Case Study: 2020 HR Tech Awards

Each year, technology companies across HR, talent, and learning apply for the HR Tech Awards to demonstrate the value they bring to their clients and to the broader industry. These case studies represent a sampling of the capabilities from the award winners in our program.
Learn more about the HR Tech Awards.

Company Name:	Waggl
Website URL:	www.waggl.com
Insert Logo (JPG/PNG):	waggl
Key Customers:	Freddie Mac, Paychex, HEINEKEN, 3M, Mastercard, UCHealth, McGraw Hill and Parsons
Category:	Talent Management: Best Innovative or Emerging Tech Solution

About The Company

Waggl is today's most powerful Employee Voice platform for HR leaders. For HR leaders who need to measure, and truly improve engagement, Waggl crowdsources real-time insight to drive faster action and alignment around critical business topics. Inspired by the waggle dance honeybees do to communicate vital information, Waggl believes every voice matters. Unlike heavy surveys or basic pulse tools, Waggl is a dialogue-first approach to engagement that creates shared ownership through inclusive team-based action-planning.

Waggl is helping leading enterprises harness the collective intelligence of their people. With a seasoned Executive Team and premiere customers including Heineken, Freddie Mac, 3M, Paychex, UCSF Medical Center, Delta Dental and Keysight Technologies, Waggl has built a customer-first culture that values strong relationships and ongoing innovation.

In 2019, Waggl increased its bookings by 40%, and grew its Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR) by 32%, driven by a number of significant customer wins, including global industry leaders in diverse industries like aerospace, manufacturing, insurance, consumer beverages, healthcare and technology. Perhaps the strongest evidence of the company's success is illustrated by the fact that the number of its customers under multi-year agreements has more than doubled.

Waggl finished 2019 with a 79 customer NPS (Net Promoter Score) rating. This NPS rating positions the company alongside large consumer-facing companies like Apple, Costco, Starbucks, and USAA, which have amongst the highest NPS levels. This experience Waggl provides to its customers represents a true competitive advantage through multiple customer impact stories and referrals.

Over the course of 2019, Waggl was also recognized with numerous awards. The North American Employee Engagement Awards recognized Waggl as Employee Engagement Vendor of the Year. The company was recognized as a "Great Place to Work" by the San Francisco Business Times and Bay Area Newsgroup, earning the #2 ranking for wellness and the #10 spot for smallest companies. Waggl's growth over the past four years landed it on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing privately held companies in America, where it placed #151 in the US, #26 in California and #19 in the software category The company also placed #15 on the San Francisco

Business Times' Fast 100 list of the 100 fastest-growing privately held companies in the Bay Area. Waggl was also recognized by the 9th Annual Best in Biz Awards as "Best Local Company of the Year" for the San Francisco Bay Area.

These awards acknowledge the balance Waggl has worked hard to maintain between rapid growth and commitment to sustaining a customer-focused culture and great employee experience. As Waggl grows, the company continues to prioritize the needs and experience of its employees while maintaining a balanced approach to delivering world-class customer experiences and continuous innovation.

Waggl's real-time Employee Voice platform goes beyond measurement. Not a survey, not simply data -- Waggl catalyzes authentic dialogue and alignment around critical business topics to help organizations bolster agility, resilience and retention. The company continues to be inspired by the opportunity to help employees and organizations improve employee engagement through transparency, dialogue, and more actionable insights.

Problems The Technology Solves

Waggl is a cloud-based HR management solution that helps organizations streamline and elevate their Employee Voice programs to deliver actionable insight, fresh perspective, and tangible knowledge to leaders and teams around business topics that matter. It comes with a centralized dashboard that enables users to invite employee insights in real-time and apply them to improving business objectives.

Inspired by the work of Clayton Christensen, author of The Innovator's Dilemma, Waggl ran an organization-wide process in early 2019 that illustrated how its customers hire their product to do a specific job. One of Waggl's ongoing challenges was that the platform was designed to do a lot of different jobs, but after further investigation about how it was being used, the company realized that the "job" they are ultimately hiring Waggl to do is to not only measure, but to improve engagement through its unique approach of empowerment and shared ownership.

Based on that understanding Waggl has developed and launched its new Waggl Engagement (WE) Solution, a comprehensive, yet agile Employee Voice platform designed to inspire employees and empower leaders. The WE Solution serves as a critical component of the essential productivity suite for all workplaces, remote or in-person.

The WE solution is holistic, consisting of four parts: Technology (how the platform works), Process (how the Employee Voice cycle of inquiry works), Question Framework (proven and recommended content), and Partnership (how customers are supported). In the context of WE, Waggl articulates aspects of its platform — e.g. crowdsourcing, transparency, and agility — as unique strengths and clear choice points for organizations and leaders who are committed to evolving how they engage and sustain their people.

Over the past six years, Waggl has evolved its platform from a lightweight, consumer-driven app to a robust Enterprise Platform capable of supporting organizations with many thousands of employees. The company has upgraded its enterprise reporting solutions, including enhanced, interactive results for managers and a suite of exportable spreadsheet-based reports for advanced analysis. It has implemented true multi-language pulsing capabilities, allowing many of its partners to deliver a more inclusive solution to their diverse employee populations. Waggl's crowd moderation tool allows employees to report responses that they feel are inappropriate. The company has rebuilt its foundation/underlying architecture to better support and scale with the organizations whose leaders, managers, and employees depend on it as their Employee Voice Platform. Finally, Waggl is now SOC 2 Type II compliant, a premiere designation that marks Waggl's commitment to data integrity and best-in-class security standards.

Waggl's technology platform is complemented by proven implementation processes, partnership resources, and best-in-class engagement question models, including two new modules – The COVID-19 Response Package and The Process Shredder, used by PepsiCo and other enterprise companies to streamline process improvement. Based on crowdsourced voting with real-time visibility of results, the WE Solution is far more agile than traditional surveys, and has demonstrated superior employee engagement and speed to action for hundreds of organizations.

Client Case Study

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the definition of workplace inclusion is "The achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources and can contribute fully to the organization's success."

Unfortunately, in many organizations, decisions are still made in a closed room with a small, narrowly defined set of leaders, and are rarely shared with the larger organization. But in order to engage the people who will actually execute on those decisions, leaders need to include everyone's voice in topics that matter (e.g. values, culture, strategy, change, process improvement, etc.).

VA North Texas Health Care System is the second largest VA health care system in the country, serving more than 135,000 active patients with 1.4 million outpatient episodes of care in 38 counties. With a team of more than 6,000 employees, 1,400 community volunteers and annual operating budget exceeding $1 Billion, VA North Texas strives to provide the right type of care for the best possible health outcomes with attention to needs and life goals of Veterans.

Since November 2018, VA North Texas has used Waggl, the leading platform for real-time feedback powered by Employee Voice, for enterprise-wide pulsing of its employee base. The leadership team of VA North Texas initially sought to supplement its annual employee engagement survey with a more agile platform that could provide continual insight about key operational issues on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Now, after more than one year of use, Waggl has been integrated into the day-to-day workflow at VA North Texas, and has enabled the organization to create a speak up culture based on a foundation of trust, in which employees feel free to express their ideas and know that their opinions matter.

"VA North Texas has really embraced Waggl to help us on our journey to do no harm," said Froylan Garza, Assistant Director, Outpatient Services, VA North Texas Health Care System. "It's important to us for our workforce to be engaged and involved in process improvement ideas, speaking up and feeling empowered to do so."

Waggl has enabled VA North Texas to foster a shared sense of purpose within the organization by including all employees in the dialogue about topics that matter within their organization (e.g. values, culture, strategy, change, process improvement, etc.). The leaders at VA North Texas understand that including everyone's voice in the decision-making process helps its employees feel connected to the organization and empowered to drive change.

VA North Texas uses Waggl for enterprise-wide annual pulsing around Best Places to Work, and on an ongoing basis in the day-to-day workflow. Clinical service chiefs throughout the organization routinely use Waggl for pulses that they want to do around accountability, workload, transparency and communication.

Froy Garza elaborates, "At VA North Texas, one of our most dynamic and energetic Clinical Service Chiefs in our physical medicine and rehab service organically requested to use Waggl to conduct pulses on things that they are interested in. Before conducting the pulse, we asked him to have a sit-down session with all of his staff in which we showed a brief video about Waggl -- how it works, what to expect, why the results are transparent, how the responses are truly anonymous, and so forth. By taking that step, we saw participation and the number of responses increase significantly. After conducting the pulse, this particular Chief takes an entire hour in his all-staff meeting with about one hundred employees from multiple sites to go through all the feedback he's received. In that meeting, he talks about why some things can happen and others can't, what suggestions can be put into place right away and what his leadership team will take away to strategize about going forward. This has been incredibly powerful."

About Lighthouse Research & Advisory

Lighthouse Research & Advisory is a modern, independent analyst firm dedicated to setting the standard for excellence in talent, learning, and HR with practical research and a hands-on approach. By providing compelling research and actionable insights, our team enables HR, learning, and talent leaders to deliver more value to the business. Our research examines competitive practices, cutting-edge technologies, and innovative strategies.

Ben Eubanks is the Principal Analyst at Lighthouse, providing insights for today's talent leaders and vendor partners. He works with practitioners from areas across the HCM spectrum, delivering high-quality research, insights, and advisory services to enable better business performance. His book, Artificial Intelligence for HR, was published in 2018.

Prior to joining Lighthouse, Ben worked as a researcher, writer, and speaker for nearly more than 10 years, focusing on learning, talent acquisition, and talent management. During his tenure as a researcher, he has published more than 1,000 reports, case studies, and articles in addition to providing advisory services to executives from some of the largest and most respected organizations in the world.

He also has hands-on experience working as an HR executive, leading both strategic and tactical talent practices and giving his research a distinctly practical perspective. Ben has interviewed business leaders from notable organizations such as Southwest Airlines, IBM, H&R Block, McDonald's, AARP, and AlliedUniversal in his role as the host of We're Only Human, a podcast focused on the intersection of people, technology, and the workplace. In addition, he founded and operates upstartHR.com, a community serving HR leaders that has reached more than one million readers since its inception.