

Credit Union Boosts Retention and Drives Efficiency With AI-Powered HR

34k

total members served by the credit union

14%

improvement in employee retention with Paylocity

1

integrated platform for HR, comms, and data analytics



www.levo.org

Financial Services

130+ employees

Eight locations across four states

Taking its name from the Latin for to raise or lift upward, Levo Credit Union has been helping people to reach their financial goals for more than 90 years. Based out of Sioux Falls, Levo now serves more than 37,000 members across 29 counties in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa.

While it may be a long-established financial institution, Levo is always evolving, embracing cutting-edge innovation such as digital payments and artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years. Brenda Schmidt, now Vice President, Human Resources, has been watching the changes for 30 years.

She explains: "When I started in HR at Levo, we had around 50 employees in the whole company; today, we've grown to more than 130, and we're expanding all the time. In those early days, I was handling a lot of HR and accounting tasks myself, but I now lead a team of five, including HR and Training Managers and Specialists."

Just as the HR function at Levo has changed, so have the systems that the team relies on. Over the years, the organization has worked with various payroll providers and software vendors. While the solutions covered the basics, their functionality was limited. All that was about to change.

"The turning point came when our HR Manager saw a demo for Paylocity," continues Brenda. "The Community module was so impressive. We could get this whole internal communications element on top of HR, plus AI and so much else for the same money we were paying for basic payroll tools."

"When we ask Paylocity's AI Assistant a question, we know it will provide an answer based on authoritative sources. We trust the responses far more than doing a Google search. It's a great tool."

Brenda Schmidt, Vice President, Human Resources, Levo Credit Union

The Challenge

Opening a New Account

Levo's previous HR and payroll solutions only offered standard features and required extra manual work to handle key tasks. The credit union looked for a more powerful, all-in-one platform.

Adopting Breakthrough Digital Innovation

As a member-owned organization, Levo's priority is always to enhance the quality of its products and services. Digital transformation is an important enabler of these goals, helping to streamline processes, and AI is the latest strategic initiative for the credit union. Brenda explains: "We're keen to be an early adopter of new tech. We are now exploring how AI can help us improve what we offer to our members, while ensuring we maintain compliance and security. Within HR, we're interested in how AI could help to simplify our everyday work and save us valuable time."

Encouraging Long-Term Employee Retention

Across the financial services sector, retaining talent has posed a massive challenge ever since the pandemic. "We were losing a lot of people in the first 90 to 180 days of employment," continues Brenda. "We are hiring for many entry level teller roles, but people now tend to try something for a short period, then move on to try something else rather than sticking with it. It's a different mindset, and the challenge for us becomes how can we get new hires to feel engaged from the start, stick with us for the long term, and build a career at Levo. That's the code that we are trying to crack."

Enhancing Internal Comms and Culture

One of the main components in Levo's retention strategy is a focus on training, learning, and development. "Few other banks and credit unions invest as much we do in employee training," adds Brenda. "It's one of our defining characteristics." However, relying on email to communicate about upcoming opportunities for employees meant things could get overlooked. "Email was the natural way to connect with people, as everyone is behind a desk or has an iPhone," says Brenda. "But when HR announcements are buried among other emails, people could easily miss them."

"New hires consistently rate our onboarding experience very highly. That all comes back to the workflows we created in Paylocity. Many say they have never had such a seamless journey!"

Brenda Schmidt, Vice President, Human Resources



The Solution

Banking on Paylocity

After selecting Paylocity, Levo implemented the platform in several phases, going live on three core modules in the first year, then adding further capabilities in subsequent rollouts.

Bringing AI into Everyday HR Operations

To streamline core HR work, Levo now uses Paylocity's [Payroll](#), [Benefits Administration](#), [Recruiting](#) and [Onboarding](#) modules, supported by the [AI Assistant](#). "We were always checking things in the PEAK Knowledge Base on our own," explains Brenda. "This is where Paylocity's AI Assistant is so useful. Rather than running a keyword search then spending time trawling through possible options, I can just enter a question, and the AI will provide an answer right away for us. We love that as it saves us time and saves our Paylocity rep time." Looking ahead, Levo is excited about the prospect of using AI to craft announcements, job descriptions, and more.

Digging into Turnover and Retention Trends

Furthermore, Levo now uses the [Data Insights](#) module to monitor employee turnover and pull reports into finance, benefits, and more. "We created a customized dashboard to track turnover and retention," notes Brenda. "We check that every month, and I present the data to our leadership once a quarter. The graphics give them a clear view of the key facts—it's so much easier than doing things in Excel." And reporting is another area that Levo sees huge potential for AI, as Brenda says: "We love the Paylocity roadmap for AI-driven reporting. That would be a great addition."

Keeping People Connected and Informed

The [Community](#) module serves as the main method for internal communications at Levo. The credit union uses the hub for HR announcements, health and wellness posts, and to publicize training opportunities. "We have groups in Community to support our training and volunteering programs," notes Brenda. "If anyone wants to join in, they can access all the resources in there." Levo has also launched an Ask HR feature in Community for employees to access support. Similarly, people can find their paychecks and benefits plan documents via the [Employee Self-Service](#) portal. "The self-service model will definitely reduce the number of queries that we deal with," adds Brenda.



Payroll and Benefits Administration streamline core HR work and drive efficiency.



AI Assistant locates information in a second and saves time for the HR team.



Recruiting and Onboarding reshape and optimize the journey for new hires.



Data Insights keeps leadership up to speed on turnover and retention patterns.



Community improves internal comms and builds an inclusive, engaging culture.



Recognition & Rewards enables employees to offer shoutouts to one another.



The Results

A Strong Return on Investment

Levo now benefits from an integrated AI-driven platform for HR, payroll, communications, and analytics that has helped to optimize processes, improve productivity, and reduce turnover.

Unlocking Handy Time Savings for HR

Harnessing Paylocity's AI tools has enabled Levo to operate in a more efficient and nimble way on multiple occasions. For example, when Brenda needed information on upcoming changes to pay periods, the AI Assistant proved invaluable. "2026 is unusual because we have to plan and budget for 27 payrolls instead of the standard 26," she explains. "We needed to establish how it would work, and being able to find information with a couple of clicks using AI was awesome. This meant I didn't have to search through the IRS website, and gave me time back for more strategic work."

Taking Proactive Measures to Combat Turnover

The in-depth reports on turnover, along with feedback from surveys have enabled Levo to craft a new retention strategy. For example, the credit union now runs weekly, monthly, and quarterly check-ins with new hires to help them to find their feet, feel part of the team, and understand the career development and training opportunities available. "We have really doubled and tripled down on our onboarding experience to make things seamless for new starters," adds Brenda. "We ensure they understand the value of staying with us for the long term."

Seeing the Uptick in Engagement and Culture

The impact of these steps has been overwhelmingly positive, helping Levo to hold onto talent. "The results are in the data," concludes Brenda. "We saw a huge increase in retention after we implemented more check-ins with new hires. Engagement scores have risen every year since we deployed Paylocity, and one of the big reasons is that people can join, go into Community to connect with colleagues, and offer shoutouts to each other through [Recognition & Rewards](#). It all helps to strengthen bonds and ensure people feel supported. That is what we are all about."



"Our next objective is to increase the use of the [Workflows](#) module in Paylocity. This will allow us to streamline email-based processes and take the hiring and onboarding process up another notch."

Brenda Schmidt, Vice President, Human Resources

