

## About AAF

Formed in 1973, Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co., P.C. (AAF) has grown to become one of the largest full-service public accounting and consulting firms in New England. Working from its Westborough headquarters, and its Wellesley and Worcester offices, the firm proactively provides accounting, tax, and business solutions to a wide range of privately owned companies, nonprofit organizations, individuals, and estates throughout New England, as well as in selected states around the country. On the Web at [www.aafcpa.com](http://www.aafcpa.com)

*“For many years, our firm spent a great deal of time, energy and effort trying to evaluate our staff and give complete and in-depth reviews. With HRToolbench, we have made drudgery into a very positive, cost-effective benefit for our company and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. We are spending far less time and have much-improved job descriptions and expectations. The system is now efficient, effective and economical, thanks to HRToolbench.”*



Herb Alexander  
Managing Partner - Alexander,  
Aronson, Finning & Co., P.C.

## Business Challenges and Objectives: Managing Professional Staff

Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co, P.C. (AAF) is a mid-size public accounting firm headquartered in Westborough, Massachusetts, that employs 120 accounting professionals at different levels. Providing performance feedback is a fundamental component of the firm’s strategy for training and developing its professional staff. However, AAF was finding it difficult to disseminate and collect feedback forms from engagement managers following every client engagement, tracking engagement managers’ feedback submissions, and compiling and reporting feedback results instantly for use by career coaches and the Partners’ evaluation committee.

“Timely feedback is critical to the firm’s success and to maintaining the high level of client service that we’re known for – and it’s a key element of growth and improvement,” said AAF Partner Carla McCall. AAF realized it needed to change its feedback process, including:

- Implementing a more efficient and easier way to request and gather ongoing, multiple performance feedback on every professional staff member;
- Expanding the breadth and scope of the feedback information being gathered on each staff member to include demonstrated functional / technical competencies;
- Compiling feedback responses automatically into comprehensive reports on each professional staff member’s performance during a defined period of time;
- Using a quantitative approach to compare the feedback gathered on different professional staff members;
- Having the ability to monitor the status of all feedback submissions instantly, and to calculate each feedback provider’s average submission response time.

## The Solution

To address its needs, AAF implemented HRToolbench®, an online, web-enabled talent management suite available from HR Technology Solutions. HRToolbench provided much more than an online 360 feedback tool. New online job descriptions were developed for all staff members that included essential job responsibilities and competencies reflecting the technical knowledge, skills, behaviors or approaches to work required for job success.

Staff members now maintain and update their personal detailed job descriptions directly in HRToolbench. Target proficiency levels assigned to each competency are based on the staff member’s role. A staff member’s performance feedback is then measured against the target competency proficiency levels for his/her job, which enables personal competency proficiency gaps to be identified instantly.

“It’s easy to see who are top performers and who are not,” said AAF Manager Tom Muldoon.

### About HR Technology Solution and HRToolbench

HR Technology Solutions, Inc., was founded in 2002 to deliver superior, affordable, Web-based tools that enable organizations to attract, retain and motivate employees more effectively and profitably. We focus primarily on serving small to mid-size organizations.

Our flagship product, HRToolbench, is an integrated suite of HR tools that promotes organizational success by sharing information uniquely among six different HR functions, including Job Descriptions, Candidate Selection, 360 Feedback, Performance Management, Compensation and Succession Planning. HRToolbench reduces the administrative time required to perform critical HR processes, encourages frequent and high quality communications between employees and managers, and supports strategic management of the workforce. To learn more, visit:

[www.hrtechnologiesolutions.com](http://www.hrtechnologiesolutions.com)

For more information, call toll free 877.444.4787 or email [info@hrtechnologiesolutions.com](mailto:info@hrtechnologiesolutions.com)

In addition to job descriptions, competencies and the 360 feedback module, HRToolbench also provides a comprehensive online performance management form that shares data with the 360 feedback module. In addition, a candidate selection module uses job competencies to enable more focused interviewing and rating of prospective candidates.

### The Result / Business Impact

With HRToolbench, AAF was able to roll out a comprehensive online talent management suite to manage job descriptions, competencies, 360 feedback, performance evaluations and candidate selection using an integrated solution that saved time, increased the scope and quality of performance information, and supported the firm's key objectives for training and developing its professional staff. "Instead of spending an hour on an evaluation, I spend 20 minutes," said McCall. Muldoon agreed: "We're no longer spending two or three hours chasing information and compiling it."

Significant business benefits were realized, including:

- Reduced feedback providers' time to prepare feedback submissions by 66%, or approximately 3 hours per provider per month, generating an estimated annual savings of \$250,000.
- Reduced internal administrator time by 50%, or approximately 35 hours per month, generating an estimated annual savings of \$10,500.
- Increased staff member satisfaction - a recent internal survey indicated that 92% of staff members perceive HRToolbench as highly valuable to them.
- Improved feedback provider average submission time by 700%, achieving an average submission response time 3 days ahead of requested submission date.
- Gained access to more immediate, actionable performance information leading to improved coaching feedback, development and staff retention.

### Future Plans

HRToolbench will play a key role in the firm's hiring process, McCall said, where consistency in the interview questions asked candidates will yield higher-quality data. "Interview questions will integrate our job competency models into the recruiting process. Questions will relate to the core competencies of our firm and specific roles, requiring candidates to think about answers - not just 'yes' or 'no,' but situational, requiring them to really think." AAF also recently implemented upward-facing feedback forms for subordinate staff members to provide feedback about leaders. The firm is also actively rolling out HRToolbench to support and technical staff members.

Next up will be implementation of the HRToolbench Compensation module to enhance AAF's salary management and merit planning process.