



CASE STUDY - Syncardia Systems, Inc.

Promantek's TrakStar Software Delivers Impressive Performance Appraisal Process Change and Organizational Productivity Improvement

SynCardia Systems develops biomechanical cardiac replacement and assist devices. Its CardioWest™ temporary Total Artificial Heart is designed for severely ill patients with end-stage congestive heart failure. The device serves as an in-hospital bridge-to-transplantation for patients at imminent risk of death. Please see <http://www.syncardia.com>.

CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

Submitted By

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SynCardia Systems, Inc. was fortunate to gain approval from the FDA in October of 2004 for the Total Artificial Heart. Suddenly we were faced with a much bigger challenge: Transform a 30 year old science company to an operating company capable of manufacturing, distributing and supporting the Total Artificial Heart.

It is always my preference and moreover my practice to evaluate a company for the presence of business systems capable of supporting the future mission. In evaluating SynCardia in April of 2005 I attempted to evaluate every functional area of the business for mission critical adequacy. I focused on the 9 Basic Business Functions including HR, Regulatory Affairs and Shareholder Affairs.

We engaged an experienced Law Firm to assist in creating our Team Member Handbook and by May of 2005 I had spent time in a face to face interview with all of our Team Members (only 22 at the time) in discussion regarding the guidelines presented in the Handbook. An expectation for Semi Annual Reviews was created in each interview.

By late June the company had completed a detailed departmental budget for the 2nd half of 2005 along with detailed goals for the company as supported by detailed goals written by and "owned" by each and every Team Member.

All was good until, as we completed Goals and Budgets for 2006 an interested and involved Team Member asked about his 2005 Performance Review as promised by the Team Member Handbook.

BUSINESS DRIVERS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There were many economic, management and Human Resource drivers that lead Syncardia to implement an online Web-based performance appraisal system.

Lack of Position Descriptions and Required Competencies. Performance standards needed to be created. We had not way to efficiently add specific behaviors required for each position. Syncardia wanted management to establish specific expectations at the beginning of the performance period.

Absence of Note Journals. We understood the value of manager and employee notes throughout Performance Appraisal cycle to help justify the final rating on a competency.

Inability to Track Employee Performance. We needed a tool that provided institutional memory of performance and contribution.

EVALUATING VENDORS

We initiated a search with the help of Google to locate and contact every possible provider.

Promantek Responsive. We were contacted immediately by a Promantek professional the following morning and immediately held a "Requirements Meeting" to evaluate the TrakStar software.

Promantek Experience. With the experience and guidance provided by Promantek, together we rapidly crafted a solution for SynCardia.

Consultative Approach. Promantek invested considerable time addressing Syncardia's particular needs.

Flexible Solution. During the product functionality evaluation, Promantek separated itself from competing vendors by offering a solution that proved to be relatively easy to implement. Promantek was responsive to Syncardia's specific needs and offered a flexible software configuration.

TrakStar Selection. We compared vendors and their offerings against pre-established goals. The most critical factors identified were the need for flexibility, ease of installation, ease of use, customer service, and rapid implementation.

DESIGNING THE SOLUTION

SynCardia developed new competencies using TrakStar to encompass the basic duties and responsibilities of each job. This was conducted to better meet the needs of the employees and Syncardia leadership, primarily management.

Joint Design Team. Together with Promantek we crafted a solution for SynCardia via a telephone meeting on a Monday morning that included three SynCardia people and the TrakStar Design Team.

IMPLEMENTATION

This phase went smoothly. The combination of internal SynCardia collaboration and close attention by Promantek made it a success.

Support and Counsel. SynCardia's lead person on the implementation side received wonderful support and counsel from Promantek.

Importing Goals. We were fortunate to have goals and budgets for all departments and Team Members of SynCardia for last half of 2005 and new goals and budgets for all of 2006. We populated the TrakStar system with the goals and budgets from all SynCardia Team Members available and also produced a matrix of measurement that was used to weight the individual contributions in 5 to 8 categories relative to certain of that individual's goals and promises.

Rapid Implementation. All this work was produced while I was on a trip to Germany, WDC and NY. When I returned in two weeks all that remained was to hold quality reviews with each Team Member. We were able to hold all reviews by December 22nd.

Getting Ready to Go Live. According to Syncardia, the actual rollout was quite easy and seamless. Syncarida was given instant access to the software.

TrakStar Introduction. After receiving significant training on the product, our HR administrator arranged for extensive hands-on training by Promantek. Promantek's training service was characterized as "excellent" and Promantek's support staff went out of their way to address and take responsibility for any issues that arose.

ACCEPTANCE AND BENEFITS

The reaction to the Promantek TrakStar solution across the organization has been overwhelmingly positive. We now have a very robust Team Member evaluation and review system in place and virtually every Team Member would indicate that we keep our word, mean business, they know what is expected of them and what Syncardia expects of its employees. The reviews helped further describe and evaluate what has been accomplished and what lies ahead. We have so much ahead and we are on track to achieve our goals. TrakStar has been an important business system to SynCardia and its Team Members.