Brooks Brothers refashions human resources with SuccessFactors and IBM, sees 50 percent productivity gain

As America's oldest clothing retailer, Brooks Brothers Group, Inc., has a history of creating long-term relationships with its customers and its employees – known as "Associates." With more than 265 stores throughout the United States and Canada and more than 250 international locations, Brooks Brothers is transforming from a North American company to a global enterprise.

Central to success is the personal and professional growth of the company's Associates, and alongside its outstanding clothing ranges the company is committed to providing a fulfilling work environment with unique and special benefits.

Revitalizing human resource management

Until recently, the commitment to Brooks Brothers' people was not matched by the company's paper-based processes. For example, a new hire would be asked to enter personal details into multiple documents, some of which were then faxed – never the most secure transmission system – to different departments. In the back office, it took time to pick up and enter the data into payroll, human capital management and related systems, with inevitable errors and delay.

Justin Watras, Director of Talent Management and Organizational Effectiveness at Brooks Brothers, elaborates, "We wanted to raise our game by better understanding our talent and supporting our business objectives. We were somewhat living in the dark ages from a systems and processes perspective.

"In the past, a hiring manager would fill out a bunch of forms, send those forms off to who knows where, and someone else would enter that data

Overview

Challenge
Successful retailer Brooks Brothers is expanding internationally, and employee excellence is at the heart of the business – but paper-based human resource processes caused frustration and delay.

Solution
Brooks Brothers chose cloud-based solutions from SuccessFactors, an SAP company, offering comprehensive capabilities, tailored by IBM Global Business Services for a precise business fit.

Key benefits
Store managers are free from the frustration of manual processes; 50 percent increase in employee data efficiency; 15 paper-based processes eliminated; 10 percent hike in productivity by reducing admin time on hiring and onboarding for new associates.

into the central system. After that, the hiring manager would never see the forms again, have no visibility to that information, and have no impetus to correct errors or put that data to work."

Similarly, as the company has expanded by acquiring new manufacturing operations, it also acquired a variety of business, payroll and human resources systems. Although the manufacturing teams are fully integrated as Brooks Brothers associates, from a data point of view their information remained isolated. Reporting was based on manual data exports to spreadsheets, emailed to-and-fro with multiple requests for reformatting.

"To meet our commitment to being an employer of choice, supporting growth and development of our people, revitalizing our human capital management processes became an essential step," said Justin Watras.

"Brooks Brothers has set out to transform itself into a global operation, with a strategy to recalibrate our back office to support that new culture. That means drawing on best practices and the best tools to make it happen, which in turn led us to SAP solutions as key enablers on our business journey."

"When we engaged with IBM® Global Business Services®, truly from the beginning we knew we had found exactly what we wanted to experience."

Justin Watras
Director of Talent Management and Organizational Effectiveness
Brooks Brothers

Finding the right fit

Brooks Brothers selected SAP® ERP software as its strategic business management platform, aiming to replace legacy systems with a suite of integrated solutions.

For human capital management in particular, Brooks Brothers was attracted by the cloud-based solutions from SuccessFactors, an SAP company. The cloud delivery model meant that the solutions would be immediately available worldwide to all staff, with no on-site implementation necessary, and offered the flexibility and adaptability that would fit the company's needs.
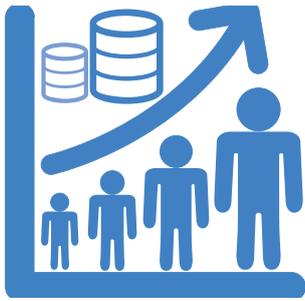
50 percent increase in employee data efficiency

Brooks Brothers selected SuccessFactors® Employee Central for all of its North American HR operations, and SuccessFactors Talent Solutions including Onboarding, Performance & Goals, and Compensation. With initial SAP and SuccessFactors deployments under way, Brooks Brothers looked for a delivery partner with extensive product experience, combined with global reach and technical excellence to ensure smooth implementation of the SuccessFactors solutions.

Justin Watras comments, "When we engaged with IBM® Global Business Services®, truly from the beginning we knew we had found exactly what we wanted to experience. The IBM team offered dedication from a talented group of people, and gave us confidence that we had the right deployment partner with the right personality match.

"Early on we understood that the IBM team possessed a high degree of expertise in the SuccessFactors products. We were particularly attracted by the global nature of IBM's services, especially as we expand overseas. With a true global presence, IBM Global Business Services provides understanding of local cultures and markets, and delivers the boots on the ground that will help take us to the next phase of our implementations, globally."

He continues, "IBM Global Business Services provided unparalleled expertise, coupled with a true customer-oriented mindset and approach. I am sure Brooks Brothers has plenty of things that probably make it challenging for people to work with us, as most companies do, but IBM has been patient with us and worked with us – and IBM has pushed us too, which is a really important piece of the puzzle.

"For example, IBM pushed us to make decisions and to use this tool in a way that it's designed. Thanks to the creativity of the IBM Global Business Services team, we built in the functionality that we wanted. IBM offers both the industry expertise and

Brooks Brothers

Solution

The company worked with IBM Global Business Services to implement integrated employee lifecycle management software from SuccessFactors, an SAP company, replacing paper processes with simple, attractive web interfaces that capture and manage all the essential data on a realtime basis and distribute it to other systems as the schedule dictates.

The solution provides comprehensive employee lifecycle management, talent management support and more, fully integrated with back-office payroll and corporate reporting systems.

the deep system and subject-matter expertise. Coupled with a willingness to listen, to understand, and go back to the drawing board to figure out how they can make our vision our reality, SuccessFactors and IBM Global Business Services have figured out a way to deliver what we ultimately needed."

Creating a tailor-made solution

One of the key advantages offered by SuccessFactors was the high degree of configurability. The Brooks Brothers team set out its target business processes, and with some fine tuning from IBM Global Business Services, mapped these requirements to SuccessFactors.

Justin Watras notes, "Brooks Brothers has unique needs as an organization, and we have high expectations in terms of striving to incorporate many processes into the onboarding experience to set up associates for the first time within the system. With SuccessFactors we have created a single process, and the IBM Global Business Services team really made a key difference in the outcome of what we have implemented.

"For example, IBM was able to build a solution that allows store managers to

"IBM Global Business Services provides understanding of local cultures and markets, and delivers the boots on the ground that will help take us to the next phase of our implementations, globally."

Justin Watras
Director of Talent Management and Organizational Effectiveness
Brooks Brothers

capture new associates' direct deposit information within SuccessFactors, transferred directly to the back-end legacy payroll solution. The bank details appear only one time at onboarding. Not only is this twice as fast as our existing method, it is more secure and, because this is a one-time screen, confidential.

"Other data continues to be available for the store managers and individuals, helping them take ownership and responsibility for simple updates, such as address and phone changes.

More than 15 paper-based processes eliminated

"With help from IBM Global Business Services, one of the beautiful things we've achieved with the implementation of SuccessFactors, and specifically Employee Central, is that it gives people and our managers and leaders visibility of information that they own and for which they are responsible.

"As a business, enhancing the responsibility that managers have for their people has been a critical part of what we have accomplished, even with the first phase of this implementation."

Getting business on board

The first rollouts of SuccessFactors have been overwhelmingly embraced by Brooks Brothers Associates. Even though the cloud solution is a very different way of working, user adoption has been near-total.

"Anecdotally, it is easy to assess whether the user base is embracing the tool enthusiastically or reluctantly. At our annual company meeting with managers from all North American stores, after providing an update about where we are with SuccessFactors and what was coming next, the result was a standing ovation. It takes a fair amount to get our people on their feet, and so that was, I think, a special moment – and this is a piece of software!"

Brooks Brothers will also be measuring the results of the SuccessFactors rollout through employee satisfaction surveys, and with metrics on time savings and reduced error rates.

Global visibility

For the acquired business units, the data integration advantages of SuccessFactors are opening up new possibilities to organize the company and its resources optimally. For the first time, the CEO and executive team have immediate, streamlined visibility of all the company's employees, and can examine the talent pool in detail across the entire organization.

Justin Watras reports, "At the acquired sites, associates would be eligible for the same company benefit programs, but with isolated human resources

Business Benefits

- **50 percent increase in employee data efficiency**

- **More than 15 paper-based processes eliminated**

- **10 percent hike in productivity by reducing admin time on hiring and onboarding for new associates**

- **All managers empowered with access to employee information for people they lead**

> "SuccessFactors and IBM Global Business Services are helping Brooks Brothers change the way we look at and take ownership of hiring people and onboarding people, and knowing and growing our people – because the process is now easy and seamless."

Justin Watras

Director of Talent Management and Organizational Effectiveness
Brooks Brothers

systems, it was challenging for our benefits team to ensure that this was the case. Gaining the information involved someone making call or sending an email asking for the necessary information, then putting it in a file and in a way that would be useful for our purposes.

"With SuccessFactors we have created a single platform that contains all that master data for all of our people. We can see using the active workflows the number of new hires pending right now, as I speak, and know that they will benefit from the correct holiday allocation, employee discounts, medical cover and more."

Taking the next steps

With the key employee, talent and performance components deployed, Brooks Brothers has started on its journey both to roll out SuccessFactors globally and to enhance the solution with additional services.

Justin Watras concludes, "Brooks Brothers is incredibly excited about what's next, such as the SuccessFactors Recruiting and Learning solutions. The key point is that many people view human resource processes as laborious tasks that take them away from their meaningful work.

"SuccessFactors and IBM Global Business Services are helping Brooks Brothers change the way we look at and take ownership of hiring people and onboarding people, and knowing and growing our people – because the process is now easy and seamless. With a cloud-based tool, you can complete work at home on your couch or at the convenience of your company-issued computer on your desk, which changes the culture of the way we embrace and own what we do."