

case study

Crafting Change with an HR and Payroll Solution that Cares





When Amber Aikens first joined Duncan Enterprises as an HR Generalist in 2015, there were a lot of outdated processes happening at this successful family-run business. Several promotions later and in a leadership role, she found herself guiding the organization through a pandemic and radical business model changes. She was thankful to have turned to Paylocity to help her paint a different picture of how HR and payroll could be.

The Challenge

Known today for arts and crafts, Duncan Enterprises was founded by Erma Duncan as a hobby in her garage during the 1940s. Erma wanted to make it accessible and easy for people to experience creativity. In nearly 80 years, Duncan Enterprises has evolved from a manufacturer of ceramic goods to arts and crafts and even personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based out of California, Duncan Enterprises faces strict compliance and training requirements – managing and maintaining these requirements was a full-time job. After growing her own career from HR Generalist to Vice President of HR – and knowing first-hand how time-consuming manual processes could be – Amber knew she wanted an HR and payroll solution that could automate tasks and support her employee engagement efforts. But not all of the team members considered themselves tech savvy, and the idea of new software stopped many in their tracks. “But I knew since my own onboarding experience we needed something better. We spent hours on paperwork, and it was a lengthy process.”

Amber explains how the previous software was not user-friendly and required many manual processes such as paper applications. Duncan had never utilized an online application system prior to Paylocity. “It was all hard copies on paper, and we get lots of applications. We’ve been very paper heavy for a long, long time.” Amber and her team spent a lot of time processing paper applications, filing and inputting the information into the system. Not to mention the struggle with running reports or having somewhere to store employee information.

But the real catalyst for the change was that Duncan’s current provider hadn’t updated Duncan’s version of the platform in nearly 15 years. Amber explains, “We were on version 3.1 and they said, ‘Hey, we’re now on version 20. You need to get up to par and we’re sorry we haven’t updated you in the last 15 years, but now we need you to change.’ And so, if we were going to have to make a change, I was going to look at other available systems in the market.”

Company

Duncan Enterprises

Industry

Manufacturing

Location

Fresno, CA

Size

135

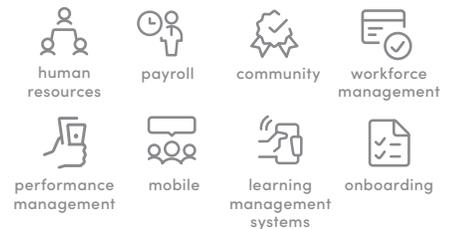
Customer Since

2019

Challenge

Duncan's previous HR and payroll provider had antiquated and manual paper processes leaving room for error.

Featured Solutions



Results

Onboarding that once took six hours can now be completed in 15 minutes.

Performance management and annual reviews are tied to an employee's electronic file that follows them throughout their journey.

The Learning module allows the team to remain compliant and up-to-date with California legislation.

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Amber Aikens, Vice President of HR

The Approach

The Duncan team rolled up their sleeves and went to work researching and interviewing possible providers. “We dug into 20 different platforms to see what's the best for our team. We were really impressed with Paylocity from the very beginning,” says Amber. “One of the reasons we chose Paylocity was the level of transparency with us on who they are, what they were capable of, and what they were working on. We felt cared for and understood. Here at Duncan, we’re family owned and operated, and the Duncan family truly cares about each and every team member. They really want to get to know all of their team members, their family members, and what they do for fun. We have that same close-knit family feeling with Paylocity.”

Creating Outside the Box

Duncan Enterprises firmly believes creativity looks different to different people, and they are constantly looking for ways to deliver products that will help people explore their creative side. They have evolved their business model several times over the last seven decades. In 2020, they shifted to also manufacture and distribute hand sanitizer and face masks as a response to the need presented by the global pandemic, shipping to retailers around the world while resources were scarce. The team was quick to identify gaps and adapt. “We believe if you're not changing, you're going to cease, so you have to continue to stay up with trends and look at what's happening. That's another big advantage of Paylocity,” says Amber. “They don't wait a year to upgrade. It just continues to evolve. And I think that makes it easier for the team to roll with the changes.”

Learning in the Lines

Tracking progress of the compliance courses has been a game changer for the team at Duncan. “In California, we have a lot of training requirements, and we have to make sure that we're keeping everyone on track with the state requirements,” says Amber. “It's great to be able to track progress and see exactly where our employees are at in the process. We can also assign new courses immediately without having to go through a big setup process – it's wonderful. I love the fact that I can look in the system and see what's available and what's trending. For example, when everyone was shifting to teleworking, there are quick five-to-10-minute trainings on how you stay motivated with teleworking, how to set up workstations when you're teleworking and more, all right within the system.”

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– Amber Aikens, Vice President of HR

“It's a one-stop shop for all those performance reviews and the corrective actions. And I don't have to go through paper files. Often times getting the information of how someone has progressed through the company gets lost in the shuffle. And you're able to make it all electronic and attach it to that person, so you don't lose those valuable insights and you're able to make more impactful decisions.”

– Amber Aikens, Vice President of HR

Painting Performance Reviews

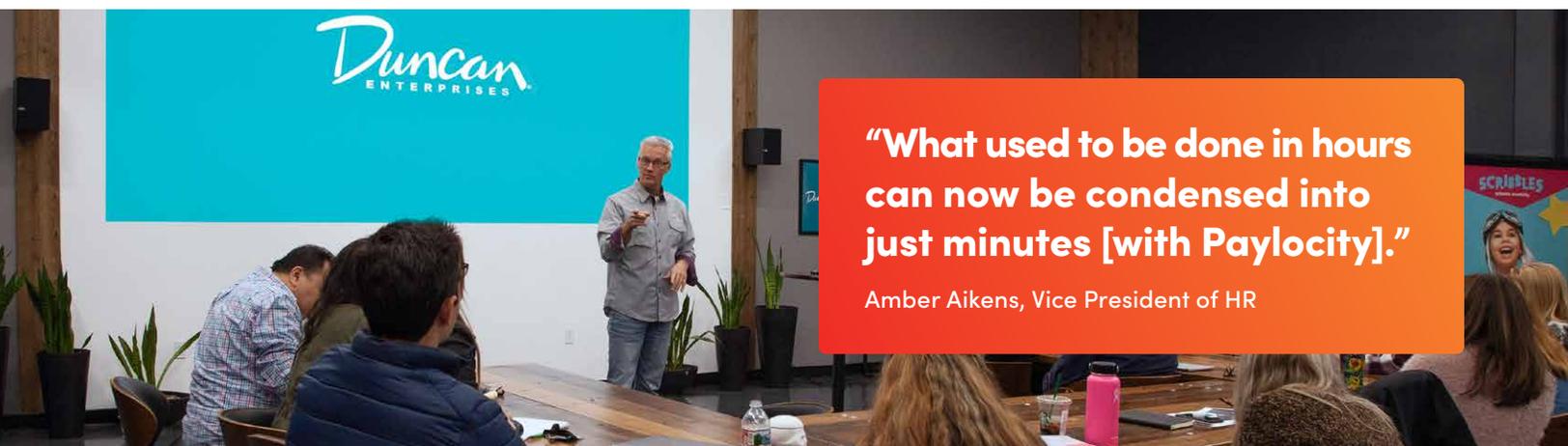
Crafting a better performance management model has been one of Amber's favorite projects at Duncan. After working her way up the ranks from Generalist to VP in five years, development and performance management have been critical to her success. “Performance management honestly is my favorite part of Paylocity,” says Amber. “I've had an amazing opportunity to grow with this company. And we always want to put high performers in every seat, and it's our job as team leaders to help someone get to where they want to go, but it's not our job to write their story. Journals, Impressions and the Performance Management module help us all get on the same page.

Impressions, Paylocity's peer-to-peer recognition platform gives employees a place to recognize each other. Of the 29% of HR professionals whose organizations use peer feedback, 89% reported it having a very positive or somewhat positive impact on their organization. Journals gives employers and employees a place to document meetings, feedback and notes throughout the year leading up to reviews. “It's a one-stop shop for all those performance reviews and the corrective actions. And I don't have to go through paper files,” says Amber. “Often times getting the information of how someone has progressed through the company gets lost in the shuffle. And you're able to make it all electronic and attach it to that person, so you don't lose those valuable insights and you're able to make more impactful decisions.”

Making Origami out of Onboarding Paperwork

The average tenure at Duncan is more than 10 years, with some team members even celebrating more than 40. Even the executive team has been around for an average of 16 years. “We have a really healthy mix of people coming in with new ideas,” says Amber. “And then we have people that are very seasoned. You don't stay at a company for 40-plus years because it's in a good location. You stay because it has a good mission. Something that you can believe and be invested in. Duncan treats their people well, and they believe in what they're doing. It's pretty amazing to be a part of that story.”

But even with super-low turnover, hiring and onboarding can be a hassle for even the most seasoned HR teams. Before the shift to Paylocity, the manual paper onboarding process would take hours. Which meant new hires were sitting in HR's office signing document after document while the HR person manually keyed in the information. Now, for the first time, prospective candidates can apply online and their information will automatically feed through into Onboarding and into Payroll, saving Amber and the new employee hours while reducing errors. “What used to be done in hours can now be condensed into just minutes,” says Amber.



“What used to be done in hours can now be condensed into just minutes [with Paylocity].”

Amber Aikens, Vice President of HR

The Payoff

Implementing a new software can be overwhelming. Many people at Duncan were resistant to the idea of overhauling their payroll solution. When Amber met with Paylocity, she felt taken care of almost immediately. She was able to get her leadership on board with the level of transparency and partnership she received from the first meeting. "Oh, I am all for honesty and I will not sugar coat it," laughs Amber. "But our implementation experience was wonderful. It sounded really intimidating to be honest. You get the list of everything ahead of you, and you realize we're moving over 20 years of historical information into a new system. All of our points of contact were responsive and helpful throughout the process."

During implementation, one of Amber's teammates on the project gave her two-week notice – which can cause issues in a business, even if they are just responding to normal day to day tasks, let alone trying to implement a whole new HRIS system on a timeline. "But Paylocity picked up the slack and together, we didn't miss a beat," says Amber. "They were able to fill in the team member that took over for payroll and get her up to speed. We actually did the whole implementation process much quicker than we had originally anticipated."

Paylocity has allowed the team at Duncan to get valuable time back in their day to focus on strategic initiatives. Paylocity's Data Insights enabled Amber to quickly access summaries and reports that she was unable to before, such as turnover reports and average tenure of employees.

"Paylocity was a smart and economical choice for the company. I tell all my friends about Paylocity if I can, because it simply is the best option. All of the add-ons are wonderful, but we didn't go with Paylocity because

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of what could be, we definitely bought for what it was at the time. And they met our needs from the get-go. All the extras are wonderful add-ons, and it makes it more of a one-stop shop for us." Since implementing new modules into the Paylocity system, Amber was able to cancel duplicate systems with the transition to Paylocity, saving both money and training time.

Though the tool has been a great fit, the culture of caring at Paylocity has truly validated the partnership. "The very best part is that we feel like we're important to them. We didn't feel important at our previous provider. And we had an account manager tell us, 'well, you're a small fish to us.' It is such a difference now; we always feel valued at Paylocity. Everyone's wonderful with us. We never feel like a burden."



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