

Case study



MORRISON HERSHFIELD

Engineering industry

Confident decision making

Business issue

Morrison Hershfield is a 70-year-old, employee-owned firm that has built a reputation for quality, being easy to work with, and having a great culture. That reputation has supported MH's growth and was behind its strategy to expand across several Canadian and U.S. markets.

However, there were challenges the company needed to address to meet its plan. Specifically:

- **Consolidation** among larger competitors
- **Pricing pressure** due to consolidation in the industry
- **Larger and more complex projects** with corresponding growth expectations across multiple stakeholders

These dynamics, as well as others, created increased pressure on MH's profitability. The firm recognized that to establish market leadership, it had to better leverage and build its capable team of technical professionals into a leading company working for the long term in selected markets.

Solution

MH's business transformation process began with a focus on its people – the professionals who drive the company's results. Additionally, the firm's executive and HR leaders recognized that while technical skill, knowledge and experience are important, it is often the overlooked behavioral dimension that drives performance.

With that context in mind, the HR team evaluated more than 40 tools designed to help with organizational and performance change. SuccessFinder was selected because it provided a unique scientific framework that defined individual performance improvement and how each team members' performance could be aligned with the company's strategy. SuccessFinder defined a robust behavioral profile of the MH staff and statistically compared it with 500 benchmark profiles of high performers.

Interestingly, when the behavioral data for all managers was combined and graphed, it showed remarkable consistency and matched the technical profile of consulting engineers. This specifically indicated the gaps (low scores) in behavior that could be addressed to drive the organizational, process, and business improvement required to advance the MH strategy. Training and development were then tailored to focus on traits that were key to the business.

About Morrison Hershfield

Morrison Hershfield is a market-leading engineering firm established in 1946, anchored by exceptional technical and solution experts, thought leaders, and high-performing employees across North America.

MH sets the highest standards of ethics, technical excellence, and customer service. These high standards have become the hallmark of the company. They continue to be guided by values of integrity, accountability, and mutual respect and believe in continuous improvement, quality, and teamwork. For more information, visit morrisonhershfield.com



successfinder.com



Key HR functional areas that the SuccessFinder assessment supported included the following:

- Culture change
- Succession planning
- Leadership development
- Career and development planning
- Recruitment
- Performance management
- Negotiation and team-building
- Stress and absence management

SuccessFinder for key roles

One of the key business roles at MH is the Project Manager. When this cohort was evaluated, it showed only a 30 to 35% fit along the high performer benchmark. To improve this, a strategy was created to hire and develop with the SuccessFinder recommended high performer competencies for the role. Hiring managers have become more aware of the strengths necessary for success in this role, and today the Project Management cohort has become one of the most successful teams at MH.

At a team level, this strategy has been equally valuable. One business unit had the goal of becoming number one in North America and used their aggregated SuccessFinder competency scores in a US/Canada team-building session, to great success.

They reviewed the tendencies of the entire team compared to the “high performance” team benchmark. This was a powerful way to increase awareness of the teams’ strengths and weaknesses and showed them what they needed to work on and develop.

Business results

Morrison Hershfield has achieved significant traction in meeting the goals established as part of their growth strategy. In addition, understanding and interest by management in behavioral-based HR practices (based on SuccessFinder) have skyrocketed. **Validity in behavioral decision-making moved from 30% to over 80%.**

Today, SuccessFinder is used across the entire employee lifecycle and has proven to be the “radar” MH needed to drive individual and organizational performance.

Some of their recognizable wins include:

- Better hires made and hiring bias reduced
- **High potential successors** identified across key roles in the organization
- **Increased retention** due to better fit hiring and meaningful discussion
- Employees seeing value in personal effectiveness, performance, and organizational alignment and asking to take the SuccessFinder test
- An **enhanced company culture** established

MH has executed on their strategy of growth and rebuilt a set of robust talent management practices based on the SuccessFinder framework. Management hires staff based on behavioral fit with benchmark data in addition to skill, knowledge, and experience. Internal candidates are then trained, managed, and promoted upon these key behaviors. The company has maintained the culture of quality work by talented professionals and has been able to grow and improve in a highly competitive business environment.

What they said

“Companies generally hire for skill, but they fire due to behavior. With benchmark data and context on key behavioral traits from SuccessFinder, we’ve resolved the challenge of unwanted behavioral surprises. We identify, hire, promote, and develop based on both skill and behavior. This has transformed our business results. Behavior is the secret ingredient that can get at the latent potential of ‘fit’ to help leverage company capability and drive performance.”

Pelly Shafto

Vice President, Human Resources – Morrison Hershfield

“SuccessFinder provided our managers with specifics to use in managing and developing staff. The clarity of each element in the tool has proven to be extremely valuable and has supported managers having conversations that are context-specific and focused on the behaviors important to individual roles.”

