

Chicago Cubs

Masters Complex HCM with UltiPro®



Company Profile:

The Chicago Cubs are a professional baseball team and members of the Central Division of Major League Baseball's National League. The sports organization is one of two MLB clubs based in Chicago and one of the two remaining charter members of the National League. The club is the oldest active team in major North American sports.

The Challenges:

As part of the Tribune Company, the Chicago Cubs previously used a large enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to manage the baseball team's HR and payroll processes.

After the club was acquired by Ricketts Acquisition, the Cubs needed to quickly move to an HCM solution that could address the team's range of compensation challenges. For example, many states and cities have complicated tax regulations requiring professional athletes to pay taxes in each state where they play, even if they're only on the field for a few hours.

The Chicago Cubs needed a unified HCM solution that could smoothly handle its complex compensation issues as well as deliver the tools to help the organization stay compliant and efficiently manage additional HR-related operations.

The Solution:

With a 182-day season, the Cubs' payroll roster can scale from 200 employees during the winter to 1,200 employees in the summer. Although some employees are players/athletes, many members of the workforce work in the Friendly Confines of Wrigley Field or support the team in minor league locations, and workers can be paid on an hourly, salaried, or contractual basis.

It was clear to the organization's selection team that UltiPro was the best solution to address these unique challenges. For sports teams like the Chicago Cubs, UltiPro delivers scalable functionality with an investment advantage that makes the most business sense.

"As a professional sports organization, we have intricate compensation issues involving unique contracts for different players and very complex taxation," said Jamie Norton, finance manager for the Chicago Cubs.



The Customer

Chicago Cubs

Industry

Sports

Number of Employees

1,200

Key Benefits

- Handles complex requirements for multi-state taxation and payroll associated with unions
- Reduces costs by moving away from an ERP system
- Quickly scales payroll ranging from 200 to 1,200 employees

"Previously, we had to manipulate data to get the proper pay calculations, often creating a mismatch in compensation information because some data had been overwritten to ensure players were paid correctly. UltiPro is flexible and powerful enough to automate these processes for us, so our data is accurate and manual reconciliation is minimized for a correct payroll."

"We had no errors in our first live payroll with UltiPro," said Jenifer Surma, senior director of human resources for the Chicago Cubs. "The only change for employees was the simple adjustment to go to a different Web site to view personal HR and payroll information."

"We also needed large-enterprise functionality that could also adjust to an organization that is sometimes 200 active employees," added Surma.

"UltiPro provides us with comprehensive HR features that adapt to whatever size we are at any time, and the solution doesn't require the costly hardware or maintenance of an ERP system."

One unique aspect to the Cubs' operation is that it handles both major and minor league teams, which are compensated differently. Several hundred minor leaguers join the team each year, and many of these athletes require payroll changes during the season, such as when one or more changes playing levels within the player development system.

With UltiPro, the Cubs can make simultaneous updates for specific groups of employees in compliance with pay changes dictated by union contracts. Previously, Surma's team had to manually enter those updates for each employee.

"We used to make salary changes by hand for hundreds of stadium operations personnel and minor league players," Surma said.

"UltiPro has eliminated days of data entry for us by handling wage changes for groups at one time. Ultimate's solution is definitely an excellent fit for us."



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Jamie Norton
Finance Manager
The Chicago Cubs

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