



CASE STUDY SERIES >>

# An Employee Engagement Power Play

That Increased Overall Team Performance

Minnesota Sports & Entertainment (MSE) is a premier sports and entertainment provider that owns the National Hockey League's Minnesota Wild. Responsible for close to 1,000 employees, the MSE HR team was committed to cultivating a world-class organization and winning culture that matched the spirit and enthusiasm of fans on and off the ice.

## THE PROBLEM

### Big objectives, small resources

Three strong components of a winning hockey team are engaged players, top-notch coaches, and a strong supporting cast, both at a team and individual level.

The small HR department at MSE was tasked with achieving these same components – high engagement, leadership, and performance – with their internal employees. But significant challenges in all three areas, as well as limited headcount and budget, made these focuses difficult to reach.

HR knew employee engagement levels were low, but didn't have a way to measure engagement in real time and didn't know effective ways to increase it. Just as the organization valued coaching on the ice, HR realized team leaders also needed coaching on how best to develop their people. And annual performance reviews – which received only a 17 percent return rate – weren't providing the team with enough data to understand and improve their workforce.



**440**  
Million Value  
of the Wild



**139**  
Million Annual  
Revenue



**1,000**  
Team  
Members



**6**  
NHL Playoff  
Appearances  
Since 2012

Financial Figures from Forbes.com

## THE SOLUTION

### An HR “Hat Trick” with StandOut

The HR team searched for a solution that would transform their organization and help their people live up to their full potential. While attending a conference in 2015, Director of HR and Organizational Development, Monica Laurent discovered **StandOut**<sup>®</sup>. Created by The Marcus Buckingham Company<sup>™</sup> (TMBC), an ADP<sup>®</sup> company, StandOut combines coaching and technology to convert talent into performance. When TMBC stressed the importance of the same components MSE was looking to score, Laurent knew it was the solution they needed.

The Minnesota Wild team implemented StandOut in 2016, replacing almost all of their old talent-related systems and processes. They are now able to measure employee engagement and collect data at the team level through an eight-question Engagement Pulse survey launched by each team leader three times per year. And to show employee appreciation and recognition, they implemented ShoutOuts, which allow employees to create custom notes celebrating the contributions of peers.

Team leaders also received a coaching workshop to support them in applying a strengths-based leadership philosophy, as well as an annual leaders forum, which is a tailored six-hour workshop that provides a closer look at the StandOut platform and principles, along with yearly team survey results.

Annual performance reviews are no longer a part of the MSE culture. Instead, team leaders move the needle on employee performance through light touch weekly conversations with team members. StandOut provides team leaders with personalized coaching tips and visibility into the critical information team leaders need. And MSE HR finally has confidential, real-time visibility into employee performance through StandOut Performance Pulse. This four-question survey delivers honest, reliable, and valid data from team leaders who provide their assessment of team member performance three times throughout the year. Data is then easily aggregated to provide an organizational overview to senior executives to inform downstream talent decisions.

## THE RESULTS

By implementing a strengths-based approach with StandOut, MSE has created a winning company culture, achieving incredible results in all three previously challenged areas. Some statistics include:

- 91.7% lift in engagement since starting StandOut.
- Over 90% of employees participated in the latest Engagement Pulse.
- 90% of leaders have attended a coaching workshop.
- 83% of employees are now regularly checking in with their leaders to have conversations about near-term future work.
- 94% completion of Performance Pulses, which are used to reliably reveal performance and make differential talent decisions.

*“We have accomplished more in one year than I thought was possible in five years. We have met our overall goal of providing world-class service and maximizing our return on human capital.”*

### Monica Laurent

Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development

*“Beyond the obvious benefit of providing structure for regular and rich communication through check-ins, the program has rendered our former annual review process obsolete. In short, the program has been transformative.”*

### Matt Majka

President  
Minnesota Wild