



Case Study: Pay Right Project Improving Recruitment & Retention

RIGHTTOPLAY



The Organization

Right To Play uses the transformative power of play to educate and empower children facing adversity. Through playing sports and games, Right To Play helps over one million children learn through play to create better futures, while driving lasting social change in more than 20 countries each week.

Founded in 2000 by social entrepreneur and four-time Olympic gold medalist Johann Olav Koss, Right To Play is headquartered in Toronto, Canada and has national fundraising offices across North America and Europe, facilitated by more than 600 international staff and 14,400 local volunteer Coaches. www.righttoplay.com

The Challenge

Right To Play had been experiencing challenges in attracting and retaining talent. While the specific vacancies varied by country office, they were most often in the professional roles, including Finance, Project Coordinators and jobs within the monitoring and evaluation function.

Right To Play's pay practices were also a problem. The use of cost-of-living as the primary driver of compensation adjustments was not well received by staff, who felt they were paid below the market, especially in relation to their specific jobs. In fact, many staff felt that the compensation levels in the organization simply did not adequately reflect their level of contribution. The existing compensation system often forced managers to create higher level roles to properly compensate specific individuals, even though the roles were properly classified at a lower grade.

Right To Play was committed to providing fair compensation to their staff. They knew they were struggling because their pay methodology was inconsistent and unsustainable. Change was needed. An internal team was created to address these issues and recommend a new solution for the organization. In early 2014, the official project called "Pay Right" was launched.

“Attracting and retaining high-caliber staff was an issue. The inconsistent application of salary increases created a sense of unfair treatment.”

- **Mona Abu Shaban, Compensation and Benefits Specialist, Right To Play**

The Journey

The Right To Play team gathered information about the organization structure, and conducted an internal job evaluation. This process enabled them to determine a consistent grading structure in all country markets. The effort was more streamlined because the country office structures are quite similar across many of the different countries where they operate.

The next step was to look at market data to get the compensation right. The team realized they needed outside support to ensure this part of the Pay Right Project was executed both quickly and with a high level of confidence and technical accuracy.

The Solution

Right To Play partnered with Birches Group for a multi-year salary scale design and policy project, to help address the issues they were facing in compensation management and recruitment. The organization was already familiar with the [Birches Group NGO Local Pay surveys](#), participating as a [Sustaining Partner](#) in all country offices. They knew Birches Group has expertise in compensation and benefits, particularly in developing markets; a good understanding of the complexities in each market; and experience in the international development sector.

This project tapped into Birches Group's expertise in *applying* data in the context of the organization's specific needs. The Pay Right Project is a scale design project that also included job evaluation and policy consulting, created by Right To Play's steering committee together with Birches Group specialists.

Abu Shaban said, “We engaged Birches Group to help us answer the following: Are our salary scales the right range? Should they be broader or deeper? Do they allow for career development? Are we adjusting our scales too frequently? Should it be linked with budget? How do we align our pay to support development and career opportunities in the next five years?”

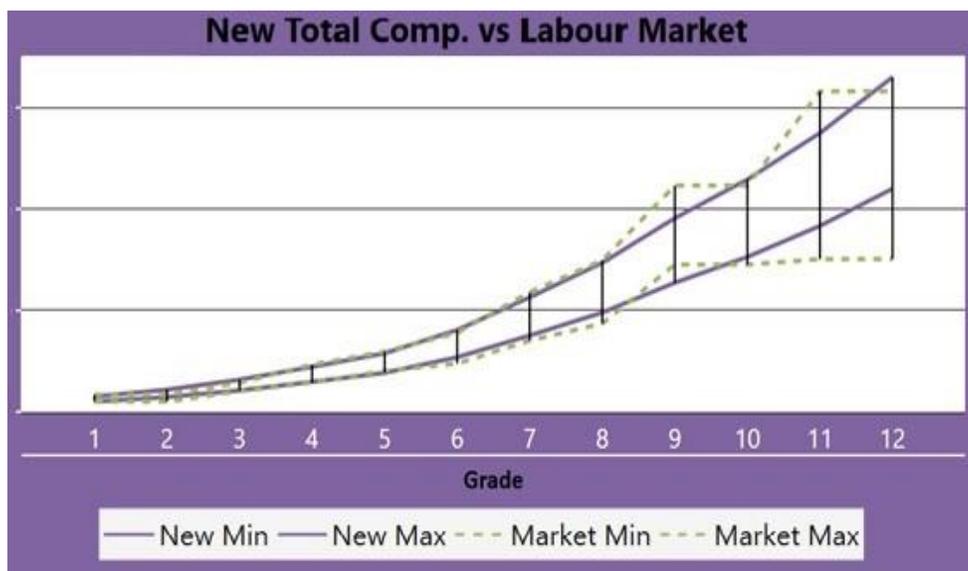
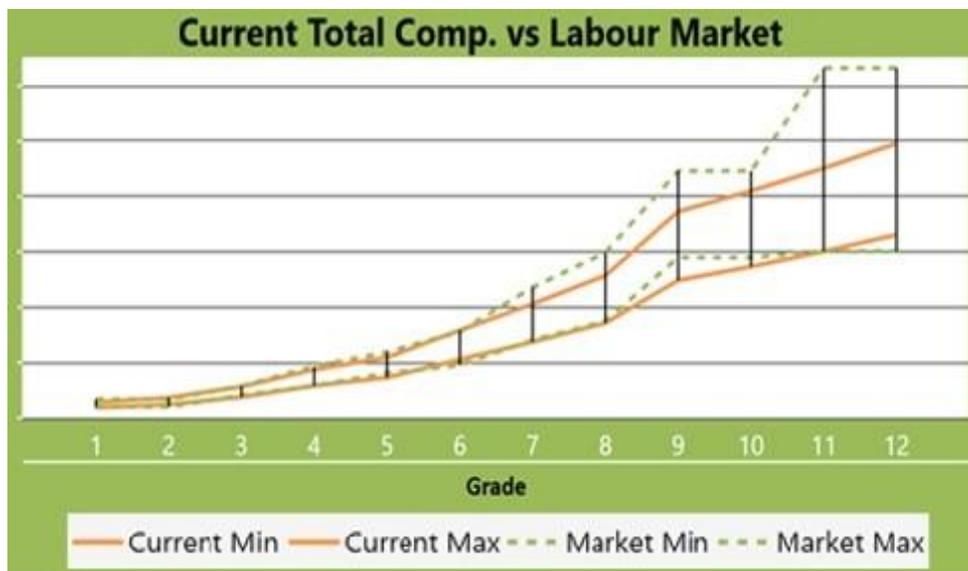
This project involved over 400 employees in sixteen countries in under two years. We would not have been successful if not for the technical expertise and support from Birches Group. They were with us each step of the way.

– Helen Moon, Director, Human Resources, Right To Play and Pay Right Project Manager

What Birches Group Did

First, Birches Group worked closely with the Pay Right project team to confirm their Global Compensation Philosophy. This, in turn, was used to inform the analysis conducted to develop salary structures.

Birches Group created options to address Right To Play’s salary scale issues, with the aim to make pay adjustments fair and manageable in the long term, while meeting the organization’s talent management needs. Continuous consultations with Right To Play’s steering committee ensured proper execution and a smooth transition.



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In each country, Birches Group developed three salary scale options for consideration. Right To Play's steering committee then selected the most suitable scale – one that fit within the organization's compensation objectives *and* budget.

Implementation came in a phased approach in order to manage the pace of change and budgetary impact. Eight country offices have now fully implemented salary and policy changes after only two years.

Challenges remain, however. In country offices that have not fully implemented the new program, particularly those with large donors, significant changes in pay are not always easily accepted.

The Results

The Pay Right Project was a successful effort for Right To Play. Here are some of the outcomes from the project:

- The Pay Right Project allowed Right To Play to identify the salary scale option best suited to their internal compensation issues, while remaining within budget.
- Implementing the new salary scales immediately contributed to significant improvements in recruitment and retention of employees.
- Newly empowered HR staff are now able to negotiate more confidently and with added flexibility when recruiting key talent.
- The scale design project has helped HR staff to better manage salary movement by ensuring it is aligned to the value of work executed by the employee.
- The project also provides staff with more clarity and predictability around their pay and career growth.

Since Right To Play has partnered with Birches Group, they attest to the service and flexibility that Birches Group consistently provides through continuous guidance and partnership.

Having completed the scale design and policy project, Right To Play's new salary scales are now based on cost of labour and market comparisons.

The design of the new scales allows for progression within each grade and in turn, empowers their managers to have more confidence in their new structure.

Both managers and HR staff are better equipped to communicate with current and prospective employees about compensation and career opportunities.

“A compensation shift of this magnitude depends on the full support of the executive team and a specialist partner like Birches Group who can guide you through the transformation.”

- Karen Scanlan, Vice President HR, Right To Play

How Can Birches Group Assist You?

Birches Group consultants work with international development organizations on:

- Compensation and Benefits Surveys
- Compensation and Benefits Policy Consulting
- Salary Scale Design
- Community™ Job Evaluation
- Community™ Skills and Competency Development
- Community™ Performance Management
- Expatriate Policy Development

Birches Group surveys are available in 150 high growth and developing countries. Birches Group also offer surveys for the international NGO and development community in over 85 markets.

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