Michigan.gov

Peak Performance Unleashed

Harnessing Metrics for Success

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State:	Michigan
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Executive Summary

The Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) was forced to adapt to COVID-19 by allowing its staff to work remotely. Remote work highlighted the need to clearly define metrics of success, establish milestones, and ignite performance for each staff member. In response, MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget (DTMB) launched a transformative idea in 2022 to develop Performance Metrics, a tool that would introduce game-like features, such as leaderboards, badges, and point systems, to foster a sense of achievement and collaboration. Its implementation would aim to engage and increase productivity for more than 5,000 MDHHS users.

In 2018, MDHHS went live with Universal Case Load (UCL), a solution that allowed MDHHS users to share casework tasks across teams and offices, referred to as Geo Groups, along with the introduction of new measurable targets for employees. However, the existing reporting transparency challenges and limited managerial insights raised significant concerns regarding the evaluation of staff performance. With the onset of COVID-19, the reporting challenges became apparent and there was a need for a tool that provides insights into staff performance for strategic actions. The goals of Performance Metrics included setting clear objectives and milestones, implementing reward systems, establishing feedback mechanisms, encouraging healthy competition, recognizing accomplishments, and aligning with technology innovation.


The implementation of Performance Metrics in 2023 brought about improvements in productivity, visibility, and reporting. It incentivized efficient task completion, streamlined communication and collaboration, and provided data-driven insights for decision-making and resource allocation. Beyond operational efficiencies, the tool enabled forecasting through data analysis and facilitated proactive planning based on historical performance patterns. Overall, Performance Metrics revolutionized work processes, motivating employees, enhancing communication, fostering adaptability, supporting personal growth, and promoting a sense of community for 5000+ active users, while achieving Standard of Promptness rates over 95% for 2.3 million cases.
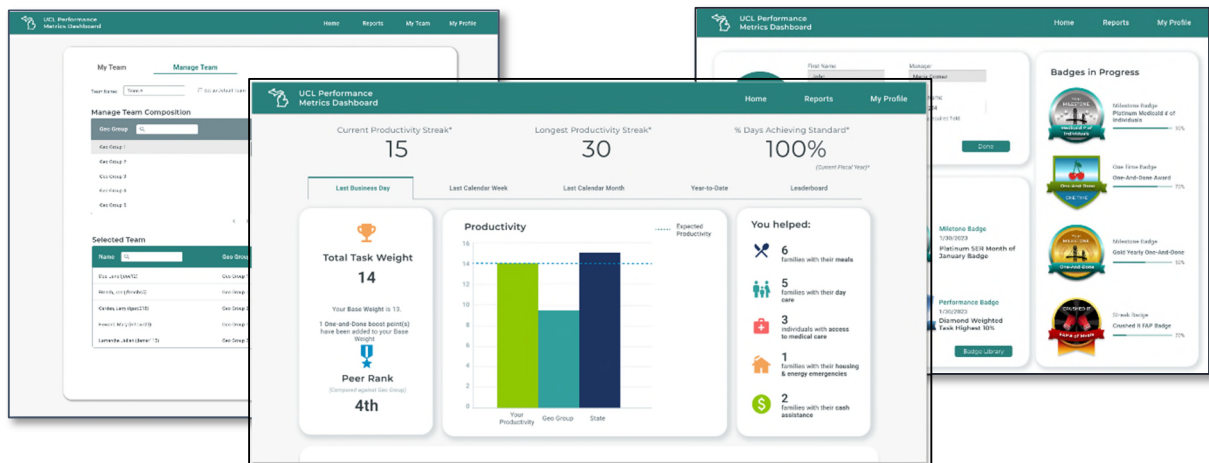
Idea: Illuminating Performance Metrics to Fuel Increased Productivity

For many years, the State of Michigan recognized the pressing need within MDHHS for a dynamic performance management tool that would enhance user experience, showcase staff achievements, and foster positive reinforcement. The existing manual reporting system lacked real-time visibility and was provided on an ad-hoc basis. To address this challenge, MDHHS aimed to adopt a cutting-edge tool that prioritized human-centered design principles.

To achieve this objective, MDHHS formed a cross-functional team comprising both business and technology users and leveraging human-centered design methodologies. By drawing insights from their human-centered design sessions, MDHHS and DTMB gained valuable lessons that informed their approach. By early 2022, the State of Michigan had obtained approval for the program charter, secured funding, allocated project resources, and successfully launched the program.

This solution, a performance management dashboard, motivates employees and provides managers with measurable productivity metrics. It provides enhanced transparency and engagement for over 5,000 state employees and lays the foundation for performance evaluation. The dashboard utilizes game-like features, such as leaderboards, badges, and awarded points, to create a sense of achievement and foster collaborative work. By the time the dashboard went live in 2023, workers and managers had a solution that provides context and visualization across their Geo Group office, county, region, and the entire state.
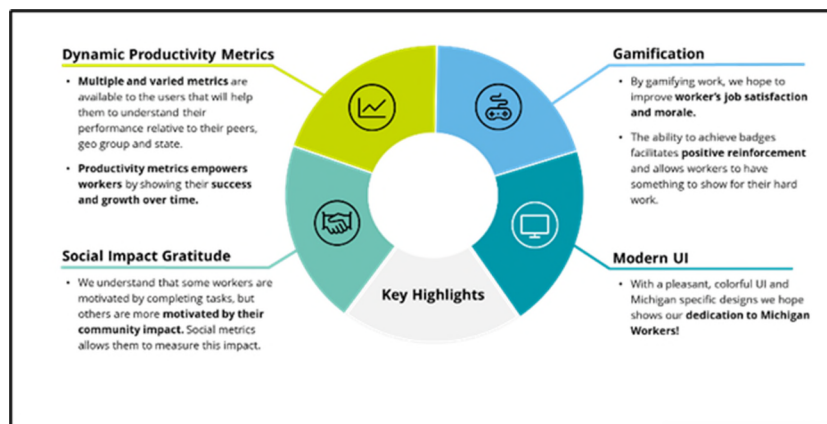
Goals for the Performance Metrics Tool

- Sets clear objectives and milestones
- Recognizes accomplishments
- Provides feedback mechanisms
- Promotes competition
- Enables technology innovation

Implementation Approach: Power of Collaboration

To address the State of Michigan's needs in 2022, business and technology stakeholders collaborated by implementing the following approaches.

- Using **human-centered design** principles, which played a vital role in the successful implementation of the Performance Metrics. User research helped identify specific challenges and pain points to address, tailoring the tool to meet the unique needs of Michigan's workforce.
- Addressing **technology**, Performance Metrics leveraged microservices on Open Container Project (OCP) containers and React for UI development. This approach provided interoperability, portability, federal standards, and flexibility, enabling seamless application migration and effective frontend development.

- **Organization change management** supported the implementation across 100 county offices, focusing on training, communication, and ongoing support. A comprehensive communication plan and tailored training sessions ensured a smooth transition, while ongoing assistance and feedback gathering facilitated user satisfaction and continuous improvement.

Human-centered Design through the Power of Collaboration

Human-centered design (HCD) principles played a critical role in the successful implementation of a Performance Metrics through increased user engagement. HCD begins with in-depth user research to understand the needs, motivations, and behaviors of the target audience. This research helped identify the specific challenges that the tool should address. The insights into users' preferences, interests, and goals allowed Performance Metrics to be specifically tailored to their unique needs while maximizing effectiveness. The application of HCD principles throughout the technology implementation process helped lead to a solution that truly resonates with users. This user-centric approach enhances user engagement, motivation, and productivity, leading to a successful implementation and improved business outcomes.

Our **HCD process** included…

18 HCD Focus Group Sessions ▶ **100+** Insights recorded ✚ **19** Screens designed in addition to badges created and designed

Addressing Technology through the Power of Collaboration

To meet DTMB's technology innovation, Performance Metrics provides the runway to introduce new technology infrastructure. Introduction to microservices on Open Container Project (OCP) containers and leveraging React for UI development provided several advantages, which are highlighted below.

- **Interoperability** – OCP is an open standard platform for Linux Containers, enabling cross-platform compatibility among different operating systems, like Windows, macOS, and Linux distributions like Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL), Ubuntu, etc. This interoperability helps ensure that applications built using OCP containers will run consistently across any infrastructure supporting the standard, regardless of whether they are hosted within a single state or shared by several others.
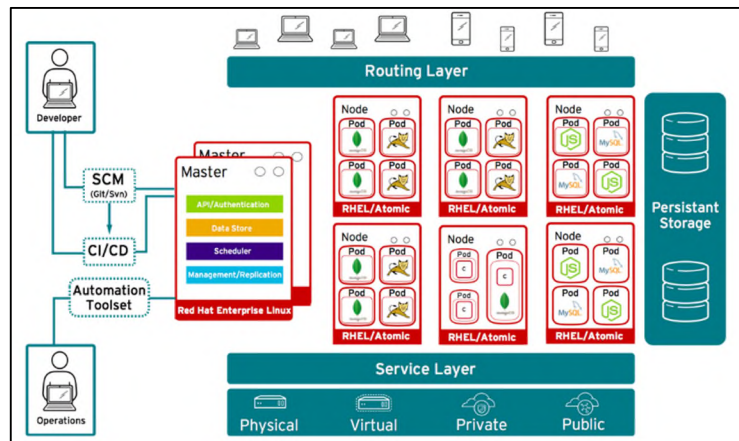
- **Portability** – Containers make it straightforward to move applications from one environment to another without modifications, further strengthening their flexibility. Therefore, if there's ever a need to change hosting providers or consolidate resources, the transition process would be relatively painless.
- **Standards** – Federal agencies have adopted OCP standards as part of their adoption of cloud computing models to reduce costs, increase scalability and availability, and simplify management. Deploying OCP-based solutions can help them avoid potential conflicts regarding the technical architecture underlying their systems.

- **Flexibility** – React provides a highly modular, component-driven frontend development model that simplifies collaboration across distributed teams. It fosters decoupling of concerns between presentation, logic, and data management components, allowing developers to focus on what matters most to their respective domains. This separation results in reduced complexity and makes it easier for multi-disciplinary stakeholders to participate effectively throughout the product lifecycle.

In summary, interoperability and portability provided by OCP containers, adherence to federal standards, and the flexibility and modular nature of React all contribute to the ability to lift and shift applications across different environments. These factors ensure that applications can be moved seamlessly without major modifications or conflicts, allowing for flexibility and adaptability in changing hosting providers, consolidating resources, or complying with standards.

Organization Change Management through the Power of Collaboration

To support the implementation of a new technology solution across 100 county offices, technology teams paired with the organization change management readiness team. Their primary objective was to prepare and equip county staff with the training and communication of the new adoption of Performance Metrics.

The business readiness team engages in comprehensive communication and training initiatives. They develop a clear and concise communication plan to inform and educate stakeholders in each county about the upcoming technology implementation and impacts. This includes sharing key benefits, addressing potential concerns, and providing updates on the implementation progress. The team also conducts training sessions tailored to the specific needs of each county, ensuring that end-users are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate the new technology. They provide hands-on training, documentation, and resources to support users during the transition period, ensuring a smooth and successful adoption across all 100 county offices.

By actively engaging with the counties and providing continuous support, the business readiness team validates for a successful implementation and maximizing the benefits of the new technology solution for all 100 county offices. They establish a dedicated helpdesk or support system to address any issues or challenges that may arise during the transition. The team is readily available to provide timely guidance, troubleshoot problems, and offer solutions to ensure that the counties can leverage the full potential of the new technology solution. Moreover, they also conduct regular check-ins and follow-up sessions to gather feedback, assess user satisfaction, and identify areas for improvement.

Impact: Significant Effect to Performance Metrics

Performance Metrics would not be the success it is today without the partnership and advocacy from DTMB and MDHHS seamlessly intersecting both technology and business to deliver the tool.

Implementing the tool significantly enhanced operational efficiencies within the organization. It introduced a sense of competition and motivation, driving individuals to complete their work in a timely manner and strive for excellence. The real-time tracking and visibility provided by Performance Metrics also enabled managers to monitor progress and identify areas where operational efficiencies can be further improved. Additionally, the tool streamlined communication and collaboration among team members, fostering a more efficient and cohesive work environment. Overall, the implementation of Performance Metrics injects a dose of fun and motivation into daily tasks, leading to increased efficiency, productivity, and overall performance.

The Performance Metrics dashboard was piloted in January 2023 and implemented in additional offices in March 2023, providing the following benefits.

- **Improved productivity**: Performance Metrics incentivized workers to complete tasks efficiently and effectively. By providing instant feedback, recognition, and rewards, the system significantly increased employee productivity, leading to streamlined processes and faster service delivery to citizens. The State of Michigan experienced a **10%** increase in task completion rates through the adoption of Performance Metrics.
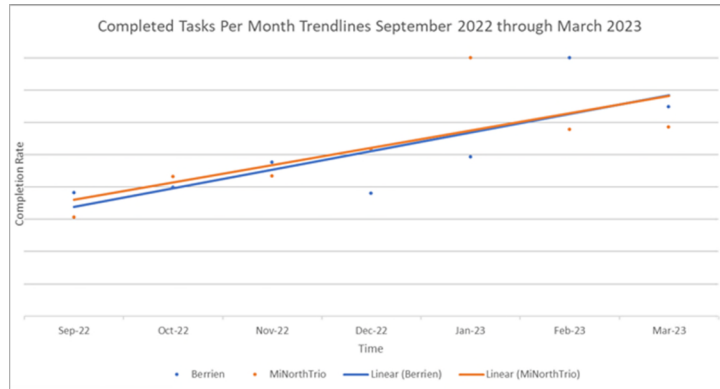
- **Enhanced visibility**: Performance Metrics brought transparency to the task management process. Workers could easily track their progress, view progress on task completion, and track task visibility for team members. This increased visibility, improved communication, and allowed for better resource measurement.

- **Comprehensive reporting**: The implementation of Performance Metrics enabled managers to access detailed reports on team performance, task completion rates, and overall productivity. These insights facilitated data-driven decision-making, identifying areas for improvement, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing operational efficiency.
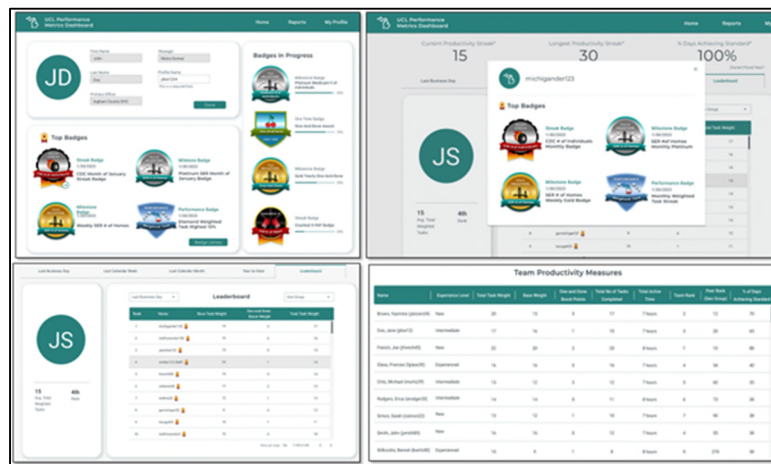
In addition to driving efficiencies in day-to-day operations, Performance Metrics is being used for forecasting purposes. By capturing data on individual and team performance, the tool generates valuable insights into employee capabilities, work patterns, and productivity trends. This data is leveraged to develop more accurate forecasts and projections for future workloads and resource allocation. For instance, by analyzing historical performance data and identifying patterns in employee productivity levels, managers can better predict peak periods, bottlenecks, or potential resource constraints. This allows organizations to proactively plan and allocate resources more effectively, ensuring that the right people are assigned to the right tasks at the right time.

Performance Metrics Overall

In summary, Performance Metrics has significantly transformed how staff monitor and complete their work. The project successfully addressed critical business problems, improved productivity, provided enhanced visibility, and increased citizen engagement with and access to state government services. This innovative

approach revolutionized the way tasks are managed, fostering a more efficient, collaborative, and citizen-centric government environment.

Performance Metrics was not just about making things fun for MDHHS; it's a powerful tool to engage users while encouraging positive behaviors and improving overall job satisfaction. Implementing Performance Metrics allowed State of Michigan employees to achieve the following benefits.

- **Motivation boost**: Applying game mechanics creates an engaging experience for state employees, driving healthy competition and recognition opportunities. Users may feel more motivated when working towards visible rewards or acknowledgment.
- **Enhanced communication**: Gamified metrics can facilitate cross-departmental interaction by promoting collaboration and active discussion around common goals. The improved communication could encourage more centralized processing to achieve faster benefits for clients.
- **Better adaptability**: As workers witness their contributions reflected in real-time dashboards or leaderboards, they become better equipped to adapt and refine their approaches. Through quick feedback loops, individuals can identify areas where they need improvement or continue building upon existing strengths.
- **Personal growth**: Gamifying Performance Metrics promotes personalized goal setting, helping state employees visualize concrete steps needed to achieve higher levels of performance. This transparency drives a sense of purpose and ownership over individual professional advancement.
- **Community building**: Gamification can foster a strong community feeling among employees and teams.

To illustrate the progress and milestones achieved throughout the implementation of the new Performance Metrics tool, please refer to the timeline graphic below.

Performance Metrics Development and Roll-out Timeline: 2022–2023
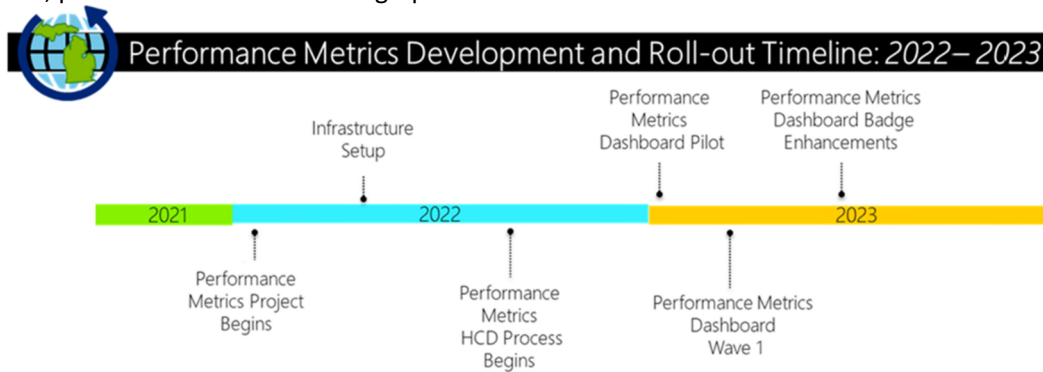
Future of Performance Metrics

The Performance Metrics project has a comprehensive longer-term plan that includes a strong focus on user feedback sessions and ongoing maintenance and support for the rollout of four additional waves. User feedback sessions will be conducted regularly to gather insights, suggestions, and concerns from the users of the Performance Metrics tool. This feedback will drive continuous improvement and ensure that the tool remains aligned with the evolving needs and expectations of the users. The project team will carefully analyze the feedback received, prioritize enhancements or bug fixes based on user priorities, and implement updates to enhance the user experience and address any issues. In addition to user feedback, a dedicated maintenance and support team will be established to provide technical assistance, address user inquiries, and resolve any technical issues that may arise. This team will work closely with users to provide timely and efficient support, ensuring the smooth operation and longevity of the gamification project. Through these efforts, Performance Metrics will be maintained as a dynamic and user-centric solution, continuously improving to meet the needs of its users while providing reliable maintenance and support.