



University of Iowa Center for Advancement Uses UKG Pro to Implement Vision for Strategic HR

The University of Iowa Center for Advancement is a non-profit organization whose mission is to strengthen the University of Iowa through engagement and philanthropy. The UI Center for Advancement was formed by joining the UI Alumni Association and the UI Foundation to better serve alumni and friends in the state, region, and around the world. The UI Center for Advancement is an independent organization and the preferred channel for private contributions that benefit all areas of the University of Iowa.

Employees: 280
Industry: Social Services

Top Challenge

Prior to UKG Pro, the UI Center for Advancement managed its human capital through paper- and spreadsheet-intensive manual processes. It maintained a seven-person HR department because of the time required to complete core HR tasks such as payroll, benefits open enrollment, recruiting, and onboarding.

Solutions

Competencies for new hires' career development has been integrated with UKG Pro Learning.

Career pathing is being created for employee development and engagement.

Competency model helping management engage in succession planning with greater accuracy.

Results

Significant savings achieved and impact and value of staff has been increased.

UKG Pro is enabling the organization to begin moving the UI Center's HR department to a shared-services model.

Reduced administrative work is expanding opportunities for HR to interact strategically with the UI Center's employees.

“Employees are staying at the UI Center because we now have time and energy to devote to leadership development training, career pathing, better performance management conversations, and meaningful discussions about career development. Pro has given us the foundation to drive a high-performance culture.”



Key Benefits

- UKG Pro-driven competency model helps create more meaningful candidate interviews, tailored onboarding, and well-defined career paths
- Efficiencies from Pro deliver hard-cost savings while increasing strategic value of HR
- Ability to share and use data across HR helps the department provide better service to employees

Becky Rafferty, VP of Talent Management

Challenges

Prior to UKG Pro, formerly UltiPro, the UI Center for Advancement managed its human capital through paper- and spreadsheet-intensive manual processes. It maintained a seven-person HR department—a large number for a smaller-sized organization—because of the time required to complete core HR tasks such as payroll, benefits open enrollment, recruiting, and onboarding.

“When I joined the UI Center for Advancement, I wanted to raise the HR department’s value,” said Becky Rafferty, VP of talent management for the UI Center for Advancement. “We needed to transition from a traditional HR department focused on paying people and processing benefits, to a talent shop that directed HR’s energy into developing employees’ long-term careers.”

The UI Center’s five-year strategic plan includes the goal of making the organization a best place to work and an employer of choice. Additionally, the UI Center must boost fundraising in the face of shrinking federal and state financial support. As a result, HR needed to raise employee engagement to meet the organization’s cultural and philanthropic goals.

Rafferty explained that HR’s goal has been to build a Competency Framework that can help create a customized experience for each employee across their entire lifecycle.

“The process begins with competency-based behavioral interview questions that will enable us to identify the best candidates with the fastest onboarding time to full competency,” said Rafferty. “Then, we can focus on the employee’s career development, which includes a customized onboarding experience, and the ability for employees to build their own careers by working to achieve the competencies of the next level job.”



Solutions

The UI Center selected UKG Pro and identified a number of UKG’s, formerly Ultimate Software solutions for future development, including UKG Pro Recruiting, formerly UltiPro Recruiting; UKG Pro Learning, formerly UltiPro Learning; and UKG Pro Succession, formerly UltiPro Succession Management. UICA launched UKG Pro after four months in October 2017, and has deployed additional solutions over the past 12 months.

Rafferty immediately began leveraging Pro’s functionality to achieve her multiple objectives. Partnering with managers, HR developed, over the course of a year, 7 to 10 core competencies per job that drive success. These competencies are recorded in Pro, and because of the solution’s integration, can be pushed out to Pro’s various applications without the need to enter the information again.

Integrating competencies for new hires’ career development with UKG Pro Learning

“We recognize that when most people apply for a job, they are looking to challenge themselves with something new,” said Rafferty. “Therefore, we

can extend the usefulness of competency information by creating a tailored onboarding plan for our new hires that leverages UKG Pro Learning. Our fundraisers are a perfect example—there are no college courses or apprenticeship programs for fundraisers, but by identifying the necessary competencies at hire, we can nurture our new employees with a training program that enables them to be more productive, more quickly.”

Career pathing for employee development and engagement

“Our employees have been very vocal that they want to see career paths, and we know that providing career ladders is essential to becoming a best place to work,” said Rafferty. “We have fifteen job families, and we’ve completed three of those job families so far. Employees can see what skills equate to basic, proficient, and advanced competencies, and how someone can grow through the job family.” Rafferty notes that the UI Center also has the gap assessment built into the competency model, so it can assign activities in Learning to help employees build the skills for where they would like to go.

“If an employee has an overlap of competencies, he or she can see how easy it would be to move into a different part of the organization,” said Rafferty. “Employees want to drive their own careers, and our managers can now give them answers—about their competencies and skills, the jobs we have here, and the gaps employees can work to fill. Because we are defining career paths, engagement has surged, and people are doing their best work, every day.”

Succession planning for future success companywide

Rafferty notes that the competency model also helps management engage in succession planning with greater accuracy. The organization can not only identify which positions may be open in one to two years, and which employees are ready for those jobs today, but also which employees need to boost their competencies to be ready to fill those roles in the future.

“We will use UKG Pro Succession to figure out what an employee should work on now to be ready in 18 to 24 months,” said Rafferty. “We can start today to set ourselves up for future success.”

Results

Rafferty reports that she has been able to unlock significant savings with Pro. She replaced the UI Center’s third-party sexual harassment training firm with the training included with Learning; replaced a non-integrated third-party applicant tracking system; and leveraged system efficiencies to reduce headcount.

“I have been able to not only reduce our HR department headcount by one through attrition, but also increase the impact and value of the remaining staff,” said Rafferty. “For example, processing time for our payroll manager has dropped from 20 hours per week to two. In its place, she is constantly thinking about how to take advantage of the integrated data in our single suite application and provide better service to our leaders and employees. We have started generating reports that prompt managers to recognize employee milestones, and will continue to expand our use of business intelligence.”

As the single source of information, Pro has also enabled Rafferty to begin moving the UI Center’s HR department to a shared-services model.

“Before Pro, we were very siloed even within our own department. For example, our benefits specialist was the only employee with access to the paper files in her office, reducing our responsiveness to employee questions. With Pro, anyone in HR can help with basic employee information such as pay and benefits. We have two generalists now that can answer a variety of HR questions, and we’re on the journey to get the right processes in place.”

Rafferty noted that the overall impact of reduced administrative work is the opportunity for HR to interact strategically with the UI Center’s employees.

“Turnover is one of the key ways we measure our progress toward being a best place to work,” said Rafferty. “We are striving to reach 0% turnover for employees during their first two years—a validation of our ability to hire and train correctly. We also want to limit regrettable turnover, the loss of our most valuable employees. In the last two years, we have cut both metrics in half. Employees are staying at the UI Center because we now have time and energy to devote to leadership development training, career pathing, better performance management conversations, and meaningful discussions about career development. Pro has given us the foundation to drive a high-performance culture.”