Unforgettable experiences with ADP

Quick facts

Name: Party City

Industry: Retail

Employees: 10,000

Headquarters: Rockaway, New Jersey

At Party City, helping others create unforgettable moments is what its teams live for. Vern Martin, vice president of corporate HR, talent acquisitions and operations, is no exception. Tasked with overseeing the hiring of thousands of employees during peak seasons, he's worked tirelessly to build a seamless, automated process for a better candidate and associate experience. As an early adopter of ADP technology, he's tailored the solution based on feedback and real-time information to empower managers and associates to make their own moments extraordinary. Discover how Party City scales its operations each year with help from ADP.

The spookiest time of the year

During our peak season, speed is really important. For our HR team, it all starts with hiring.

We get several hundred thousand employment applications during the Halloween season. Previously, that was a process that was all managed through paper. Back then, I couldn't tell you how many applications we received. Everything was word of mouth or anecdotal. Data and information could easily get lost in translation. I couldn't tell you whether we were effectively positioned to drive our business.

Now with ADP's technology, I know down to the location, the day or even peak times, when people are applying. I know whether or not we've got the talent resources that we need to drive our business. I can proactively see where our business is at risk, so I'm able to take effective and early steps to intervene. When we run our applicant report, I can see what stores are under-performing to the trend. For example, if a store has to hire 40 people and there's only 30 people in their applicant pool, they're going to miss their goal. I can work with them to address the issue before it becomes a real staffing problem.

We hire over 35,000 people a year. With help from ADP, we've removed hours of administrative work for every single hire. Those hours get returned to other important areas in our business, such as identifying talent needs and gaps within the organization. For example, let's say we can see in the platform that a store has 400 applicants but missed its hiring goal, so we know it's not about

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the applicant count, right? Now we know it's about the leader's capability to perform. Then we can intervene to either bridge the talent gap that exists or help support the business while there is a talent gap, so that we don't impact our overall business objectives to grow our topline and drive sales.

Consistency is key with recruitment management

We're getting ready for our peak hiring season right now. For the last few months, we've worked with our recruitment management partners to make sure our application is streamlined and that we're monitoring questions and inquiries that come in from candidates. Anything we learn from difficulties in the process or questions they've had, we've integrated into the application to make it as candidate friendly as possible. We want to provide the best experience we can and be mindful of the trends that we see.

I have to hire 22,000 people in eight weeks, so I can't afford for the application process to be difficult or stop someone from applying. I also incorporate the feedback and best practices from my ADP partners. ADP understands what our objectives are, and we've worked collaboratively to see how we can facilitate that experience as effectively as possible.

If the business says they want 6,000 hires next week, we can handle that. The system can handle it. And we can deliver the same experience. Since the system handles a lot of the communications for us, it enables us to be consistent in outreach, emails and reminders to candidates. The technology helps us provide a level of service we would never have been able to deliver if we were managing the way that we were before.

And it enables us to provide time and attention to those managers who need it. The recruitment management platform offers everything that the HR resource might have provided in the past. It enables me and our field HR team to provide just-in-time support to the person who needs it vs. having to spread our time across everyone.

We can be involved early and often, but it doesn't require us to be physically present. Even with a remote team, this allows us to be accessible and available. And that becomes critical, because as any effective HR person knows, it's about how you prioritize and invest your time, and now you're providing that time to those who need it the most, when they need it. Let me put it this way — if there are 800 different hiring managers, we're never going to have 800 HR resources available to support them in the various stores. The tool enables us to work more efficiently with our managers and to educate them on how to effectively source and hire candidates.

In the past where I had to put HR resources to something that was a manual process, the technology has enabled that to be done in a more effective way so now I can place those HR resources where they're going to add more value to the organization, where they're going to actually help us drive results.

Our compliance is almost at 100 percent for Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC). It's not often that HR has the opportunity to drive dollars back into the business. ADP helps us deliver the compliance that we're required to, which helps us do our jobs effectively.

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There's nothing scary about compliance

It was almost impossible to measure compliance before ADP. I couldn't tell you what percentage we were at.

Now with ADP, I can see, measure and track our compliance, which is incredibly important from an HR standpoint. We added the EI-9 feature to recruitment management, and I can see in real time where anyone is on their timeline for completion of the I-9 Form. For example, I sit in Rockaway, New Jersey, but I can see the employment application of the person who just applied in California.

Our compliance is almost at 100 percent for Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC). I'm draining every ounce of juice from that lemon in terms of what the company is receiving back in savings as a result of the tax credit — and that's an immediate, amazing savings for the company. It's not often that HR has the opportunity to drive dollars back into the business. ADP helps us deliver the compliance that we're required to, which helps us do our jobs effectively.

Ease of access with MyADP

MyADP is an incredibly powerful tool to help us develop our HR strategy. We didn't have an effective way to manage communications with our associates and MyADP changes that for us. It gives us a different way to think as an HR organization and opens us to what it is possible for what we deliver and how we deliver it.

With the ADP Mobile app and the MyADP portal, our HR team can put our resources into one place to create a different branded experience that's reflective of the opportunities within the organization. If we didn't have this as a resource, we may not be able to offer the effective employment brand experience that we want to.

Our employees can log into the MyADP portal or the ADP Mobile app for so many things: to get their Form-W2 or pay stub, or to see their time. It's all so accessible. They can also see additional information, like if we post about the food truck that's going to be at our building this Thursday, or if they want to find out information about a new benefit or just general company information. It's all there.

If I have a question and I want to know who to reach out to within the company, MyADP has that. If I have to meet with a team that I've never met with before, I can log into the Org Chart and see pictures of all the people on the team. As an associate, I can create a different experience for how I do my job. And that unlocks an incredible world of opportunity, not just of access to information, but it changes the way that people are able to perform in their role, which is super exciting.

Transforming the associate experience with powerful technology

One of the things that we as HR professionals need to be thinking of is, any time you elevate the level of experience for employees in one area, it starts to elevate their level of expectation, right? With MyADP, it's super easy and such

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a fast and efficient way for me to get something done. Now, when something doesn't meet that same criteria, we have to reconsider how to create an experience that is equal to that for our associates. That's incredibly important to us.

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Looking toward the evolution of the next step in this process, we're always turning to ADP for available tools. This year we started with MyADP; now we're working through ADP Enterprise eTime®, which we knew would be a change. And then we'll wait until post-Halloween to see what enhancements we can make with the ADP scheduling tool. As we build our long-range strategy of implementation, we can identify what's the "gulp rate" of the organization, how can we digest one tool before introducing another. Our Client Success Executive has been so helpful with that process and understanding our objectives.

Working with ADP as part of the team

Over the last five years, we introduced several key products I was excited to be a part of because they empowered our leaders to take their people's needs into their own hands. ADP enabled the traditional HR department to be removed from a lot of processes that our managers were then able to handle directly. The technology has afforded our organization an ability to be so much faster in terms of our agility in delivering from an operational excellence standpoint.

When you look at an organization of our size, the amount of use that we have with our tools can be challenging. At ADP, I have partners that I meet with regularly about the utilization of our tools. And the service experience is great. I don't view them as ADP partners, I view them as an extension of my own HR team. They're not just contacts for ADP. They've become part of helping us achieve our objectives. When I go down my to-do list, they are right there with every other member of my team. And everyone I've worked with at ADP has demonstrated a vested interest in making sure that we succeed.

ADP is always looking to see how they can help make it easier, educate us or learn from us to improve our experience going forward. I've had numerous opportunities to speak and be a partner on councils about the effective use of the tools. The willingness of ADP to listen to the feedback of users and integrate that into not just enhancements for the future, but in deploying updates to make sure that our pain points are addressed, has been beneficial.

With the launch of MyADP, I've had teams come on site to see what the experience looked like from our standpoint. They helped us think about how we would implement something new. If something wasn't going well, and let's face it, not everything goes smoothly, I've had people on site here to experience and help solve the problem and leverage resources from across the ADP organization.

There's a commitment to making sure that we are satisfied, as a client, and that the resource is meeting our needs. I've had the opportunity to work on

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the backend process with ADP to make the systems as easy as possible. Our systems have evolved and changed over time and most of that is a result of stakeholder feedback. With ADP, I'm able to convert a question into an answer and then into a solution that touches everybody else who uses the system afterward.

Recommending ADP to other organizations

You are not alone when you select ADP. They're there to help you with all your HR needs so you can focus on delivering a great experience to your constituents, whoever that may be.

We have a relatively small HR team for the number of stores that we have across the country. Having ADP as a member of our team helps us accomplish enormous things that we would not be able to do independently. ADP is helping me get them done in record time and over-delivering from a service standpoint for my partners; that's been great for us.

It genuinely appears to me that other organizations are receiving the same experience regardless of their size, and that resources are available whether it's a dedicated resource or it's calling into the solution center and getting your ticket opened and resolved. ADP has been extraordinarily responsive.

What I'm working for

For me, that experience, how people feel at work, is incredibly important. I think it shapes how they feel about themselves, how they're able to perform their roles and how they're able to influence our key stakeholders, which for us is a customer.

My goal is to create great experiences. And I think these tools enable us to help create great experiences for people. There's nothing better, or there aren't many things at work, that are as great as getting offered a job or receiving a promotion. Those things really make you feel great, change the way you feel about yourself, change the way you perform, and as an HR leader, I get to be a part of that.

#workingfor

I'm #workingfor great experiences for people.

ADP
Always Designing for People™