

Hospitality Group Cooks Up Streamlined Operations with a Modern HCM



- 75%** reduction in time to onboard new hires
- 1** platform covers all HR needs from A-Z
- Hours** saved on payroll, benefits, compliance and more



www.squareoneconceptsinc.com

Restaurants & Hospitality

1,300+ employees

Scottsdale, Arizona

Square One Concepts is a full-service hospitality firm that prides itself on creating enjoyable and memorable experiences for guests. The organization is best known for its beloved restaurants across Arizona, and its commitment to excellence has the team poised for rapid growth in the coming years.

But scaling efficiently was nearly impossible with a disjointed tech stack, not to mention manual processes that exacerbated the normal challenges of running a restaurant. What's more, Square One Concepts was relying on an HCM provider that couldn't provide the level of service or the tools they needed to grow. The lack of service meant it took longer to resolve issues, and the employees felt the strain. The team needed a new HR and payroll solution, one that would integrate with its operational tools and be a true partner.

In 2022, Chief Financial Officer Roland Wood and Human Resources Director Maria Vertes led the charge to switch Square One Concepts from their previous provider to a modern, all-in-one HCM platform that could provide value in the present and long into the future.

Roland remembers, "Number one, we knew we needed something more robust, and two, we definitely needed something that was going to support us quite a bit more as we lean in on our growth plans."

"Paylocity allows us to do the things we need to do as fast as we can so we can focus on the strategy of running the business, more than the day-to-day tactical."

Roland Wood, CFO, Square One Concepts



The Challenge

Outdated Systems Make Restaurant Challenges More Potent

Square One Concepts struggled to attract and retain talent without breaking the bank.

Delayed Onboarding Created a Danger Zone Where New Hires Could Walk Away

As a hospitality group, Square One Concepts is competing against a growing number of businesses and the gig economy for workers. “Recruiting has always been a challenge,” Maria says. “And within the hospitality industry, everybody is trying to scoop from the same bowl of talent.”

By the time restaurant managers found candidates, they knew the clock was already ticking. “We would get calls over the weekend or in the evenings from a GM or a chef saying, ‘Hey, I have this person who applied, and I want to start them tomorrow,’” Maria remembers. “We lost people because we couldn't get them to start for a week. It's kind of a danger zone for us to lose candidates when it's already such a challenge for us to find people for certain positions.”

Lack of Communication About Employee Benefits Impacted Turnover

The hospitality industry has historically had one of the highest turnover rates, and at 5.4%, it is still [twice the average rate](#) nationally. “I think that's unfortunately pretty standard for food and beverage,” Maria says, “and there are certain positions where the turnover rate is a lot higher than others — predominantly back-of-house positions.”

But for Square One Concepts, a big part of the problem was communicating with employees about their extensive benefits. “We've moved mountains with our employee satisfaction and experience. And when we bring in new talent and retain the talent we want to keep, we want to highlight that as much as we can, because those are major things,” says Roland.

Poor Service from Previous HCM Provider Prevented HR from Helping Employees

Every organization has unique needs, but when HCM providers aren't committed to partnership, it's the organization's employees who suffer. Square One Concepts recognized this and realized it was time to make a switch.

“The service we were getting, or lack thereof I should say, was really the catalyst that started the conversation of, okay, we can't do this anymore,” Maria says. “We need a platform and a vendor that's going to truly support us, be timely with us, and take care of our needs. Because if they don't take care of us, if we can't find solutions to issues, then we can't help our employees.”

“The amount of time you save with recruiting and onboarding, the responsiveness of Paylocity service, it has all been exceptional. When we can do our job better, then our employees get serviced much better.”

Maria Vertes, Human Resources Director



The Solution

A New Recipe for Smarter HR

Paylocity was the secret ingredient for a happier, more efficient team.

An All-in-One Product Simplifies Operations

Switching to Paylocity gave Square One Concepts the robust feature set the team wanted when they began their search. With their previous provider, managers often got confused between the multiple technology systems. “We wanted to move away from ‘vendor spaghetti’ and just having everything in one place is vital,” Roland says. “Paylocity offers a full A-Z system that covers all our needs.”

Paylocity’s integration capabilities were also a game changer. “The technology is largely what set Paylocity apart from the other options,” Roland says. “In our industry, things are changing all the time, and we are constantly looking at different software. To know that Paylocity would be able to plug and play with all this different stuff that we were looking at was really important to us.”

Streamlined Processes Reduce Administrative Burden

In their efforts to improve the employee experience, Square One Concepts shifted to weekly payroll which added additional work for the payroll team. But with Paylocity, there’s less administrative burden than ever before. “I can automate and streamline our ability to post our payroll every week,” Roland says. “Since we went from biweekly to weekly, it effectively doubled the workload for us to have to transact and account for all the payroll expenses. So being able to streamline now is important.”

Quick, Convenient Communication Keeps Employees in the Loop

The hustle and bustle of a restaurant leaves little opportunity for front-of-house leadership to spend time on HR-related matters with employees. But now, Maria leverages [Community](#), Paylocity’s online communication hub, to keep everyone informed. “There are times when our managers don't necessarily have the time to sit and explain something in detail to an employee or answer their questions,” Maria says. “With Community, I've noticed employees really like to be able to reach out to HR directly because it's more convenient for them. They can get an answer immediately — as long as I'm at my seat — without making a phone call.”



Integrations enables seamless connections to different operational HR tools.



Payroll streamlines weekly payroll processes and reduces administrative workloads.



Community makes it quick and easy for HR to communicate with employees.



Learning supports ongoing employee development and improves retention levels.



Recruiting and Onboarding accelerate key processes and help get new hires started fast.



The Results

Modern Technology Enables Focus on Employees

Switching to an all-in-one HCM allowed Square One Concepts to deliver a top-shelf employee experience.

Onboarding Time Is Reduced by 75%

Having recruiting and onboarding capabilities in the same system enables Square One Concepts to get new hires in the door and on the floor in less than half the time it took before. “Previously, it took hours upon hours for the recruiting information to feed into our old system,” Maria says. “And with Paylocity it's an hour. So, it's very doable if we get a call and a manager wants to start a new hire the following day. We can do the onboarding and make it happen.”

Centralized Communication Extends Reach

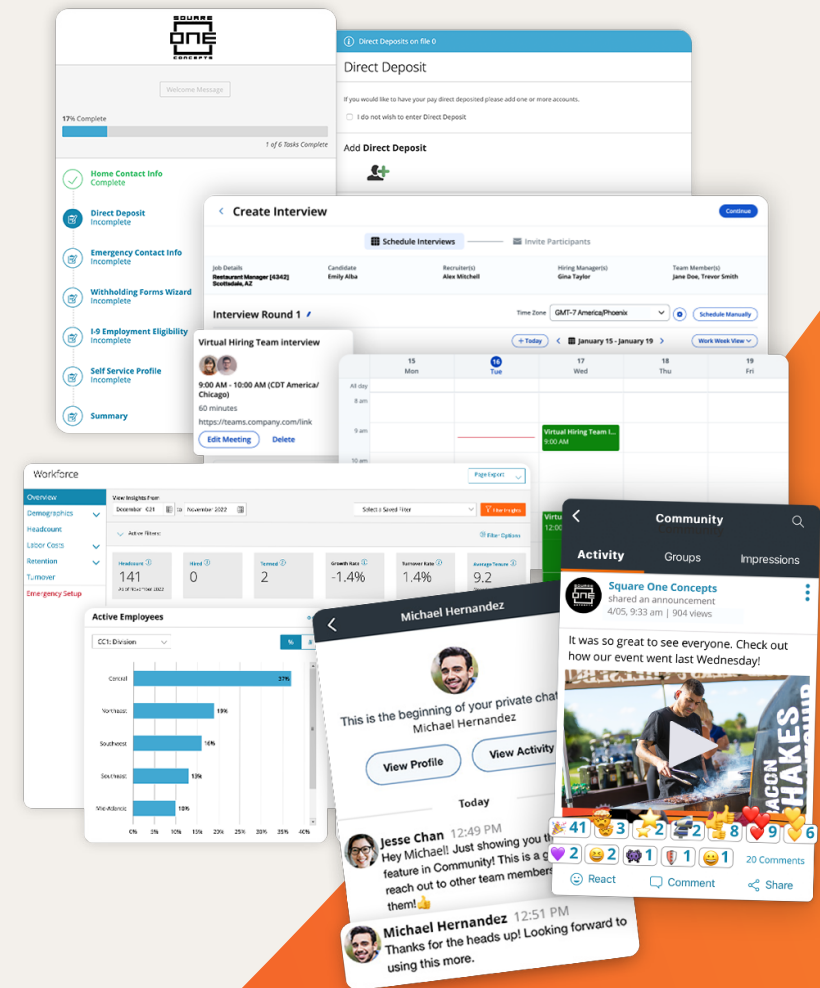
Square One Concepts now has a way to reach its entire workforce — even the deskless employees without regular computer access. “I know our employees are using their mobile phones because I can actually communicate with them through Community, which is fantastic,” Maria says. “It's almost like you're texting with somebody in real time, so I love that.” Beyond one-to-one chat, the team uses Community as a company broadcast channel. “I do all kinds of announcements,” Maria explains. “Let's say there's a new handbook. I post the new handbook on there when there's a new policy. Anything that I feel is company-wide news or congratulations, I will use Community for that.”

Robust Learning Features Improve Employee Development

[Research shows](#) investing in employee development yields positive business results, including improved retention. Seven in 10 employees say learning helps them feel more connected to the organization, and eight in 10 say it adds purpose to their work. So, it's no surprise Square One Concepts is increasing focus on career development. “As part of our loyalty program, we're launching some robust training and rolling that out to our employees better than we were before,” Roland says. “We're leveraging the learning management system so we can mass communicate with our employees at the frontline level, which are the ones we want to complete the program.”

Human Resources Can Focus on Humans

Payroll, compliance, benefits administration, and other core HR tasks can leave even the most seasoned veterans feeling stretched thin. That's why Square One Concepts sought out a provider that would be a true partner. “I'm in human resources, so I put a lot of emphasis on interactions with humans,” Maria says. “Working with our Paylocity team has been a pleasure. I never feel like I'm being sold to, and our implementation was phenomenal. We love having a vendor that takes care of us and helps us find solutions to our needs.”



“Paylocity has everything that a growing company needs to become more efficient and be at the forefront of technology.”

Maria Vertes, Human Resources Director

