Transforming time and workforce strategies

Quick facts

Company: Education Affiliates

Industry: Educational programs

Employees: Over 2,800 in 32 states

Headquarters: Baltimore, Maryland

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Lydia Chodnicki
Director of Payroll

With 38 campuses in 17 states, Education Affiliates offers post-secondary education in nursing, dental, healthcare, skilled trades and commercial driving. Education Affiliates seeks to enhance the value delivered to both students and potential employers by focusing on educational outcomes and career placement, employing dynamic, experienced professionals as faculty, and investing in facilities, new programs and curriculum development.

Director of Payroll, Lydia Chodnicki, shares how implementing ADP® Workforce Manager enabled Education Affiliates to improve the employee and manager experience and more accurately gather data for improved business decision-making.

ADP: What were some of the challenges Education Affiliates experienced prior to implementing ADP Workforce Manager?

Lydia: We had quite a few time-tracking pain points we wanted to resolve, before we considered ADP Workforce Manager. A lot of employees weren't using our existing time management system for simple tasks like time-off requests and transfers. We had some employees using paper timecards, and we wanted to eliminate paper timecards altogether. We wanted to improve employee engagement around time tracking, since time is the one piece that is touched every day by employees. It's the most visible to them, and we wanted it to be the best experience it can be. ▶

We also wanted to improve the manager experience. Identifying and correcting timecard errors required managers to navigate through several screens, which they found time-consuming, so it wasn't always being done.

We wanted to be able to more easily gather data for informed decision-making. There is a lot of pertinent data in our time system, and we wanted more flexible reporting to replace the templated reports. Lastly, our HR and payroll are decentralized and managed independently in each location. We wanted processes that would drive consistency between locations. ADP Workforce Manager looked like a good fit for us.

ADP: Why did Education Affiliates agree to be a pilot partner with ADP Workforce Manager?

Lydia: Education Affiliates has been an ADP client since 2012. We were part of the ADP Vantage HCM® pilot program, which went really well, so when ADP asked if we wanted to be a pilot company for a new workforce management solution, it was a no brainer. Our experience with the Vantage pilot is one of the reasons we agreed to work with ADP for this opportunity.

We are always working to improve our systems. We love that we're able to provide concrete input in the design of ADP's newest innovations and can request specific features that we need. We like our Vantage solution so we wouldn't look for something not compatible with it. We wanted an all-inclusive, single database in one location. That's very important for our reporting.

Even though it seemed to be a no-brainer, I looked for feedback from different groups. I talked with our data analytics group to see how this would affect them. They liked that they could get even more information out of the system. I showed a demo to our practitioners to get their thoughts on what employee and manager reactions might be. They really liked the look and feel, and felt it was more user-friendly. That's our biggest audience so their feedback was very important to me.

ADP: What are the benefits of ADP Workforce Manager to Education Affiliates?

Lydia: One of the most unique characteristics of Education Affiliates is that each location wants to have its own campus policies, while corporate needs everyone to follow the same process. ADP Workforce Manager allows us to do both: standardize and provide the flexibility to support differing regulations around meal breaks, leave and more across our country-wide locations.

ADP Workforce Manager has features that fixed a lot of small issues for us. For example, employees earn time off monthly and can use their time off in advance of accruing it, but they can't go over their balance for the year. Our previous system wasn't set up this way, so employees could go over their balance, and we had to manage this manually. While it could have been fixed, it would have been a large project that we didn't have the resources for. Now, we can prevent the issue altogether. ▶

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We offer multiple ways for employees to clock in including MyADP, timeclocks, the ADP Mobile app, an 800 call-in number and online timestamp. All of these are still available, and we're looking forward to adding geofencing capabilities. We'll have a custom designed field so our locations can leverage Employee Data Assignments within ADP Workforce Manager to shut off the geofencing for those employees that work offsite.

ADP Workforce Manager allows employees to select from a designated business structure to prevent errors in how time is recorded, which is a big detail for us. This limits options for employees to ensure time is recorded correctly in our general ledger and allows us to have more controls in place.

We also love that we can set up the home screens for our managers and practitioners. We can set them up differently and select what information we want them to see. We all know if an employee's paycheck is wrong, it can destroy their faith in the company. Now, our managers have quick access to exceptions and timecards that require sign-off right on their home screen, making it as easy as possible to manage timecards correctly.

There are federal and state laws we need to comply with regarding 20- and 30-minute breaks. Previously, these breaks got flagged as exceptions and had to be manually addressed. In ADP Workforce Manager, these exceptions pop up right on the home screen so managers can see them and address them right away.

ADP Workforce Manager offers more flexibility with reporting and utilizing the data in our system. The data views make it easy for managers to create custom reports and analyze data that previously had to be exported to and manipulated in Excel.

We have salaried and non-exempt employees, and while we capture their departments on our timecards, that information wasn't being sent to payroll. Now, we track hours worked and overtime by department without manipulating data in Excel. We can track when work is being done, such as evening and weekend hours worked, which helps us better manage schedules.

ADP: Having gone through the process of piloting and implementing ADP Workforce Manager, what are some key takeaways you would share with other companies considering a similar change?

Lydia: When implementing anything new, we think it's important to get feedback from the people who will be using the system the most: the employees. While executives are looking at the bottom line, you need to think about your employees who are logging in every day. If people feel like they have a say in the look and feel, they're more likely to use it. Their feedback helped us customize the solution in a way that's intuitive for them to use. We didn't want to have to create a job aid to figure out how to submit a timecard. We knew that if we made it easy for employees to use, they would actually use it.

Do a lot of training. We've piloted other software, and we learned when we didn't train enough, we suffered the consequences. It doesn't matter how much we love ▶

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a product if we can't get our employees to use it. Create job aids for post-training. We record our training so employees can watch again, and we have follow-up materials to help them remember how to use the system.

Remember that a strategic partnership goes both ways. It's important to keep the lines of communication open. Our feedback improves ADP's ability to provide us with the solutions that we need, and their knowledge of our business enables them to continue to recommend improvements that would benefit our business, and this has proven itself out time and again.

ADP: What's next on your journey for continued improvement?

Lydia: ADP Workforce Manager is much further ahead of many other systems we use when it comes to the intuitive user interface design. The look and feel are cutting edge, and this helps us keep up with where the trend is going all over the world.

ADP understands our needs on an ongoing basis. They are always working to understand where our future is going, what's coming down the road a year or two from now and helping us plan for those things.

We will measure our success against our goals to increase employee usage and overall payroll accuracy, reduce manager edits and reduce overall time spent by our HR team on non-strategic initiatives. We'll also be tracking manager approvals and practitioner sign-off to ensure our managers are doing their jobs and not relying on the practitioners to manage timecards to get payroll run.

For more information about ADP's enterprise solutions, visit **adp.com/enterprise.**

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