

# HOW NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS CREATED A PATH TO SALES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OPTIMIZATION



## A CASE STUDY ON NI'S SPM PROGRAM HEALTH ASSESSMENT

**Industry:**  
High Tech

**OS Service Lines:**  
SPM Program  
Assessment & Future  
State Planning

National Instruments (NI), a global leader for automated test and measurement systems, has a mission defined by three drivers: productivity, innovation, and discovery. These drivers infuse all that they do, and this is a story about how their unique culture brought big discoveries to the sales compensation process.

When the NI team launched a large sales compensation plan optimization project in 2019, they took it as an opportunity to view the entire sales compensation process through a fresh lens and uncover improvements to fuel a more productive administration approach. They brought in OpenSymmetry to conduct an objective program health assessment. An unbiased current state assessment and evaluation of their SPM instance diagnosed how well their existing configuration met NI's business needs.

### THE CHALLENGE

Through the health assessment, NI wanted a clear view of the SPM configuration and whether or not it was optimized to meet their sales compensation program needs. The NI team was willing to consider a potential overhaul of the technology if it proved not to be a good fit, and they were open to assessing other technology vendors for a better fit solution, even if it meant incurring upfront costs. This required a deep dive into administration and internal processes to evaluate the setup and day-to-day management of their solution. Project objectives included:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of current program health
- Identify future state needs for managing sales compensation
- Evaluate SPM capabilities against business needs
- Assess other leading ICM (incentive compensation management) vendor capabilities against NI program needs
- Develop program recommendations along with next steps, associated costs, and timeline

### THE SOLUTION

The assessment conducted by OpenSymmetry was built around a comprehensive framework called **The 5 Cs**, which considers all aspects of a sales compensation program:

- 1 | COLLECT** Examine inputs and people/revenue data integration, preparation, and outputs
- 2 | CREDIT** Evaluate crediting methodology for direct and indirect payees
- 3 | CALCULATE** Assess the accuracy and efficiency related to rules, formulas, and other calculation variables



“ It was a positive experience. The OpenSymmetry team was well prepared and knew what they were doing. Also, whenever they did not know the answer, they would do the research and get back to us rather than giving a premature answer that they didn't know for sure, and I really appreciated that.

- Máté Szentei,  
Senior Group Manager  
of Sales Compensation,  
Information & Governance,  
National Instruments

## ABOUT NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

NI (ni.com) develops high-performance automated test and automated measurement systems to help you solve your engineering challenges now and into the future. Their open, software-defined platform uses modular hardware and an expansive ecosystem to help you turn powerful possibilities into real solutions.

**4 | COMPENSATE** Review verification of payments, HR payroll process, and approval workflows

**5 | COMMUNICATE** Appraise the end-user experience and reporting of analytics/performance measurement

During the project, the NI team was able to talk the OpenSymmetry team, a neutral external resource, through daily processes and explain the system set-up and performance. This provided a chance to identify ineffective processes and the root cause(s) of daily frustrations. The NI team was surprised to learn that some of the inefficiencies were not rooted in the technology, but inherited from the configuration of source systems. They needed to treat the problem at the source.

Fortunately, the configuration issues had a clear direction for next steps, and this eliminated the need to consider a new technology. This realization gave them greater confidence in the SPM platform and an opportunity to leverage compatible tools to maximize the SPM instance's efficiency.

## THE RESULTS

### Productivity, innovation, and discovery

Through the current program assessment and future state planning, OpenSymmetry uncovered a series of quick wins for NI's sales compensation team – high-impact adjustments that would take a low level of effort but yield a high ROI. Ultimately, this project led NI to identify areas where sales compensation processes could be streamlined and automated, updating the SPM configuration in conjunction with their annual sales compensation plan rollover. **OpenSymmetry's recommendations for the enhancement of specific business processes drove internal efficiencies, saved resources and time, and minimized non-value-added work.**

Because OpenSymmetry's long history as SPM consultants came with a broad network of clients, they were able to connect the NI team to another client with a sales compensation team who had implemented many similar changes as those recommended for NI by OpenSymmetry. Equipped with the results of the program assessment, future state recommendations, and learnings from a peer that had overcome many of the same challenges, NI was now ready to push their sales compensation process to be true to their mission statement – driving productivity, innovation, and discovery. NI looks forward to driving productivity like never before by executing OpenSymmetry's recommended changes and enhancements and applying new innovations to their sales compensation process and technology configuration.

To learn more about how you can benefit from an SPM program assessment and future state planning, go to <https://www.opensymmetry.com/services/strategy-services>.

## ABOUT opensymmetry

OpenSymmetry enables clients to achieve greater operational efficiency and get better sales results. OpenSymmetry is a global consulting company specializing in the planning, implementation, and optimization of industry leading technology suppliers of sales performance management solutions.