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Brady Corporation

An interview with David Lukowski, Global Director of HR Shared Services and Information Systems, Brady Corporation

ADP: Can you describe how the business has changed in recent years?

DL: We've shifted focus within our business to go back to the basics of our 100-year-old company heritage. That's really a re-focusing on identification solutions and workplace safety. We've also grown and acquired companies throughout the globe, as well as divesting companies that didn't fit our core portfolio. It's really been about getting back to what we do best and getting into markets around the globe that will help us maximise our growth potential.

ADP: What have been the main operational HR challenges?

DL: When you look at the complexity of being in multiple countries, every country brings a new set of capabilities into the portfolio. This is positive in terms of the importance of diverse skill sets when expanding into markets and geographical areas. But there are also some challenges, at the HR level, in making certain that transitions (related to acquisitions or divestitures) are not impacting the employees in a negative way.

"If we set up a new office in a new location, this is now fairly painless."

Around the globe we've maximised our economies of scale by moving to a single, global HRIS system. That platform allows us to integrate our employee data everywhere. When we talk about 'big data' and management of big data, having one integrated HR solution is important. We can then partner with service line providers, such as payroll partners, where we can maximise our service line potential in the country based upon employee population and need.

Quick Facts

Company: Brady Corporation

Founded: 1914

Who we are: Brady Corporation is an international manufacturer and marketer of complete solutions that identify and protect premises, products and people. Its products help customers increase safety, security, productivity and performance and include high-performance labels and signs, safety devices, printing systems and software, and precision die-cut materials.

Number of Employees: 7,250 employees globally, predominantly in the United States, Mexico, China, Philippines and Belgium.

ADP: What has been the impact on the business of this transformation and improved use of data by working with partners?

DL: As we've moved to a regional HR shared service delivery model, we've really allowed the HR function to focus on the value-added activities for strategy setting and policy harmonisation. As we allow the HR function to do that, we've also been able to maximise our footprint by regionalising our shared services delivery and then partnering with the vendor to ensure the level of service quality that we expect at Brady. We now have four shared service centres: Milwaukee, Wisconsin which encompasses the Americas; Zele, Belgium which encompasses Europe; Shanghai, China which encompasses the Asia Pacific region; and a service centre in Bangalore, India.

ADP: What impact has that had on cost effectiveness and cost predictability for your payroll?

DL: By using a payroll provider we're optimising payroll delivery in-country and leveraging their expertise. As we're trying to reduce labour costs around the globe it has had a positive impact. Being in multiple countries, we try to make certain that we leverage this relationship to maximise the return on investment. That global framework allows us to identify the optimal solution within any new markets we enter. It suits our scale, it suits our complexity and it really makes sense for our "regional footprint shared services" model.

"It's very difficult to be an expert in payroll for every country around the globe."

ADP: How has that helped with mitigating compliance risk and implementing new rules and regulations in the countries that you operate?

DL: I think that's key. It's very difficult to be an expert in payroll for every country around the globe. So the compliance piece is crucial: going into a country with the best provider has really helped us optimise compliance. Whenever new regulations come on the horizon, they handle them quickly and efficiently. If we set up a new office in a new location, this is now fairly painless. We've had a couple of new markets, most recently Qatar and Saudi Arabia, where we are just developing a working knowledge of the requirements in the region.

So relying on the relationship with a vendor with experience in the region allows us to quickly set up and begin to support the organisation in an effective manner.

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ADP: How do you ensure your key performance indicators (KPIs) remain the same across the international organisation?

DL: The relationship manager and I run an operational review on a quarterly basis to maintain delivery across the globe and to identify any opportunities. It's an open forum for collaboration and improvement. As we continue to harmonise our own internal policies, we also maximise our service delivery from an HR perspective. We all like to come to work and enjoy a paycheque that's timely and accurate, and partnering with vendors to help us achieve that goal is something that is always on the forefront of our delivery model. It's important that we allow the employees to focus on their jobs while the HR professionals focus on their HR needs.

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