

Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Mitigates Risks Towards Accomplishing Strategic Goals With ZeroedIn People Analytics

Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is a corporate university of the United States Department of Defense offering acquisition, technology, and logistics training to military and Federal civilian staff and Federal contractors.

The Challenge

In 2002, DAU published its first performance-based Strategic Plan. It has served them well, allowing DAU to transform the university from a training consortium into a premier corporate university. Each year since, DAU continues to leverage a performance-based framework and raise the bar with new visions and new strategic goals.

DAU's strategic planning process includes:

- A Strategic Plan that covers 6 years and it is updated annually
- An Annual Performance Plan that establishes tasks and performance measures
- An Annual Performance Report that assesses the actual versus planned accomplishments
- An Annual Report that informs DAU customers and stakeholders of DAU's achievements

Automating the progress tracking and monitoring of the strategic plan proved challenging as DAU tried to scale it across the enterprise. They tried other software solutions but the systems were unable to handle the levels of granularity and access needed to effectively automate their management and reporting process.

The Solution

DAU partnered with ZeroedIn, a global provider of workforce and people analytics, to enable the DAU Performance Dashboard. ZeroedIn was able to take the unique DAU requirements and build the underlying platform model to allow for the key measurement of DAU business strategies. This included the application of the Oregon Productivity Matrix process as part of the core data model. The unique blend of data mining and warehousing, business intelligence, and performance management compliments DAU's strategic planning and management process.



CHALLENGE:

Streamline the monitoring and tracking of the strategic plan through automation, ensuring that the management and reporting process is efficiently handled with the required levels of granularity and access for enterprise-wide scalability

SOLUTION:

Take DAU's unique blend of data mining and warehousing, business intelligence, and performance management requirements to build the underlying platform model to allow for the key measurement of their business strategies

PRODUCT:

ZeroedIn Analytics Platform

ZeroedIn is innovative in its approach to learning governance and measurement and picks up where traditional learning infrastructure tools like learning and talent management systems leave off. ZeroedIn supports DAU with:

- Structure, processes, and practices that enable good and actionable decisions
- Goal integration and alignment
- Planning and management of projects
- Sponsorship and stakeholder validation
- Oversight of continuing operations
- Measurement of desired business outcomes and progress indicators
- Surfacing and resolution management of problems and conflicts
- Assignment and tracking of task responsibility

DAU structures its strategic plan this way: strategic challenges are translated into five strategic goals. Each of the DAU goals represents a major part of the business – customer, mission, infrastructure, people, and transformation – that are considered broad areas and represent statements of strategic imperatives. The strategic goals translate directly into ZeroedIn’s scorecard framework and the strategic imperatives for each become measures of goal attainment also known as key performance indicators (KPIs). Each of these goals is covered through a small, but encompassing set of enabling strategies (objectives) and measures. These enabling strategies are more detailed in nature and contain the direction needed to understand the precise areas to target their attention. The enabling strategies align within ZeroedIn and display on a drill down scorecard for each goal to reflect composite measures of progress.

In addition, and in alignment with the goals and strategies, separate and discrete performance tasks are defined in the DAU Annual Performance Plan. These tasks are managed within ZeroedIn as well. The tasks are projects, each with a project manager and are expected to be accomplished by operating groups during the year. Performance measures define progress toward the higher level enabling strategies. Using ZeroedIn, the project managers report their progress online at regular intervals throughout the fiscal year in terms of percent complete, days ahead or behind schedule, and dollar cost over or under budget. ZeroedIn alerts and visuals allow for the goal attainment to be quickly and effectively communicated.



The Results

Each quarter during the Enterprise Performance Review and Analysis (EPRA), DAU leadership team reviews the quarter’s performance and progress for all performance targets and selected operational metrics. Before ZeroedIn, gathering information for an EPRA was tedious and labor intensive. Today, DAU uses ZeroedIn as a live, online briefing tool during each EPRA conference. The system allows the review team to drill down into areas of interest, assess current and historical progress, and discuss plans of action.

For over a decade, ZeroedIn has helped DAU adapt to potential risks by opening up immediate visibility across the organization. ZeroedIn shows DAU how the operating units are progressing in accomplishing their commitments towards the execution of their strategic plan.

