

ACNielsen Has Big Incentive To Collaborate With CTB Consulting

As ACNielsen's unique Worldwide Annual Incentive Plan grew, so did its Complexity—until Collaboration with CTB Consulting Streamlined, Simplified and Automated the Entire Process.

With revenues of more than \$1.5 billion a year, ACNielsen is the world's largest market research company. ACNielsen distinguishes itself by providing its clients with insights and answers. For that reason, it's a highly people-intensive business and ACNielsen is intent on attracting and retaining the best people.

In fact, the company has put a real dollar premium on employee satisfaction. It even evaluates its top executives and establishes their bonus payments partially on employee satisfaction.

"At ACNielsen, we believe that satisfied employees lead to satisfied clients which, in turn, lead to satisfied shareholders", says Tom Kucinski, Vice President of Compensation. "Our annual employee satisfaction survey helps keep senior management apprised on a wide variety of employee issues. Action plans are then developed and implemented to address areas of concern. We are so committed to those employee issues that the results of the employee satisfaction survey impacts 25% of the bonus payout. I believe that this is relatively unique in any industry."

When Kucinski first arrived at ACNielsen almost three years ago, it was almost time to deliver information and analysis to senior management regarding the "Worldwide Annual Incentive Plan." The trouble was that Kucinski found that the administration and analysis of the incentive plan had become too complex.

Says Kucinski: "The plan had started off being managed with a fairly small and simple spreadsheet which was used to

provide all analysis and reporting. As the plan grew and became more complex, the spreadsheet became unwieldy. There are 1,400 employees in the program from more than 60 countries. We are basing bonuses on a wide variety of factors, and they had to be calculated using information provided in the currency of each country. Management was waiting for reports for use in their decision-making and we were in the eleventh hour. Then and there, I vowed to automate the process.

A consulting firm Kucinski hired to automate the process didn't work out. "They were a firm that thought they had the project management and technical skills required to do the job. However, they did not!" says Kucinski. At this point, the systems management specialists at ACNielsen recommended he try CTB Consulting of Park Ridge, New Jersey.

"Our company had completed several engagements with CTB," says Kucinski. "These engagements had been very successful. That's the kind of recommendation you like to hear."

"Initially," says Kucinski, "CTB sat with me and my colleagues and helped us manually work through the year-end bonus process. They were heroic."

CTB went on to work with Kucinski on the full automation of the incentive plan.

Before the process was automated, it took over a month to input data, check data and calculate the bonus pools. Now, after the collaboration with CTB, the new



Tom Kucinski
Vice President, Compensation
ACNielsen

Business

ACNielsen is the world's leading provider of market research, information and analysis to the consumer products and services industries. More than 9,000 clients in more than 100 countries rely on ACNielsen's dedicated professionals to measure competitive marketplace dynamics, to understand consumer attitudes and behavior, and to develop advanced analytical insights that generate increased sales and profits.



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automated process takes less than one hour to calculate, once all data is input.

Kucinski says CTB's help so far (the project is continuing) has saved ACNielsen a great deal of time, which translates into thousands of dollars of savings.

"The people at CTB are experts," says Kucinski. "They know what they are doing, period. Being a client, and working for a company that has thousands of clients around the world, I know that you can never underestimate the characteristics of the people who are serving your account. The people from CTB are responsive, easy to work with, and they can take a very complicated challenge and translate that into regular 'person speak'. They are accessible and always keep me informed with frequent status reports.

"In short, CTB took the time to understand our company, what we needed to do, and the context it was in. Then they took it a step further. They made a number of suggestions that may never have occurred to us. They saw the possibility that we could develop this into more of a modeling tool, instead of only a reporting vehicle. It was a true collaboration."

"We see the people at CTB not as 'technogeeks', or as detached advisors, but as real business partners."

And what of the future? "Now that CTB has helped us become more technologically savvy," says Kucinski, "there is still room for growth and we expect CTB to collaborate with us in that growth."