Sports Foundation Gets a Great Team Together for the Fiesta Bowl

paylocity
Forward Together.

40%
seasonal increase in headcount onboarded within weeks

24/7
timecard access for staff working long hours to prepare for the game

Zero
payroll errors since introducing Paylocity

Fiesta Bowl

www.fiestabowl.org

Hospitality

60 employees

Scottsdale, Arizona

Since 1971, the Fiesta Bowl has been an annual highlight of the college football season. The historic postseason game has routinely featured top teams from across the college football landscape. Beginning in 1992, the bowl game became instrumental in determining the national champion and in 2014, it became a member of the reformed College Football Playoff system. The Fiesta Bowl is considered a premiere event and is followed by millions of college football fans each year.

The Arizona Sports Foundation, which hosts both the annual Vrbo Fiesta Bowl and the Guaranteed Rate Bowl, along with other events, is a small organization with big responsibilities. With tens of thousands of fans at Chase Field or State Farm Stadium and millions more watching on TV, there's no room for errors in scheduling, ticketing, or safety.

The sheer logistics involved in coordinating the teams, fans, event sites, accommodations, and broadcasters means that Fiesta Bowl staff are stretched to the limit. On any given day, they might be working at or traveling between airports, team hotels, training fields, stadiums, and other sites. There's just too much work for the 35 permanent employees to handle, so every year, the organization needs to bring on approximately 25 seasonal workers to help during the weeks before and after the big games.

But ramping up staffing levels by 40% and back down again in a matter of months presents its own challenges for administrators—especially in terms of time management, payroll, and benefits administration. To scale the organization without needing to grow its HR team, Fiesta Bowl decided to replace its legacy Paycor software with the powerful, intuitive Paylocity platform.

"I've worked with Paylocity at three different organizations now, and I'm a strong advocate because their reputation speaks for itself. Among my peers in HR, whenever someone starts a new role, the first thing we all ask is: 'Is your new company using Paylocity? And if not, would they be open to it?'"

Julie Atherton, Senior Director of Administration, Arizona Sports Foundation
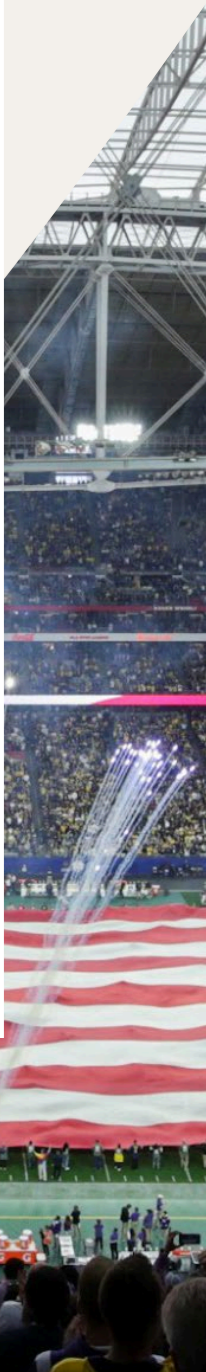
Inflexible Systems and Outsourced Processes Sap Efficiency and Break Trust

With staff working long hours in the field, timecard errors were common, causing delays and unnecessary work for administrators.

Missed Punches Make Payroll Painful

Organizing a high-profile college football game involves thousands of moving parts. With more than 100 players on each team, plus coaches, support staff, cheerleaders, and mascots, things can get complicated quickly. And that's before even considering the yearly Fiesta Bowl Parade, which features floats and marching bands from across the country.

Julie Atherton, Senior Director of Administration, explains: "With all the events going on, staff work offsite at different facilities, starting very early and working late hours. So, it's inevitable that people are going to forget to clock in or clock out."

In the past, that made payroll a big headache. "Every month, I always had a slew of missed punches on timecards," says Julie. "I had to track people down and get them to remember what hours they worked on Tuesday a week and a half ago. Moreover, when I looked into our payroll with Paycor, I found a lot of errors. It was time to make some changes."

Outsourced Processes Limit Visibility and Trust

Part of the problem was that Fiesta Bowl was using HR and payroll software that didn't integrate with the rest of its systems. Important information about payroll and benefits administration was still being sent back and forth on paper, and it was difficult to get accurate data to guide decision-making.

"First and foremost, it's about trust," says Julie. "I need to know that when I am running a payroll or approving timecards, the information is available and it's accurate. We needed to take back control of our HR processes and data to get that assurance."

> "The user-friendliness of Paylocity is second to none. Everything we've done with it just works. The data is accurate, and the processes are seamless. It's the platform we trust to ensure we're always ready for game time."
>
> Julie Atherton, Senior Director of Administration

Taking Out Blockers and Tackling Payroll Problems

Fiesta Bowl shifts to Paylocity to enable greater scalability and streamline payroll and benefits processes.

Julie made a strong case for change to Fiesta Bowl's CFO, based on her positive experiences with Paylocity in previous roles. "What I like about Paylocity is the support," she says. "If I need to speak to someone, it's always easy to call up and have that conversation. That's something I've never experienced with other providers."

Onboarding Gets Seasonal Staff Up to Speed

Today, new employees come into contact with Paylocity from the first moment they join Fiesta Bowl. Once they receive the onboarding email, they can log into the Employee Self-Service portal or download the Paylocity Mobile App and get instant access to onboarding and training materials, such as Fiesta Bowl's employee handbook. Moreover, the Onboarding module automatically tracks the tasks that people have completed and logs them in their employee records.

Mobile Time Collection Eliminates Errors

Giving employees mobile access to Paylocity's Time Collection tool has transformed the accuracy of Fiesta Bowl's timecards. Whether an employee is welcoming a team at the airport, meeting with volunteers at State Farm Stadium, or helping to prepare floats for the parade, they can clock in and out to record their hours accurately. That means no more missed punches, and no more errors or costly delays in Payroll processing.

Integrations Make Benefits Administration Seamless

Fiesta Bowl uses Paylocity Integrations to connect data from third-party systems such as Vanguard, which the organization uses for its 401k plan. Together with Paylocity's Benefits Administration tools, this eliminates paper-based tasks and allows employees to manage their pensions, healthcare, and other benefits in one place. As Julie says, "With Paylocity, benefits administration becomes just another seamless process."

Insights & Recommendations Boost Transparency and Trust

Transparency and data analysis are better with Paylocity Insights & Recommendations, too. When the team is doing audits or pulling information for 401k or workers' comp, they can pull all the numbers from Paylocity— and be confident that those numbers are accurate. "Compared to our previous system, the catalog of reports that Paylocity offers is huge," says Julie. "We don't have to go in and build custom reports because it's all there already. I can get any information that I need right away."

Onboarding helps train and integrate new hires within hours

Employee Self-Service enables staff to clock in and out at any time via the Paylocity Mobile App

Payroll automates calculations for accurate pay and reporting, eliminating all payroll errors

Benefits Administration streamlines enrollment and cuts paperwork

Insights & Recommendations provide key HR reports out of the box

Helping Employees Become MVPs

Paylocity helps Fiesta Bowl bring employees on board quickly and empowers them to work effectively in the field, while streamlining HR administration.

Boosting Employee Happiness with 24/7 Access to HR Tools

The entire Fiesta Bowl organization — both permanent and seasonal staff — regard Paylocity as the central hub for all HR-related information and tools. By providing 24/7 access to timecards and simplifying time management, it's popular with everyone. As Julie says: "Ultimately, everything comes down to the fact that the employees are happy with the system that we're using. That makes my job a lot easier, and we've had zero payroll errors since introducing Paylocity."

Simplifying Processes to Boost Accessibility and Mitigate Risk

In a small organization, it's always a risk when only one person knows how to run key processes like payroll. Paylocity has freed Fiesta Bowl from those worries by enabling Julie to train her senior finance colleagues in a matter of minutes. "Paylocity makes it so simple," she explains. "I could hand those step-by-step instructions over to anyone in the office, and they really can't go wrong."

Scaling Seamlessly to Prepare for the Big Game

Thanks to Paylocity, it's now much easier for Fiesta Bowl administrators to manage the 40% seasonal fluctuation in headcount in the weeks surrounding the big games. New staff can be onboarded and offboarded seamlessly, and payroll and benefits administration are no longer pain-points for the HR team.

Julie concludes: "Paylocity is definitely a time-saver in my role, and it's a system that I'll continue to promote. We're coming up to a full year of using the system, and it's proven that we made the right call. Our CFO and leaders have all bought in, and we know that we'll always have the support we need from Paylocity when we need it."
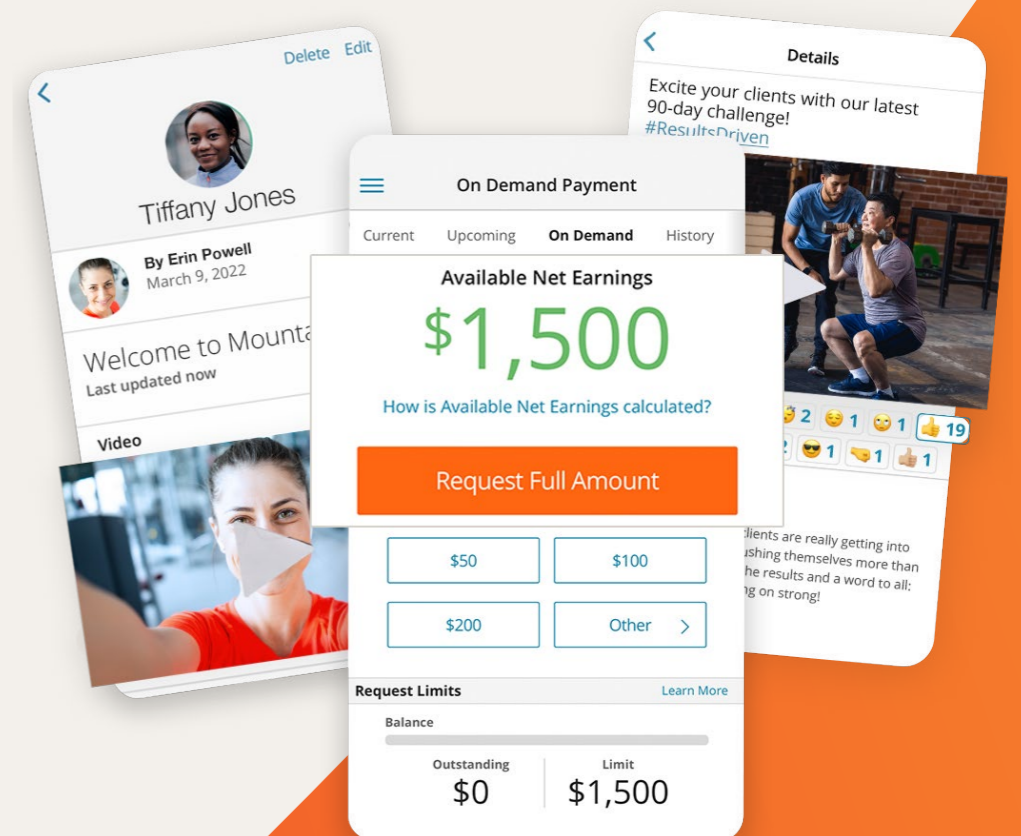
"Paylocity continues to advance and evolve, and the platform always has more to offer. Whenever I want to extend our HR capabilities, Paylocity is the first place I look. It's the hub for everything I do, and it's become the hub for our employees too."

Julie Atherton, Senior Director of Administration