



Serving up talent insights to create a future-ready workforce

FGF prepares for growth with
integrated, ultra-efficient human
resources processes

In partnership with



IBM Consulting

8-minute read

FGF Brands Inc. describes itself as “a tech company that bakes.” The company’s innovative use of digital technology in manufacturing, sales and distribution has proven a perfect recipe for success with major retail and restaurant customers across the US and Canada.

To shift its fast-paced business growth into even higher gear, FGF is planning to expand its operations with new Internet-of-Things (IoT) powered factories. The company aims to bring on skilled, motivated and engaged team members to drive the expanded enterprise. But time-consuming, paper-based human capital management (HCM) processes would make it difficult to recruit, manage, develop and retain talent efficiently as the company scaled up.

As a first step on a far-reaching digital and human resources transformation initiative, FGF engaged an expert team from IBM to replace manual and repetitive HCM processes with highly automated and streamlined workflows, powered by [SAP® SuccessFactors®](#) solutions. With the new way of working, FGF is unlocking new talent insights and laying the foundation for the next phase of its ambitious expansion plan.

“ With SAP and WorkForce Software solutions, we can now deliver key data to decision-makers an average of four hours faster each day—an improvement of 75%.”

Sundaram Sambamoorthy, Chief Financial Officer, FGF Brands Inc.



Reputation for excellence

Since 2004, FGF has been creating great eating experiences for customers across North America. Through its state-of-the-art production facilities, the company helps some of the largest and best-known retail, restaurant and coffee-shop brands to serve up delicious baked goods to their customers seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Lori Procher, Senior Vice President, Talent and Development, North America at FGF, explains: “Our customers depend on us to deliver on time, every time. Because we partner with large enterprises, it’s vital that we prepare each order to the highest standards of quality and dispatch it according to precise service level agreements—and one of our core guiding principles is ‘a passion for excellence.’ In the talent function, our aim is to cultivate an environment that helps us be more agile, adaptive and constantly push for better results for our customers.”

To help achieve these goals, FGF has infused technology into every aspect of its operations. As well as automated B2B integrations with its customers and trading partners to exchange data on orders,



invoices and shipments, the company’s technology-driven approach includes IoT devices to monitor its production lines and identify new efficiencies.

Sundaram Sambamoorthy, Chief Financial Officer at FGF, continues: “Because we operate in a space where volumes are high and margins are lean, continued

investment in our digital capabilities will be crucial to realize our long-term growth goals. In particular, we see great potential in an Industry 4.0 approach to increase the level of automation in our production facilities—allowing us to boost throughput while keeping time, cost and quality under tight control.”

Accelerates key operational reports by

75%

on average

Enables real-time HR data insights into

3,000

team members

Pioneering technology innovation

In recent years, this pioneering, technology-driven approach has helped FGF achieve substantial business growth. To capitalize on incremental opportunities in the market, the company is planning to invest in new production facilities to boost its manufacturing capacity. To staff the new IoT-powered facilities, FGF aims to complement its 3,000-strong workforce with new, motivated and engaged team-members.

Over almost two decades of organic expansion, FGF had developed many different processes and systems for HCM in different parts of its business. Key processes such as time management and workforce scheduling often required filling out paper forms or complicated spreadsheets, drawing on data stored in multiple digital systems—creating duplication of effort and reducing efficiency. Similarly, team-member journeys such as updating contact details, booking leave or switching shifts were



time-consuming, and it was difficult for the company's operations team to gain timely access to the latest information for workforce planning purposes.

As well as consolidating its HCM tools and improving the effectiveness of its core HCM processes, FGF aimed to enhance its ability to forecast and prepare for future workforce requirements. The company

was confident that replacing its multiple software tools with a single, centralized solution would be the first step to gain the insights it needed to make better-informed strategic decisions around talent.

With its business set to grow rapidly, how could FGF support an expanded enterprise with integrated and efficient HCM capabilities?



“Our team-members are our greatest asset, and thanks to SAP SuccessFactors we are now in a much better position to understand how we are progressing toward our strategic talent goals.”

Lori Procher, Senior Vice President, Talent and Development, North America, FGF Brands Inc.

Embracing company-wide standards



To create a standardized approach to HCM across the business, FGF decided to adopt a central platform based on SAP SuccessFactors solutions. The company's first objective was to integrate its core HCM processes, and FGF selected [SAP SuccessFactors Employee Central](#), [SAP](#)

[SuccessFactors Employee Central Payroll](#), and the [SAP Time and Attendance Management application by WorkForce Software](#) to begin its HR transformation process. At the same time, the company wanted to use the new solutions to optimize its HR processes, enabling it to benefit from the latest industry best practices to enhance efficiency.

Chander Batra, Chief Information Officer at FGF, says: "We had outgrown our previous HCM tools, and looked for a platform with the enterprise-class capabilities to meet our needs for the long term. SAP SuccessFactors solutions met all our key requirements for a new HCM platform. As well as offering advanced self-service capabilities for our managers and team-members, we saw that some of the world's largest food manufacturers had built their businesses on SAP solutions—giving us the confidence that they would support our continued growth."

After a thorough vendor evaluation process, FGF engaged experts from [IBM® Consulting](#) and IBM Business Partner [HR Strategies Consulting](#) (external link) to help deploy, configure and test the new SAP SuccessFactors solutions.

Procher continues, "IBM Consulting and HR Strategies Consulting invested a great deal of time with us during the request-for-proposal phase of the project, and really made the effort to understand our strategic direction around talent."

Batra adds: "In addition to bringing significant industry expertise to the table, the IBM and HR Strategies Consulting teams had strong relationships with SAP and WorkForce Software. We always felt that we were in safe hands, and that the teams had the right combination of technology backgrounds to help us tightly integrate the solutions and overcome any challenges we encountered along the way."

Bringing trusted partners to the table

As a first step, FGF worked with IBM Consulting and HR Strategies Consulting to evaluate its existing HCM processes, identify opportunities for improvements and then configure digital workflows in the SAP SuccessFactors solutions to support the new ways of working.

At the start of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic began to sweep around the world. To minimize disruption to the project, IBM Consulting rapidly deployed a remote-working strategy to help all stakeholders stay connected.

“Although the COVID crisis unavoidably pushed back our planned go-live date, the IBM team mobilized the resources we needed to ensure the project was always under control, and ensured that every stakeholder always knew what their roles and responsibilities were,” adds Batra. “Thanks to a deferral payment solution from IBM Global Financing, we were also able to align our investment in SAP

SuccessFactors solutions with the planned go-live date, helping us to minimize business risk and optimize return on investment in the new HCM capabilities.”

Procher adds: “In some respects, working remotely became a real benefit to our project. With support from IBM, we were able to meet in large groups online more easily using digital tools than would have been possible in person, which contributed to more effective collaboration.”

Working with the IBM and HR Strategies Consulting teams, FGF has successfully made the transition to the SAP and WorkForce Software solutions for its core HCM processes across Canada. The new digital platform enables the company to deliver highly efficient self-service workflows to salaried and hourly personnel—eliminating the friction in key user journeys, while creating a single, high-quality and consistent source of data on all team-members in the



business. The solution also supports country-specific requirements in Canada, including Registered Retirement Savings Plan Deductions and integration with the company’s third-party benefits provider.

Reaping the benefits



Since embracing SAP and WorkForce Software solutions, FGF has begun to reap the benefits of an integrated, data-driven approach to HCM. By replacing multiple individual HR tools with a single solution, the company has eliminated the need for multiple software contracts, simplifying technology support.

Crucially, FGF is gaining the advantages of switching from manual processes to more automated and integrated workflows. Data on team-member schedules is now instantly available as soon as it is entered into the SAP solution, empowering the company's operations team to make

scheduling decisions based on near real-time information.

"To ensure that we can deliver on time, every time, one of our key objectives is plan our workforce requirements as far in advance as possible to avoid talent gaps," explains Procher. "By moving to SAP and WorkForce Software solutions, we now gain a 360-degree view of all the full-time and agency team-members working across the business—even down to the level of individual plants and shifts. Equipped with this insight, we can make faster, better-informed staffing decisions, such as taking on more agency team-members to

increase our capacity and meet short-term spikes in demand."

Sambamoorthy adds: "Each day, we deliver a report on the performance of each plant over the previous 24 hours to our operations team, who use the data to identify potential issues and resolve them rapidly. Timely access to this information is vital, as it makes it easier to get in front of any problems our plants are facing. With SAP and WorkForce Software solutions, we can now deliver key data to decision-makers an average of four hours faster each day—an improvement of 75%."

In the future, FGF anticipates that self-service workflows will make a positive impact. For example, when a team member wants to request a vacation day, he or she will be able to complete the task in moments online or on a mobile device.

"The potential self-service benefits of SAP SuccessFactors solutions will also extend to our management teams, who will be able to use the solutions to streamline many important processes that previously depended on phone calls, emails and paper," comments Procher.

Recipe for growth



Most importantly, the company has now laid the foundation for the next stages of its business transformation. By switching to a central platform, FGF creates a single source of truth for its HR data, which will enable it to make strategic talent decisions based on data insights, not just instinct.

“In the past, attempting to answer talent-related questions required time-consuming swiveling between multiple systems and large and complex spreadsheets—but with SAP SuccessFactors, we’ve eliminated much of that manual work,” says Procher. “Our team members are our greatest asset, and thanks to SAP SuccessFactors we are now in a much better position to understand how we are progressing toward our strategic talent goals.”

Looking to the future, FGF plans to build on its collaboration with IBM, SAP and WorkForce Software to bring its business-growth vision to life, and serve its delicious foods at more tables across North America.

“Working with IBM Consulting and HR Strategies Consulting to deploy SAP SuccessFactors has completed our transition from a fast-growth start-up to one of the leading players in North America’s food sector,” concludes Procher. “Going forward, we see great opportunities to build on the collaboration, and to deliver additional talent functionality to support our fast-growing business.”



About FGF Brands Inc.

Founded in 2004 and headquartered in Toronto, Canada, [FGF](#) (external link) describes itself as a “tech company that bakes.” FGF delivers food products to coffee houses, restaurants, retailers and food service companies across Canada and the US, and employs an expert team of research and development experts, taste testers, marketers and packaging specialists.

Solution components

- IBM Consulting
- IBM Global Financing
- SAP® SuccessFactors®
- SAP SuccessFactors Employee Central
- SAP SuccessFactors Employee Central Payroll
- SAP Time and Attendance Management by WorkForce Software

About HR Strategies Consulting

Founded in 1990 and headquartered in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, [HR Strategies Consulting](#) (external link) empowers businesses to gain maximum value from their HR investments. Specializing in the employee experience, HR Strategies Consulting helps organizations to unite HR and technology to make work life better for all.

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