Restaurant Group Prioritizes People to Achieve Massive Growth

paylocity®
Forward Together.

800+ workers hired quickly and efficiently per year

Automated recruiting and onboarding to save time and money

30% employee growth rate

HR automation improves employee experience

UPWARD PROJECTS

CHURN FEDERAL PIZZA JoyRide

POSTINO WiNDSOR

www.upwardprojects.com

Hospitality

1,300+ employees

22 locations (and counting)

Switched from Paychex & Bamboo HR

Upward Projects is a restaurant group serving an eclectic mix of casual dining favorites: pizza, tacos, ice cream, and more. Known best for its flagship restaurant, Postino, Upward Projects' culture centers around its mission statement: 'We make people feel good.'

But to build its culture and achieve its mission, Upward Projects needed a platform that went beyond the basics provided by their legacy vendor and helped their employees feel good, too.

The first problem Sam Foos, VP of People & Culture, faced was that his team spent too much time on manual HR tasks and not enough time building culture. They needed an end-to-end HCM platform that streamlined and automated recruiting, onboarding, payroll, benefits, and performance management. Without it, they couldn't focus on attracting, retaining, and developing Upward Projects' talented employees.

Selecting a new HR platform figured heavily into Upward Projects' growth strategy, as they needed to create an engaging experience across the employee lifecycle. Having selected Paylocity as its HR technology partner, Upward Projects is well positioned to achieve its goal of opening 55 locations by 2025.

> "Culture is the expression of your people. What do you want that expression to look like? Is it attractive to new candidates? Is it attractive to vendors who want to partner with us? Is it attractive to guests that come into the restaurants? Your HCM has to reflect and support your culture. Paylocity does that for us."
>
> Sam Foos, VP of People & Culture

The Employee Experience Needed a Significant Overhaul to Support Growth

Upward Projects couldn't keep pace with hiring or meet their employees' needs as the business grew rapidly.

Disconnected HCM Slows Recruiting and Onboarding

With as many as 85 new hires being onboarded in any given week, Upward Projects needed a recruiting and onboarding solution that made it easier to bring talent on board fast. Sam and his team needed a flexible solution so they could customize recruiting, hiring, and onboarding features and enable real-time visibility into their candidate pipeline. And once new employees were hired, the onboarding process needed to not only integrate new hires quickly and efficiently, but also help them embrace the company's mission.

Upward Projects has a small team managing people across talent and development, recruiting, and HR. They all needed a solution that could support their different roles and processes and minimize the disconnects that complicate communication and cause delays.

Performance Management Challenges Hinder Employee Development

Sam and his team wanted to help employees grow in their careers; for example, seeing dishwashers grow to be executive chefs. Upward Projects needed a performance management solution that tracked employees' growth and development during their time at the organization and fostered constructive, relevant, and timely conversations between employees and their managers to make those career dreams a reality. Relying solely on an annual review without ongoing dialogue in between kept employees from truly embracing the career possibilities available to them. It was hard to retain talent, and the organization risked losing their best employees to competitors.

Legacy HR and Payroll Solution Stalls Company Growth

When organizations like Upward Projects want to grow, their HCM platform can either help them or hold them back. Before Paylocity, Upward Projects' HCM solution was not all-in-one—and it wasn't working for them or their employees as it slowed the hiring process, performance review process, and failed to support culture building efforts. Sam notes, "Our first goal was to find a solution that not only helps us do payroll but could also handle all aspects of human resource management. Our second goal was to find a user-friendly solution that is easy for an admin, supervisor, and an employee to use." Finally, Upward Projects needed a responsive provider that would listen to their feedback and meet their evolving needs as the organization grew.

> "Our top challenges are what many in our industry face: attracting the talent you need to grow your company, developing that talent so they can be best utilized within the company, and ensuring they never want to leave."
>
> Sam Foos, VP of People & Culture

Paylocity Seamlessly Integrates Employees Into the Organization

With Paylocity, Upward Projects found a scalable solution that streamlined and improved every stage of the employee journey.

Automated Recruiting and Onboarding Speeds Talent Acquisition

Upward Projects chose Paylocity because it offers flexibility for the recruiting team and easy use for applicants—the ideal combination to accelerate the talent acquisition process. Paylocity streamlines the application process, even allowing candidates to apply for roles on their mobile devices. Using Paylocity makes it easy for both recruiters and applicants to connect and share information.

Sam and his team appreciate the customized hiring workflows they can adjust based on each role. Once candidates are in the Upward Projects' system, they move through it with little manual effort from the HR team, making it an ultra-smooth process for both recruiters and candidates. "It's a one-stop shop," Sam says. "The information flows from onboarding to HR to payroll. You're not playing with a bunch of different systems. You can focus on high-level work like talent acquisition strategy."

All-in-One System Makes Payroll and Benefits Easier Than Ever

Now Upward Projects' payroll and benefits are all in one place. Supervisors can build shifts, adjust schedules on the fly, and approve timecards using a single system. Employees can verify their information and download paystubs. Employees are more engaged than ever, adapting quickly to the self-service options, which lightens HR's manual task load even more.

In addition, Sam's team receives notifications whenever an employee is eligible for benefits like health insurance and retirement planning. They can then follow up to ensure every employee takes full advantage of the organization's benefits package. HR and employees appreciate this top-tier integrated experience.

Performance Management Enhances Employee Development

Paylocity's Performance Management module lays the groundwork for greater employee retention by tracking career goals and progress toward achieving them. Now Sam and his team leverage communication tools like Journals to help employees and managers keep career conversations going throughout the year.

Sam explains, "We call the [Paylocity] Journals 'jam sessions.' Employees fill out the jam session, so the supervisor knows what they want to discuss. And the supervisor can easily add notes. We keep it in the employee file. It's a great tool to capture ongoing conversations, plus we use the jam sessions for annual reviews." With documentation easily accessible to managers and employees on one platform, career path development is an ongoing process rather than a once-in-a-while event.

Recruiting runs smoothly in a fast-paced industry.

Onboarding gets employees ready for their first shift faster.

Payroll simplifies processing and eliminates potential delays.

Benefits integrates with existing systems for ease of use and fewer errors.

Mobile App offers employees a consumer-like experience they are used to in their daily lives.

Performance Management and **Journals** connect and engage employees with their managers to help with their career development.

Upward Projects Scales Its Business with Help From Paylocity

Streamlining HR tasks and engaging employees forms
a great foundation for company growth.

Streamlined Recruiting Delivers 800+ New Hires Per Year

The Upward Projects team appreciates the difference with a talent management system that goes beyond basic recruiting functionality. "Now you've got this huge database that lets you send emails and texts to spur interest in open positions or new store openings. So Recruiting becomes a powerful tool for us, not just an applicant tracking tool but also a talent acquisition tool."

Now it's easy for Upward Projects to stay connected with potential candidates. When a candidate applies for a position, the hiring process is an opportunity to showcase the company's people-first culture immediately. Additionally, the team has visibility throughout the hiring and onboarding process, keeping their hiring practices agile. Sam says, "We're hiring about 85 people daily, and as we send out links to Onboarding, we immediately know if somebody is actively engaged in the process."

Company Growth Rate Reaches 30%

Organizations growing as quickly as Upward Projects often struggle without automation. Sam explains, "Upward Projects knows that a smooth, user-friendly HCM platform is the best-case scenario for HR professionals and the people they serve."

The first impression is critical when competing for top talent, and making the employee experience a smooth one makes an impact. "I can't count the number of times I've heard the onboarding process was difficult at other organizations with paperwork, paycheck issues, or other hurdles. We know our process is smooth with Paylocity, and our employees share that sentiment."

Upward Projects' leadership recognizes how crucial an effective hire-to-retire HCM platform is for attracting and retaining talent. In Paylocity, Upward Projects found an integrated solution that automates HR tasks, supports efforts to attract and retain talent, and makes it easier for the company to grow. In addition, moving to Paylocity helped Upward Projects consolidate multiple platforms into one complete solution.

Since implementing Paylocity, Upward Projects has rapidly expanded its workforce—going from 300 employees to 1,300—with an average growth rate of 30% per year. And they're not done yet, with plans to continue using Paylocity to help them double in size by 2025.
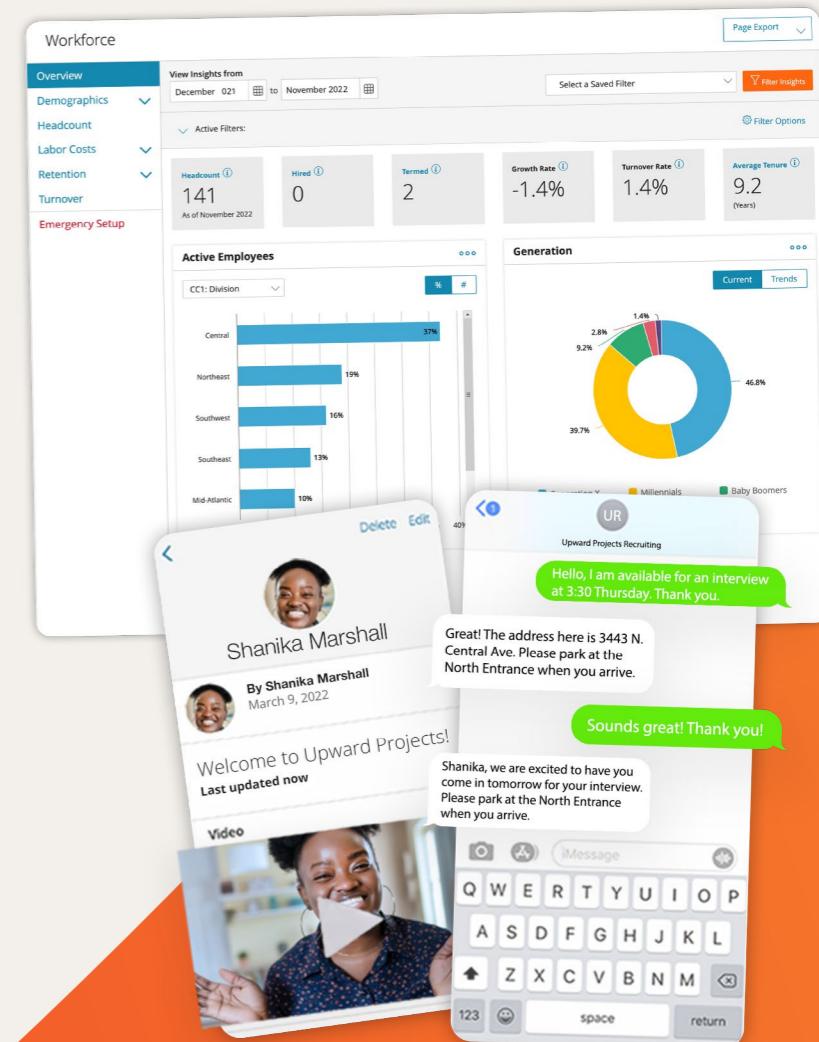
"Having a system that does all these things in one spot—captures employee information, makes it easy for employees to use, and enables administrators to customize—those are the three pieces that make Paylocity work."

Sam Foos, VP of People & Culture