



Workday and Bill Gosling Outsourcing

Making a people business work better for its people

Although Bill Gosling Outsourcing's services can be described as debt management and contact centre solutions, it's really in the people business. Its 1,700 employees around the world are ambassadors for Bill Gosling Outsourcing's clients, representing their businesses and brands.

"The reason our clients want to do business with us – and they have lots of choices – is trust," according to Kenny Johnston, COO. "We provide surety and brand protection. We are acting on their behalf. We're talking to their customers. If we want to create a stable, predictable business, that comes down to our employees."

He continues, "We're nothing without the buy-in and loyalty that our people feel in the field. We're nothing without our people feeling engaged in the process and wanting to be here. Without that, we're just an ordinary call centre."

Workday has helped Bill Gosling Outsourcing become anything but an ordinary call centre by engaging its employees, empowering them to make decisions, and providing timely, accurate information to everyone in the organisation.

A game-changing approach

"We want each employee in our organisation to have the tools to be in control of what they need to do," says David Rae, CEO. "Any time we can get them better tools, better training, better management – that will help us get to that goal. Workday helps give all our employees the ability to get information in a timely way, and to act on it. That is a game changer for us."

Prior to going live with Workday in 2013, Bill Gosling Outsourcing evaluated and compared Workday with other solutions. When the company learned that Workday offered a single, unified system for finance and HR, it immediately saw the potential benefits. "That's where we really got excited about what we could get out of a single solution that we were missing," says Rae. "By marrying financials with human capital, we envisioned a solution that would be years ahead of where we were." CFO Joseph Fanutti agrees. "For Bill Gosling Outsourcing, having a unified system is absolutely critical," he says. "Our people metrics and our financial



Business case at a glance

- 1,700 employees in four countries
- USD 80 million in revenue (2014)
- Headquartered in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

Workday applications

- Workday Financial Management
- Workday Human Capital Management
- Workday Payroll (Canada and US)
- Workday Expenses
- Workday Recruiting
- Workday Time Tracking
- Workday Procurement

Summary of business benefits

- Greater employee engagement and autonomy, leading to improved client margins
- A single source of information for employees and managers for increased efficiency, accuracy, and trust
- 16 per cent reduction in turnover, 25 per cent reduction in paper costs, and 50 per cent reduction in staffing costs related to procurement and treasury
- General ledger accounts reduced from 17,000 to 150, 30 per cent reduction in closing time, and year-end audit time reduced by several weeks

metrics work hand-in-hand. The dashboards we've set up for our operations managers now include both financial and HR metrics. Profitability means just as much to an operations manager as turnover. So understanding the correlation between those two is very important."

Fanutti observes that before Workday was deployed, the company operated in separate silos, which limited its overall effectiveness. "Finance operated its own silo, HR its own, operations its own. There was a lack of consistency in terms of how we viewed the business," he says.

"Numbers were always challenged, no one could agree on metrics, and people couldn't agree on what actions to take going forward. Workday has been transformational because everyone now speaks the same language.

Everyone looks at the same numbers, everyone agrees to the same metrics, everyone prioritises the same way."

Top three benefits from the CEO's view

Rae cites three significant benefits of moving to Workday, which have profoundly improved the business. "One is understanding our employee turnover, our attrition rates," he says. "As a result, our employee turnover has decreased by 16 per cent in a year."

"Second, the amount of time spent by our support staff on actually doing relevant work has improved immensely. In the past, support staff dealt with paper – paper flow, paper processes. To give you an example, in our main office in Toronto, we went from 56 filing cabinets to six." Paper costs were reduced by 25 per cent, with another significant reduction expected next year.

The third and most important benefit Rae sees is that operational managers have the information they need on a daily basis. "They can get greater insights into the areas they are managing for our clients," he says.

"Since we have gone live with Workday, revenues have increased, support costs have decreased, contribution margins have increased, and our way of doing business has changed dramatically," he says. "We have happier

employees who are more content in the job they're doing. They feel they're spending quality time on the things we need them to, and not on minutiae."

Cross-functional business benefits from the CFO's view

Some of the benefits CFO Fanutti sees are more consistent client margins because of the new, seamless interaction between the finance and operations teams. "Now we can work with the operations team, helping them plan their business, measure their business, and set priorities." As a result, they have been able to reduce staffing costs related to procurement and treasury by 50 per cent.

"The operations team has become more engaged on the analytics side. Working with finance, they can do a much better job in predicting and understanding the business. Now there's a true partnership between finance and operations in terms of understanding what's happened within their individual cost centres and how to react to that," he says.

"Our financial analyst time – in terms of preparation of data versus analysis – has gone from 70/30 to 30/70. Now we're only spending about 30 per cent of our time producing financial information," he says, "with the rest now spent on analysis, allowing us to use data to drive future business decisions."

"Our overall time-to-close has dropped by 30 per cent, and the level of effort involved in preparing for the close process has decreased significantly. In our old ERP system, we would go through three or four iterations of financial statements before they went final. With Workday, we can do that same process with two iterations. So we've cut back the level of effort to prepare by 50 per cent," he continues.

"We went from 17,000 general ledger accounts to 150. We also implemented about 130 spend categories, 80 departments, 10 regions, and a dozen legal entities. It's been a very efficient process for us."

Even the year-end audit was much more efficient in the company's first year of Workday deployment. The finance team was able to give direct access to their auditors, eliminating layers of one-off requests. "It's probably taken two weeks out of our year-end audit," Fanutti says, "since the auditors can view information they couldn't easily see before, such as fully documented business processes and audit trails containing the details of every transaction and change."

COO Johnston also appreciates the global consistency Workday has brought to the company. "With Workday, we now have a true global standard to measure client profitability and client margin," he says. "That means I can have a consistent conversation with my country head in the Philippines or in the UK or in the US."

Reliable, timely analytics

As CEO, Rae says he especially values the analytics Workday delivers right to him.

"I'm looking for how we're performing in each country, our revenues, our profitability, our contribution margins, employee turnover rates, hiring rates, hiring times," he says. "With Workday, I can trust that information. I make sure that I go over the reports with the team that's creating them so that we're all in agreement. Then when I run those reports, I do not have to worry about anything having changed in the formulas or any questions about the integrity of the data."

Before, the information he received came weeks or even months late. "Now I receive information daily," he says. "I can look at our contribution margin by client each day, and at the end of the month. I can also look at the contribution margins for that month without the finance team having prepared their profit and loss statements. And that gives us much better foresight as to whether we're on track, whether we need to make adjustments, and whether we need to spend any additional time in areas that are challenged."

Autonomy for all

Finally, the C-suite isn't the only group with access to critical data - now the people who need to use it have access to the data they need. "A lot of our information was tracked manually in the past, especially from the human resources side of the business," Rae says. "A lot of that information was never really available to our management team. Now, because all the information is in Workday, managers can get much more detailed in the type of information they're looking at. For example, when an employee updates his or her skills in Workday, that gives managers an opportunity to bring someone new onto the team."

He continues, "The people generating the reports are the people who need the reports. We trained all of our managers on the analytics side of the business, on the overall structure of finance and HR, and how they are coupled together. That's given them the ability to create reports themselves. They can run reports daily instead of looking for some sort of information dump from another system. They don't have to look at multiple reports run by different groups. It makes their job that much easier and much more efficient."

What has been the result of this information autonomy? "The overall effect is that our managers are spending more time doing things that add value - spending time with clients, with employees, and on enhancing strategies."

"When we started looking at Workday, we were only looking for an HR solution. And after a year live on the full platform, we have a solution that has been a game changer for us. Workday has impacted the way our business operates, so much so that it now contributes to our strategy going forward as it relates to growth, expansion, and new opportunities for our clients and our employees," Rae says.

"I've had many people on our management team say to me, 'This was one of the best things we've done in the last ten years, easily,'" he concludes. "Many who were sceptics are now believers."

