

ABOUT GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ALLIANCE

The Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) serves as the focused voice of the cold chain industry, representing 1,300 member companies in over 65 countries, and provides a platform for communication, networking and education for each link of the cold chain. The GCCA and its core partners relentlessly study the cold chain industry to identify areas where the cold chain needs to be strengthened and, subsequently, develop resources to help the industry do just that. With GCCA already leading the cold chain industry in data analysis, using a Dynamic Benchmarking platform was the perfect next step.

The highly anticipated and successful launch in 2014 of its North American Productivity and Benchmarking Survey brought members a new web-based survey and reporting platform which allowed members to not only report their information, but also compare themselves against their peers on over 400 data points, using customizable filters.

GCCA represents the interests of the entire cold chain industry by uniting partnerships in the temperature-controlled products industry. Since 1998, GCCA, through its core partner, the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses (IARW), has produced the North American Productivity and Benchmarking Report, a comprehensive industry benchmarking study of public refrigerated warehouses which measures and compares key performance indicators in the areas of finance, operations, compensation and benefits.

Conducted every two years, data for the report was originally compiled using Excel spreadsheets sent to members to populate with data which would then be aggregated and analyzed manually by an accounting firm. Months later, a summary report of the study's findings would be issued to members, many of whom found the reports to be too general and not always relevant to their specific needs. In late 2013, GCCA contracted with Dynamic Benchmarking to streamline and improve the process and, in Spring 2014, they started to develop the new survey and reporting tool.



“We wanted to deliver as much information as possible to our members without making the task of gathering and inputting data overly daunting,” comments Megan Costello, GCCA Vice President of Member and Industry Affairs. “The Dynamic Benchmarking team was instrumental in making this a reality.”

The new North American Productivity and Benchmarking Report platform was officially opened for data collection in August 2014. The comprehensive study measured and compared over 400 different metrics for the association's nearly 350 public refrigerated warehouse members. In December 2014, GCCA conducted a webinar in conjunction with Dynamic Benchmarking to not only showcase the study's findings, but also educate members on the variety of tools available to manipulate data for more laser focused, peer-to-peer comparisons.

While the response to the dynamic and user friendly platform was overwhelmingly positive, survey participation was low, with less than a third of its members responding. It quickly became clear that the traditional method of collecting extensive data might not be the best way to serve their membership. GCCA decided to examine the possibility of paring down the survey, but wanted to be sure they still maintained as much depth and breadth of the original study as possible.

"While the information we collected was quite detailed, the audience from which we gathered it was not very broad," comments Stephen Neel, GCCA Senior Technical Director. "After polling some of our members, it became clear that the number of questions we were asking was unmanageable. Our members simply don't have the time to enter all of that data."

GCCA convened a task force to take a hard look at the survey and pare it down to the essentials. The task force was made up of GCCA members in financial leadership positions who had participated in the past and would be most likely to use the resulting study data. Betsy Delfosse of Dynamic Benchmarking worked with the group, advising them on benchmarking best practices as they whittled the survey's over 400 questions down to a mere 70.

After 6 months of hard work, GCCA relaunched the revitalized North American Productivity and Benchmarking Survey in August 2016.

"The real work here was in deciding what data was most vital to our members," adds Neel. "Once we made those decisions, making the changes in the Dynamic Benchmarking platform was easy. The flexibility of this model is unparalleled to any other we've used."

The new survey collected data for the 2015 fiscal year, dividing the questions into three, main categories - company profile, financial data, and operations - and, to date, all indications are that streamlining the survey was the right call.

"Participation in the survey has tripled," continues Neel. "We attribute this remarkable change to being able to maintain the interface that our members like while cutting data entry time significantly."

Unlike e-mail or paper documents, there's no way to forward or share individual data. Even our staff can't access individual member data. The Dynamic Benchmarking solution is actually much more secure than our previous method and extremely user friendly.

—Megan Costello, Vice President of Member and Industry Affairs, GCCA

Initial reports show that despite the drastic decrease in the number of questions, GCCA is still collecting enough valuable data to calculate over 16 critical Key Performance Indicators that can be used to develop industry benchmarks as the data represents a broad cross-section of warehouses. The addition of peer

cluster reporting has also been well received, which will allow larger companies with multiple warehouses to compare warehouse performance within their company.

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“Feedback to date has been overwhelmingly positive on all fronts,” says Neel. “I’m confident that these changes have laid the groundwork for even greater participation in the future. We always have that option of making changes quickly and easily thanks to the ease of use of this great benchmarking tool.”

With greater participation in the study, thanks to the pared-down format, GCCA is confident that it will be able to provide its members with even more valuable input into the development of strategic plans and critical business decisions. All in all, this broader base of participants will provide more relevant data to its entire membership going forward.

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<http://www.dynamicbenchmarking.com/clients/global-cold-chain-alliance>