ABOUT MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION (MTA)

The Michigan Townships Association is a voluntary membership association for Michigan's 1,240 townships. Its core mission is to advance local democracy by fostering township leadership and public policy essential for a strong and vibrant Michigan. While the anonymity of data is not an issue in their benchmarking model, understanding and using large quantities of data is a challenge. Dynamic Benchmarking developed the Michigan Townships Association Salary Survey which offers extensive reporting on compensation for township offices, boards, commissions and employees. Launched in early 2014, this survey gave townships the ability to compare themselves with others by applying a variety of customizable filters. Townships are now able to quickly get important information for compensation decision making.

The Michigan Townships Association (MTA) provides services to the township governments of the state of Michigan and promotes the interests of township government by fostering strong, vibrant communities; advocating legislation to meet 21st century challenges and developing knowledgeable township officials. An annual compensation and benefits benchmarking study is one of the important resources that MTA provides to its members.

One of the unique characteristics of township government is its compensation model which supports everything from salaried to hourly, per diem and by service payment. "Because of the unique nature of each of our townships, our members required a benchmarking tool that could easily adapt to address their individual situations," comments Catherine Mullhaupt, MTA Director of Member Information Services.

Historically, MTA conducted and compiled their annual compensation and benefits benchmarking study manually, using a combination of paper surveys and online forms, which was time consuming and tedious. All reports and analysis were also created by hand, limiting the number of comparisons that could be made while still getting the final report out in a timely manner.

"Many of our townships do not have access to high speed Internet nor are all of our members comfortable with technology. Working with a complex, online system wasn't feasible," adds Mullhaupt. The hunt was on for a system that could be powerful enough to handle the complexities of township government, yet simple enough to be usable over a dial-up connection and by users new to technology.

The Dynamic Benchmarking solution provided the flexibility necessary to address the unique needs of MTA members, including an easy to use interface and a scalable model that works for small townships with fewer than 100 residents as well as large townships with over 20,000.

One of Dynamic Benchmarking's hallmarks is our aggregation system, which prevents any user from seeing data from all other users. However, MTA members needed a different kind of data sharing mechanism as all of the township data is public. MTA wanted members to see the actual data from other members so Dynamic Benchmarking created a new Excel report template report. Now users can instantly generate a personalized Excel report that lists all of the data for all accounts in an easy to read format. Users can choose to run the report with filters to select townships that are most like their own town or even hand select townships by name for inclusion in the report. Data is updated continually as members add or update information, providing an up-to-date and accurate resource for assessing the norms of townships and their compensation models.

The new, web-based platform meets ALL of the needs of MTA and their members by collecting and analyzing data, in real time, and providing personalized reports that each user generates to their own requirements. MTA saves significant time while meeting the information needs of members in a timely manner. In less than a month from the launch of the new, online survey, over half of the townships had submitted data to the study.

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Catherine Mullhaupt,
Director of Member Information Services

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