



REALRESPONSE®

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Kansas City Chiefs Throw It Back with RealResponse Technology

Iconic NFL Club Empowers Employees with Anonymous Two-Way Communication Platform

With time-honored traditions, superstar players and coaches, and more than 500 employees, the Kansas City Chiefs are among the premier Clubs in the National Football League (NFL). After humble beginnings as a local family-owned business, the Chiefs eventually evolved into a brand that has become a slice of Americana.

Then, the club went international. In December 2021, the NFL awarded the Chiefs' International Home Marketing Area (IHMA) rights to Germany (where the Chiefs will play a regular season game in 2023) and Mexico (where the Chiefs played a regular season game in 2019). In April 2023, the club similarly earned the rights to Austria and Switzerland.

The late Lamar Hunt, a member of three professional halls of fame (football, soccer, tennis), founded the Chiefs in 1959 and the team began playing in 1960. His son, Clark Hunt, is now chairman and CEO. Winning two Super Bowls in four years cemented Clark's legacy as one of the most prolific and influential leaders in sports—a moniker that also described his father.

Running a family-owned business that has grown to the size and scope of the Chiefs can be tricky. As the business evolved and the culture changed, so did the need to modernize the platforms through which the Club communicated with employees. The Chiefs were seeking a way to keep a finger on the pulse of employees' needs in real time; and the Club wanted to establish and maintain a confidential, inclusive, and two-way dialogue between leadership and employees.

While other NFL Clubs were relying on analog solutions, the Chiefs were ahead of the curve

The Chiefs believe human capital is the club's most valuable resource. That belief cuts across all four parts of the club's mission: 1. Win with character. 2. Unite our community. 3. Inspire our fans. 4. Honor tradition. Providing a hotline seemed like a natural way to capture suggestions to enhance the workplace dynamic with its employees and players. While there was a basic hotline in place, it was largely unused and ineffective.

Further limiting the potential of the hotline was the fact that there was no way to guarantee anyone's anonymity through it. And, it was only a one-way communication from the employee to the Chiefs.

To their credit, the Chiefs knew a different solution was needed to serve the wider organization—faster and more effectively. They selected a next-generation solution that is retro with a twist.



Nobody likes criticism, but from my standpoint, feedback is always positive, and so we'll take it and learn from it."

—Chiefs Chairman and CEO Clark Hunt

Bring back the suggestion box with RealResponse's encrypted technology

Given the nuances of today's workplace, it is impossible for an employee to share concerns or elevate issues while protecting one's own anonymity. Utilizing hand-written notes, voicemails, emails, texts, Zoom meetings, Slack messages, etc., are all "trackable" forms of communication.

To help solve this challenge, the Chiefs partnered with RealResponse to deploy its proprietary technology with encryption and two-way communications. The goal: To provide and empower every Chiefs' employee, including the world's most elite athletes, with an instrument that makes them feel safe and heard.

And after an anonymous back-and-forth with employees, the Chiefs discerned that several key issues could be addressed immediately. One of which was cultural: A perceived bifurcation between football and non-football personnel.

Breaking down barriers between "the team behind the team" and "the team" itself

There has always been a stigma attached to professional sports teams and how employees do not have access to certain areas of club headquarters while the club is in-season. This often causes non-football staff to feel they are not valued as members of "the team behind the team."

To combat this dynamic, the Chiefs try to promote more interaction among "football" and "non-football" personnel in areas of wellness and personal development. The Chiefs also hold a series of internal meetings focused on wellness and lifestyle issues to help the players, coaches, scouts, trainers, equipment staff, etc. improve relationships and learn about each other. Additionally, the Chiefs hold quarterly "Learning Zone" sessions that allow everyone to attend presentations by different departments. These sessions are a great way for everyone to share their department's successes and goals.

The Chiefs characterize the RealResponse platform as a "culture tool"

Putting RealResponse in the hands of 500+ employees, who can at a moment's notice start an anonymous conversation with the Chiefs, is what the Club describes as the ultimate "culture tool."

"With RealResponse, you are able to get to the bottom of an employee's concern or issue much more quickly because you can use the platform to gain further insight by using the anonymous dialogue feature," said Chiefs' Executive Vice President of Administration Kirsten Krug.

"We want to promote a climate of open, consistent and constant communication and the RealResponse platform is something that shows our employees how important feedback is to the Chiefs. Because absent the information we receive from the platform, employees are going to formulate their own opinions about the priority we put on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our staff members."



The Kansas City Chiefs are winners of three Super Bowls [1970, 2020, 2023]. Originally founded as the Dallas Texans in 1960, the club relocated to Kansas City in 1963. The Chiefs play home games at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium—one of the loudest and most intimidating venues in the NFL.



The Chiefs promote meaningful interactions among all employees, including this team-building event at the U.S. Army base in Fort Riley, Kansas.