, but now she also gives a lot of focus to the strategic side of things. "We also look at where HR needs to be in order to deliver the best for our people through talent management and talent development."

About American Farm Bureau

American Farm Bureau Federation is the "voice of agriculture." The organization advocates for the interests of farm and ranch families. As Stephanie puts it, "our organization serves our members from a variety of angles such as policy development, education and outreach, leadership development, and foundation work."

The Challenge

Around four years ago, American Farm Bureau decided that they needed to shift their performance management strategy. They wanted a process that was a better fit for their organization's business needs and culture at that point in time. "We had been using a longer form with 35 to 40 ranking questions," Stefphanie said.

The organization initially shifted to a check-in model with quarterly conversations and settled in on a semiannual process. Since then, the goal has been to make the performance management conversation more fluid. "We want to create a space for people to have a conversation, but not make it feel burdensome," Stefphanie shared.

Why PerformYard

In that process of finding a new performance management system, Stefphanie showed a demo of PerformYard to a small group of leadership. The Executive Vice President and others loved the interface, and American Farm Bureau decided to implement the software.

Stefphanie said there were several factors that led American Farm Bureau to PerformYard. Originally, the ability to have individual and team goals that align with the organization's goals was a big driver. She said the software was polished and user-friendly. She also mentioned the sign-off process and workflows are also excellent features. American Farm Bureau was looking for something "moldable" that could be structured in different ways, especially as the company was tweaking its performance management approach. "One specific example is the customization of email reminders. Stefphanie likes the ability to set the frequency of alerts in order to prevent "spamming" inboxes."

The Process

American Farm Bureau's current performance management process employs semiannual reviews that are focused on driving quality

conversations between managers and employees. "We try to keep the process as fluid as it can be for the supervisor and the employee," Stefphanie said.

The company identified development topics, behaviors and actions they felt were most important and crafted questions around them. Each of the semiannual reviews use the same form. Managers can dive as deep as they need on each question, but the form is meant to leave room for managers to conduct the conversation in their own way. After the manager and employee meet, a summary of the conversation is documented in PerformYard.

Stefphanie said that when the company was using a form that had a numerical score, sometimes it would create more of a focus on the numbers than the conversation. She believes that the open-ended question format leaves room for timely conversations and allows everyone to be engaged in the process

The Results

One of the results Stefphanie has seen is that people are having better and more focused conversations. "I do feel the conversation needs to be timely and meaningful, because otherwise, the feedback cannot be leveraged in the best way possible."

The American Farm Bureau Federation uses PerformYard's performance management software to run this strategy.

If you're interested in learning more, visit - PerformYard.com or call (888) 745-0761 to connect with our team.