# Education Affiliates Inc.

**Education Affiliates**, based out of Baltimore, Maryland, provides educational programs that teach real-life career skills in occupations that lead to employment upon graduation. The company has expanded over the years through numerous acquisitions and organic growth and now has 2,600 employees and 51 locations throughout 17 states across the United States.

However, with each of its acquisitions came a new set of challenges, such as different, independent payroll and HR systems, each being run separately from Education Affiliates' corporate offices. Meanwhile, all of the recruitment and hiring efforts as well as employee benefits plans were managed at its headquarters, adding to the issue of vital information and data not being housed in one easily-accessible location.

We spoke with Education Affiliates' **Steve Budosh**, chief financial officer, and **Lydia Chodnicki**, director of payroll, about these challenges and how they partnered with ADP to find solutions. Here's what they had to say:

## Business Challenges

**Q: What are some of the challenges that Education Affiliates faced?**

**Budosh:** Education Affiliates has 48 locations throughout the United States, and each location is responsible for processing their own payroll and HR information. At one point we were running the company on about six different payroll systems and there were a lot inefficiencies, a lot of waste and a lot of cost to that. So I entrusted my team to find a solution to save the company money and streamline payroll operations.

**Chodnicki:** Prior to ADP, a lot of our processes were manual. Our time system was not connected to the payroll system which meant there was constant importing and exporting to different systems, which of course can lead to all kinds of issues.

**Q: Why did you decide to partner with ADP to find a solution?**

**Budosh:** We needed a solution that would streamline the process. I encouraged my team to interview providers, and the ADP solution was the one that we chose.

**Chodnicki:** One of the reasons we chose ADP was because we could implement the same system and processes across all of our locations. Even though each location manages their own payroll and HR, my team at the corporate office is now able to pull the data we need because everyone is using the same system, the same way.

## Business Solutions

**Q: How did the implementation process go?**

**Chodnicki:** We were the second client to go live with ADP Vantage®, and the implementation was amazing. The ADP team came in and we walked through the process of someone being hired all the way through termination to see how everything we did affected all the other departments, which was great. Through the implementation, the ADP team was with us every step of the way. They visited often, and having them in our office to have face-to-face discussions and walk us through the steps really helped to make the implementation very successful.

**Budosh:** As with any new implementation, I wondered how it would go – but the Education Affiliates and ADP teams worked together to pull it off flawlessly. And over the past five years we've had several upgrades including the ability to use the ADP system on mobile devices, and it's been flawless.

### Q: How has working with ADP helped Education Affiliates become more efficient?

**Budosh:** The major advantage of ADP is that because it's a fully integrated solution, it has helped us to streamline processes, eliminate all the paper and waste, and we now have a very coherent package that manages our payroll and interfaces with our HR systems. And those HR systems then interface with all of our insurance carriers, so I know we're properly managing our staff and that we're very efficient in the way we operate.

Also, with ADP – or "the one-stop-shop," as I call it – I can see everything, and see it quickly. For instance, in the event we have a candidate ready for hire, a requisition can be entered, I can see and approve it within minutes and we can get the employee hired that same day.

**Chodnicki:** By all of our locations using ADP Vantage, everything is in one database. There is no importing and exporting – the data is right there. We are able to pull reports such as payroll, time and HR all combined together, which is great. Streamlining that process and having everything in one database fixed a lot of issues. For instance, if someone is absent we can easily jump in and run their payroll for them if we need to.

### Q: How has ADP made your day-to-day work life easier?

**Budosh:** One of the most important things for me is that ADP has freed up a lot of my time. Before ADP, I would get a stack of approvals requests on my desk everyday – to hire somebody, fire somebody, change their compensation, transfer their department. I'd have to physically initial the paperwork which would then have to find its way back to HR, and that served as the approval for the record. With ADP, all approval requests are tracked within ADP Vantage and I can simply click "approve" on my mobile device to make it happen.

**Chodnicki:** With ADP, I find that now instead of running around putting out fires, I'm preventing them. Because ADP is real-time data, we can help situations or prevent problems long before payroll is even run. I can look at the database and see what someone is doing, view their timecard or see how they've used the system that day.

With previous systems, we'd have to wait till after payroll is processed to get access to some of that information, and a lot of information we didn't have access to at all.

### Q: Has working with ADP helped to alleviate any work-related stress?

**Budosh:** With ADP, I get peace of mind. I know an employee is not in our system unless they have been approved, that their pay is correct, that when they leave us, we have the appropriate checks and balances to offer insurance coverages as necessary under law, and that we manage all of that effectively. Since we've been with ADP, we've not had any issues that have caused me any concern. I can sleep at night knowing that what should be happening behind the scenes is happening.

### Q: What is life like now with ADP compared to before implementation?

**Budosh:** Prior to ADP, I would spend time in the morning looking at the payroll paperwork, or I'd be interrupted during the day for an emergency. Now it's set up on my calendar to log in to the ADP portal daily, look at what needs to be done and take care of it literally within 20 seconds. And if there's an emergency, I simply get an email, view it in the ADP system and approve it. I no longer feel interrupted, whether I'm in a meeting, out of town or even on vacation – I can take care of it seamlessly and remotely.

**Chodnicki:** Before ADP, our payroll would take a good day or day-and-a-half to run a payroll – it was very time consuming. Now, an average payroll can be done in less than two hours from beginning to end, so that's really created a lot of cost and time savings which allows employees to spend that time doing other things.

### Q: How has the ADP system affected your reporting process?

**Chodnicki:** With many other HCM systems, you have to understand how to write code or SQL statements which most people don't know how to do – including myself. It was always so difficult to get information out of the system we were using. But ADP makes it very easy and user-friendly – it's as simple as clicking and dragging to write a report. A lot of our team members who struggled with pulling data in the past enjoy that they're now able to run their own reports. They can even automatically pull data from all three modules – HR, payroll and time – and enter it into a single report. The best part of my job is rolling out new tools for our employees to make their lives easier.

**Budosh:** One of the things I really like about ADP is that as CFO, I get into the data – and now I'm able to get any report that I want. If I need a list of employees by location, if I need a total company list, I can get it in a moment's notice.

*Q: How has ADP helped you save costs?*

**Budosh:** In the first year with ADP, the ADP system saved us a couple hundred thousand dollars in various expenses such as oversights, mistakes and inefficiencies. This has been through implementing a number of checks and balances at the local level where the payroll input is done, and then at the corporate level where all of the payroll and HR systems interface with our various insurance providers. Now I know mistakes and inefficiencies don't exist because I'm getting real-time bills that are interfaced with our payroll system. And because the ADP system is so efficient, Education Affiliates has been able to grow over the last five years without adding headcount.

*Q: What has been your service experience with ADP?*

**Budosh:** ADP has always been there when we've needed them. As an example of ADP's willingness to help, I actually have the cell phone number of our local rep. He's told me I can call him anytime day, evening or night if there's any issue that comes up and we need support.

**Chodnicki:** What ADP has that other companies don't is the customer service. I've never worked with a company before that really cared about what the client wanted. I've been on several different project advisory councils where ADP asks for our feedback, and it's really amazing to see my feedback come through in a new release where I can see the impact that I've made in the product itself. With ADP, it's definitely not a client/vendor relationship – it's a partnership.