

case study

The YMCA Embraces Tech to Put the Focus Back on the Community





YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids partnered with Paylocity to automate its HR and payroll processes, so they can put the focus on enriching the community.

The Challenge

Local YMCAs engage more than 10,000 neighborhoods across the United States, providing childcare, swim lessons, summer camps, physical fitness classes, part-time summer jobs, and a lifetime of memories. In West Michigan, the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids (the Y) focuses on strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. The chapter employs nearly 1,600 people a year across seven branches and 45 school locations. From seasonal part-time positions such as lifeguards to full-time careers such as teachers, the HR team is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding approximately 100 people a month. This is no small feat for the team of five, which is why the Y turned to Paylocity to simplify their HR and payroll solutions. "The YMCA Senior Leadership team chose Paylocity to help improve all our day-to-day HR and payroll functions," HR Systems & Risk Specialist Gavin Watson said. "As a non-profit, our leadership team definitely understands Paylocity's solutions are an essential element for HR and payroll success."

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– Gavin Watson, HR Systems & Risk Specialist

The Approach

Camp Clean-up

Gavin was brought to the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids around the same time the company began implementing Paylocity solutions. He had previously worked at the Evanston, IL, YMCA chapter for nearly six years before moving to Michigan. His vast experience with software and integrations made him a valuable asset during this transitional period.

“As a non-profit, we don’t always have the resources or time to fully impart all parts of HR to our employees,” writes Gavin in a LinkedIn blog post. “My personal belief is to embrace new technology to help solve problems, act smarter, and reduce human error.”

Company

YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids

Industry

Non-Profit

Location

Grand Rapids, MI

Size

1,600 Employees

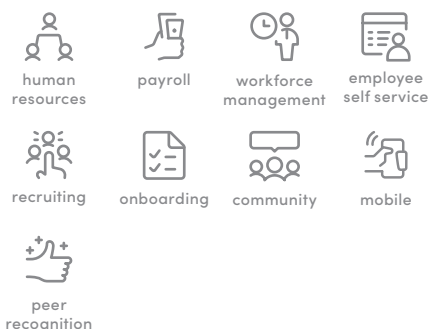
Customer Since

2014

Challenge

With hundreds of new hires every month, the YMCA HR team needed to simplify and streamline their HR and payroll processes.

Featured Solutions



Results

Data and analytics help drive HR and payroll decisions

Recruiting and onboarding are now more effective with less administrative and manual work

Simplifying and streamlining the HR processes allowed the focus to be put back on their mission

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The YMCA's Recruiting and Onboarding improved immensely with Paylocity by saving time and reducing manual work.

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Gavin explained that before switching to Paylocity, employees were using interactive PDFs to record their time sheets and benefits. Once completed, the PDFs were then sent to HR. From there, the HR team printed and manually entered the information into their system. This meant a wide margin for human error, and, with more than 1,600 employees, the workload was crushing.

“Having to export from one software and upload to another... it was messy.” Gavin explains, “It took nearly three times as long!” The switch to Paylocity’s Time & Labor, Employee Self-Service and Mobile simplified the process, putting the focus back on the employees who serve the community.

Simplified Staffing

With seven branches stretching across the West Michigan area, staffing continues to be an ongoing and time-consuming challenge. Between summer camp counselors, lifeguards, and teachers, recruiting and onboarding took up a significant amount of staff time. After transitioning to Paylocity’s Recruiting solution, which integrates with Indeed.com, Gavin and his team saw a jump in applications, but the solution simplified the process, enabling them to effectively manage the administrative load as they plan for the future.

“Having everything in one source is a game-changer,” says Gavin. “The Recruiting tool is really nice. We used to do every single offer letter manually, and that was impossible to keep up with. Certain roles can be tougher to fill, and we don’t have a full-time recruiter. We love being able to send dashboards to leadership.” Since the switch, emails are sent to unqualified candidates automatically, closing the loop faster and taking the manual legwork out the process and allowing staff to focus on filling those roles.

Commitment to Community, Even Within

Communicating posed a challenge for the Y, because many employees don’t have easy access to their work emails or a desk computer. Gavin says the Paylocity Mobile app has helped employees to feel better informed by accessing what they need on their own, meaning HR staff are spending less time answering questions. For example, he can easily push W2s and other company information directly to employees’ personal mobile devices, and notifications alert them to check in to see what they may have missed.

Since the Y’s employees span multiple generations with different levels of experience and learning preferences, a one-size-fits-all training approach isn’t effective. Gavin put together a series of YouTube videos customized to how Paylocity works for their organization. The instructional videos have more than 8,000 views. All the time employees spend watching those videos means time saved by HR staff that can now be focused back on their primary mission of helping the community.

It can be a difficult task for organizations to encourage connection with such a diverse workforce spread across so many locations, but Paylocity’s Community has helped Gavin and his team to bridge that gap. Built right into the Paylocity platform and accessible on the mobile app, employees can share stories, pictures, advice, and more right from their phones. More importantly, employees are able to rely on Community to give them the most up-to-date, accurate company information through Announcements.

Prioritizing Progress

Seasonal employees bring their unique HR challenges, especially when it comes to engaging and motivating them. Recognition is a key way to show them they are valued, and the Y highlights staff achievements using Impressions, Paylocity's peer-to-peer recognition tool. "Impressions are really great, we love them," says Gavin. "Impressions are really motivating and our employees have really embraced this tool as a great way to recognize their peers."

When dealing with more than 1,000 employees, data and analytics are especially critical to making decisions that are effective and impactful. The ability to view trends around employee data and costs has been especially helpful at the Y. "When all your data lives in one system and you have a good reporting tool – the data is king," Gavin says. "It makes it so easy to see the breakdown of turnover, gender, age, and labor costs." The data helps drive decisions for the leadership teams, especially as the organization expands.

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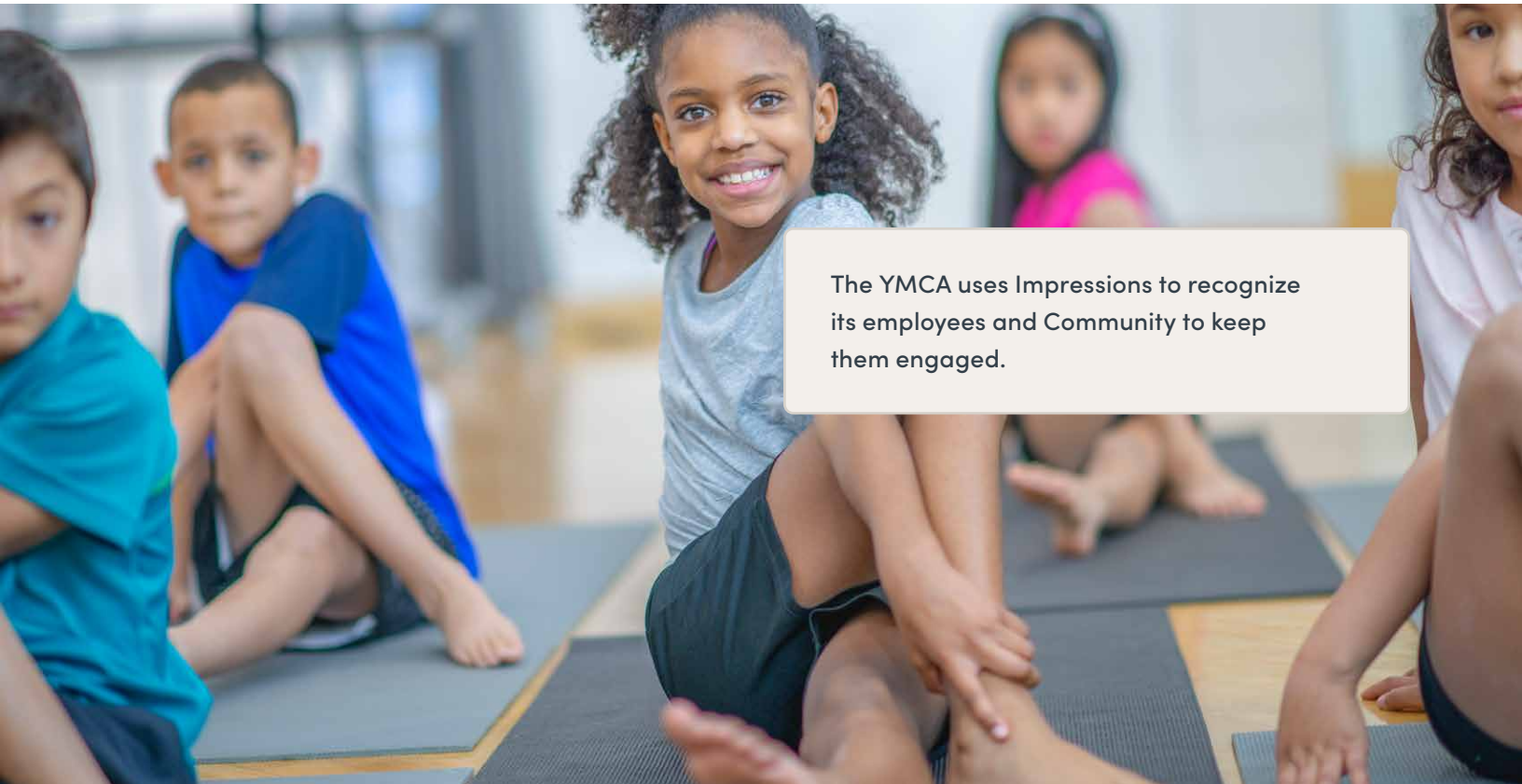
– Gavin Watson, HR Systems & Risk Specialist

The Payoff

Paylocity has helped reshape the Y's HR and payroll processes while also providing value in other areas. Recruiting and onboarding are more effective with less administrative work, and communication to employees has improved through Community as well.

Intent on getting the most out of the platform, Gavin and his team attended Paylocity's Elevate Conference in 2019 to learn more about the ins and outs of the system and connect with other Paylocity clients. The multi-day event featured key experts in the HR and technology fields, industry updates, as well as information on Paylocity solutions. "There is so much we haven't dug into yet," says Gavin. "There is a lot of features we wish we had more time to explore but with the size of our team, it's hard." Gavin explained his plans to dive further into the platform's features more this year.

"From where we were to where we are now is night and day. As a Millennial, technology is kind of expected. At the YMCA, we have made great progress, but recognize there is always more we can do. We are committed to continuous improvement. Simplifying and streamlining the HR processes has allowed us to put the focus back on developing and enriching the youth of America, caring for the community, and promoting wellness and fitness."



The YMCA uses Impressions to recognize its employees and Community to keep them engaged.