How National Carwash Solutions Increased Compensation Equity with 15Five Compensation

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Executive Summary

This article addresses the compensation management challenges faced by National Carwash Solutions (NCS), a U.S.-Canada workforce of over 1,500 employees assembled through more than 20 acquisitions over eight years. The author's central argument is that transitioning from manual spreadsheet-based compensation processes to 15Five's Compensation module (powered by Comprehensive.io) resolved systemic inefficiencies, reduced compensation bias, and improved pay equity. Key evidence presented includes a self-reported tenfold increase in administrative efficiency, elimination of at least eight hours of manual work per compensation cycle, and the implementation of automated merit logic linking performance ratings to comp-ratio-based pay recommendations. The article further describes a last-minute failure of a prior HRIS compensation module, which precipitated the switch to 15Five. Conclusions drawn emphasize improvements in managerial confidence, real-time equity auditing, and the reduction of unconscious bias in pay decisions. All findings are drawn exclusively from HR Manager Allie Jensen's testimony and are presented in a vendor-authored promotional format, with no third-party corroboration or comparative data provided.

Key Insights

1. NCS's multi-acquisition growth strategy created a fragmented compensation infrastructure that manual spreadsheet processes could not adequately govern, introducing data security and accuracy risks during sensitive pay cycles.

2. Automating merit recommendations through a system that links performance ratings to comp-ratio logic shifted managerial decision-making from discretionary to structured, which NCS reports reduced inconsistency and potential bias in pay outcomes.

3. A last-minute failure of an incumbent HRIS compensation module — discovered the night before a cycle launch — highlights the operational risk of relying on integrated HRIS compensation features without pre-launch capability validation.

Practical Takeaways

- Organizations managing compensation across fragmented, multi-acquisition workforces may encounter structural inconsistencies in pay logic that spreadsheet-based or generic HRIS modules are unable to resolve without dedicated compensation tooling.

- Linking performance rating data directly to compensation band positioning within a compensation platform is described by NCS as a mechanism for surfacing outlier pay decisions for HR review, enabling real-time equity auditing.

Critical Analysis

Strengths: The article provides a concrete organizational context — a specific company, named HR practitioner, defined workforce size, and a describable before-and-after scenario — which gives the case study a degree of specificity unusual in vendor content. The identification of a last-minute HRIS failure adds narrative authenticity. Limitations: The article is produced and published by 15Five, the vendor whose product is evaluated, creating an inherent conflict of interest. All outcome data — including the 'tenfold efficiency increase' and '8 hours saved per cycle' — are sourced exclusively from a single employee's testimony with no independent audit, control group, or methodology disclosed. There is no quantification of equity improvements, no longitudinal data, and no comparison against industry benchmarks. The term 'compensation equity' in the title implies measurable pay gap analysis, but the article does not present any pay equity metrics. Biases: The framing is entirely positive; no implementation challenges, costs, or limitations of the 15Five platform are acknowledged. The article functions primarily as marketing content rather than objective case documentation.

Organizational Practice

NCS conducted annual merit compensation cycles using manual spreadsheet processes (Google Sheets and Excel) before transitioning to a dedicated compensation platform. The new process automates pay increase recommendations by linking employees' performance review ratings to their position within a defined salary band (comp ratio), generating a recommended adjustment range. HR managers use real-time data filters to audit compensation decisions for equity across gender, department, location, and role, and the system flags anomalies — such as high proposed increases for lower-rated performers — for HR review.

Strategic Implications

The case illustrates a broader pattern in which rapid inorganic growth through acquisitions creates compensation fragmentation that generic HRIS modules may be unable to address. The article points toward increasing organizational interest in purpose-built compensation platforms that embed equity auditing and performance-linked logic directly into the manager workflow. The described failure of an incumbent HRIS compensation module immediately before a cycle launch reflects a recognized risk in PMS implementations: the gap between vendor-stated functionality and operational readiness under complex business rules. The emphasis on reducing 'unconscious bias' through algorithmic recommendation structures reflects a trend in which procedural fairness mechanisms are embedded at the point of managerial decision-making rather than applied retrospectively.

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