A whole new (camping) world
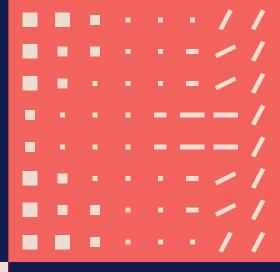
Barry Swann
Human capital operations director

Daniel Varela
Vice president of payroll, benefits and compliance

Quick facts

Company: Camping World

Headquarters: Lincolnshire, Illinois

Award: ADP® Meeting of the Minds 2021 Client Award for Innovation at Work

Industry: Retail

Employees: 12,000

Camping World is America's largest retailer of RVs and related products and services. With over 170 locations and 12,000 employees across the country, they continue to lead and innovate the outdoor lifestyle industry. Read on to discover their commitment to innovation across the board, ranging from their products to their HCM processes.

Learn more about Camping World at campingworld.com

The evolution of camping

Barry: The biggest misconception people have about Camping World is that when most people think about camping, they think about tents and sitting around the fire — which is wonderful — but that's camping from previous decades. What we've tried to do is really enhance that camping experience, whether you're walking into a Camping World to buy an RV or walking into one of our other brands like Gander Outdoors or Gander RV to purchase kayaks and paddle boards or hunting and fishing equipment. We provide our customers with the total outdoors experience — beyond the old-fashioned 'put up a tent and sit around the fire.'

Plus, the Camping World product has really developed over many years. We've partnered with a company called Lordstown Motors in Detroit to develop the first electronic RV and the first electronic RV generator. From there, we plan to make any of our fossil-fueled products to be electronic, whether it's a golf cart, buggy or scooter.

Daniel: Regarding our spirit of innovation, I'm going to have to give our CEO, Marcus Lemonis, real props here because he inspires us to latch onto the innovation to make our lives better, our customers' lives better and our employees' lives better. It emulates from the top down as we see the initiatives that he shares with us. For instance, we just introduced a new line in our business called Electric World where we're bringing fully electronic, carbonless equipment to the camping lifestyle. We're helping design and develop those products, too.

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Partnership with ADP

Daniel: After meeting with our executive team, we worked with ADP to move away from the traditional vendor model into a partnership where ADP was pivotal in knowing what we needed to do to grow our business. They partnered with us to make changes which allowed us to grow and work with them even further to improve our processes for both our accounting team and our employees. That partnership is one of the things that I really love about ADP. They helped me achieve a certain level of professional success within the organization that was directly attributable to them taking visions and items I wanted to see and helping us make them reality.

My favorite part of the job is looking at where we've come from to where we're going, bringing the latest and greatest technology to people to improve their lives or give them better, more timely information when they need it. We're an entrepreneurial company, and we're always looking to change, improve and be trailblazers in any area that we enter.

The need for HCM technology

Daniel: When I joined the organization, we were very paper intense. A new employee's first experience when they walked through the door was to review and fill out 70 pages of paper. Then we had to go through all that paper, shuffle it around and protect its privacy. With our name being Camping World, we are about nature and the outdoors, and you look at the initiatives in the world to become less carbon, less emissions and less of a footprint, it really makes sense for us as an organization to contribute to those efforts by going digital.

Barry: ADP has helped us greatly over the last few years. When I first joined Camping World, we didn't have an applicant tracking system or manager self-service, everything was based on paper. We challenged ADP to help us make that process digital, and easy for the managers and employees to follow. We looked at our process from the very beginning — when a candidate is thinking about applying to us — all the way through retirement. And we've made that process completely digital in the last two years.

Innovating processes

Daniel: I was brought in to Camping World to consolidate and bring efficiencies to processes and reduce overall waste within the payroll and benefits space. One of the key things we had to do in order to change our systems was to get buy-in and explain the processes to the key decision makers within the business who are not payroll professionals, but run operations that lead our business sales and growth. So, we had to make a case for leveraging technology to be disruptive to improve our processes, give our employees a better experience and give us timely information so we could use it as quickly as possible

Barry: For us, innovation has been a journey over these last three years. I sat down with Marcus, our CEO, and we spent nearly the entire day talking through people processes.

- **How can we make our managers more productive?**
- **How can we make our employees happier?**
- **How can we allow them to be able to do their job, make more money, put more food on the table for their families?**

And that day really has built this process over the last three years. The most important aspect of it is building an infrastructure where we listen to our employees.

The benefits of an integrated system

Daniel: ADP is at the center of our universe today. All our contractors and employees get entered into ADP. All our subsystems — whether it's benefits, time and labor, our general ledger or just efficiencies and being able to reach out to employees — feed with ADP at the center.

Barry: I use ADP products every single day. ADP makes my life easier because I can look at the data and the continuity between the systems. I can go to ADP Recruiting Management. I can go to ADP Vantage HCM®. I can go to MyADP to look at onboarding. All of that data is flowing between all of those systems. It allows me to be able to reflect on the data and put together a dashboard that is consistent, easy to use and then provide the details to my colleagues to make their job easier.

Using data to grow and improve

Barry: Data really helps me understand what trends are happening within the organization and how we are performing, not only as an organization across the board, but specifically people-related data. I spend two or three hours a day understanding the data that's in ADP, from our people data for turnover and trends within ADP Vantage to what kind of applicant flow we're having into ADP Recruiting Management or our employees' mobile use. So understanding, reflecting on and being able to act on that data is critical for my role and my colleagues so we know what areas of the company, country and business we need to help develop and expand.

Daniel: Data is super important. Collecting that business intelligence lets us become a better employer, and a destination employer for employees. We don't want people to come work for us for one or two years, we would like them to have a lifetime career here and we're willing to invest in those people through education, offerings, technology and by bringing everything to the forefront to help retain them and make their lives easier. ADP DataCloud helps us analyze and give people access to our data. We're able to see and forecast our needs of the business before they've even happened. That allows us to make important decisions about our business that can reduce our spend and improve our customer service ratings.

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Daniel Varela
Vice president of payroll, benefits and compliance

Utilizing mobile technology

Barry: Right now, we have 93 percent mobile phone use for ADP products, which is phenomenal. We've developed an easy-to-use system, and we can send communications and trainings to managers and associates. Plus, it gives us the ability for the manager to use their phone on the go, so they can be on the floor, with their employees and with the customers a lot more and spend less time doing the old-fashioned paperwork. So by ADP making the app simple, easy and attractive, it really helps drive innovation and promotion of technology through our workforce.

Daniel: The mobile app resonates so importantly because we adopted employee self-service several years ago. As employees needed to change their address, get their W-2s or change their tax withholding elections, we've directed them to the ADP portal or mobile app. They're receiving this attractive consumer experience ADP has programmed and delivered, and when our associates download and explore the app, they brag about it and tell their experiences to other associates.

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ADP Mobile is light-years different from when we first started using the app to where it is today, but in a good way. The product has continuously improved, same as our processes and our business. We've continued to learn, improve and build a better work base. Our products have followed that, and the mobile app has been key. The information is at your fingertips, and it gives it to you when you want it. You don't have to pick up the phone and call a payroll specialist or visit your supervisor at the location, because the information is there for you to see right now. Even in the middle of the night, you can look to see what your paycheck is going to be tomorrow, or compare that paycheck to the paycheck you received the same day last year and look at the difference in your pay or benefits. That information lets you know where you've come from and to, and then it gives you opportunities to use it to make decisions or changes.

Winning the Innovation at Work award

Barry: The HR team that we have — that small and mighty team of 20 people — share this award along with payroll and benefits that Dan heads up. It has given us the ability to know we're doing the right things, and we as an organization are going in the right direction. It's an award that reflects the hard work of the human capital and payroll departments, and also the 12,000 employees that have really embraced not only what we've provided to them, but also the feedback they've provided to us. It's very much a two-way street.

Daniel: We have spent years in paper and disjointed processes, so we're very proud to win the Innovation at Work award. I'm very happy for my team, the human capital team and the recruiters who all played a huge role in making this product successful. All of us team members working together made a difference, and it got noticed by ADP. It's made our team proud to know that of all the companies ADP could pick, they picked Camping World to win this award. It was a very pleasing and proud moment in my career to find out that we've won.

Looking ahead

Daniel: As I look at how we continue to innovate in the future, it really is that partnership with ADP that helps us put things on the board. As new technology evolves, there are new things we ask for, such as being able to text message employees and push out news alerts. These are all things that are in development right now with ADP, and some of them are already available such as sending news alerts through the app. I can push out a company news alert to everybody, or I can even pick a select group of people I want to receive it. So rather than having to look in your email, it pops up as an alert. That's one of the key benefits of seeing some of the technology improvements, too.

There isn't an easy button that any of us pushes that makes payroll or onboarding or recruiting any easier, but it does get easier and the technology that's in place today makes life so much better. I'm excited for what we're going to see in the future from the product and from ADP.

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