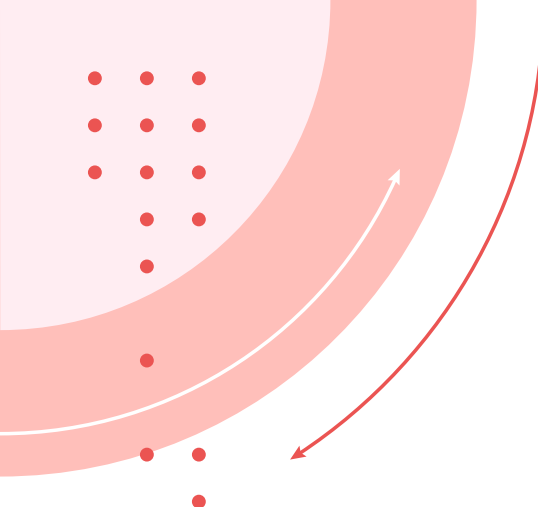




Knowledge Portal Gets Health Care Employees Exactly the Answers They Need

A shared-services model has created a one-stop shop that provides satisfying experiences for the employees and human resources team of a Midwest healthcare provider.



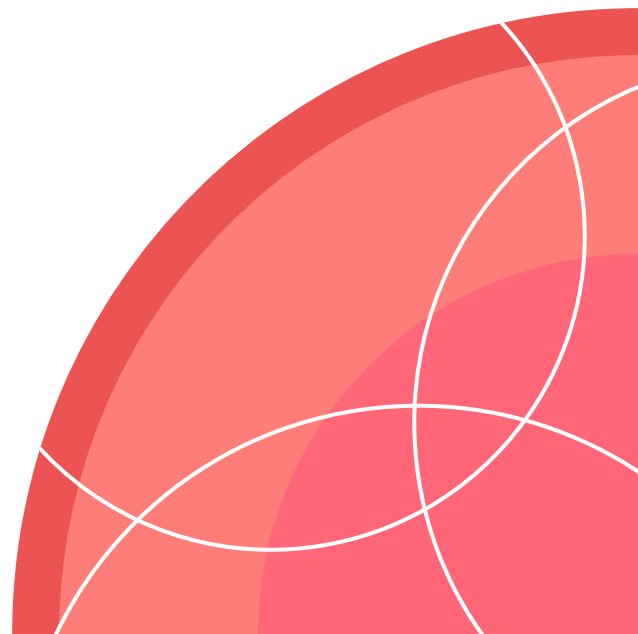
Imagine working in a human resources department that has to field questions from almost 20,000 coworkers across multiple states, using nothing but email and the phone. That was the challenge facing a Midwest healthcare provider in early 2020.

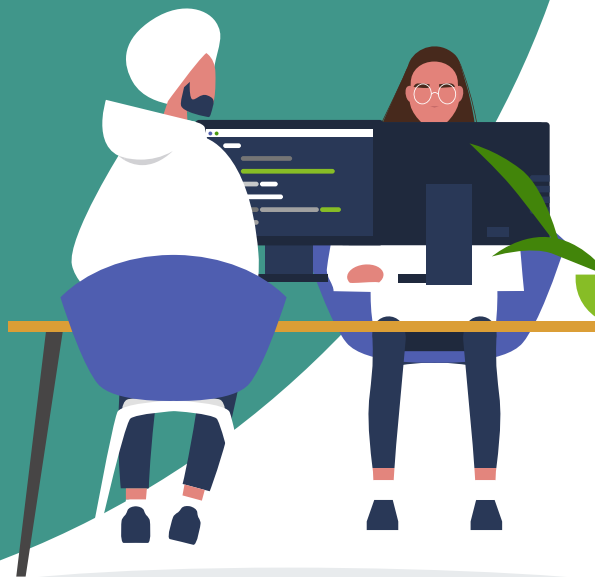
Our client is a nonprofit organization that operates a network of hospitals and clinics, with facilities that include specialist centers for cancer care, heart and vascular care, weight loss, pediatrics, and women's health. It also oversees numerous outpatient facilities and local medical practices as well as subsidiaries and affiliates that provide laboratory tests, home health services, and support.

Despite its maturity, size, and broad geographic scope, the provider had never established a way to efficiently handle human-resources-related requests or documentation. These processes had been ad-hoc, unsupervised, and short on accountability.

Employees who had questions about payroll deductions or changing their 401(k) contribution, for example, had to send an email message to a general inbox or leave a message in an HR voicemail box. There was no workflow automation or audit trail, so requests frequently fell through the cracks. HR administrators also wasted time repeatedly composing responses to the same questions. That was a problem in itself, because one-off answers could sometimes be inconsistent or erroneous, sowing confusion.

Once employees submitted a request, they had no way of tracking its status. As a result, queries sometimes had to be submitted several times, causing HR team members to duplicate their work; there was no formal way to verify receipt. The HR group also had no means of ensuring that employees were satisfied with the responses they received.





A model framework

The healthcare provider had recently brought in Deloitte's consulting practice on an unrelated project. HR officials recognized the consulting firm's expertise in process automation and asked if Deloitte could also help fix the broken HR system. A Deloitte analysis quickly determined that the key to success would be to move the nonprofit organization to a shared-services model.

A shared service is a centralized capability within an organization that is wrapped in a well-defined service that all people can use as a default resource. Human resources organizations are considered to be a perfect use case, because they touch everyone in the organization with a consistent set of services and documents.

"We recommended that shared services could help bring administrative and repeatable work within HR to a consolidated place so that folks can focus on what they need to do," Scott Warwick, a manager at Deloitte Consulting, says."

Despite the healthcare organization's lack of experience with a shared-services model, it saw the potential for transformation. "We were able to create trusted relationships that allowed them to build software that truly is helping transform their organization," Warwick says.

Using ServiceNow to support HR transformation

The health care provider was already using ServiceNow's workflow technology to automate ticketing in its IT organization. ServiceNow's expertise is rooted in IT service management, but the company has

steadily expanded its solutions to cover a wide variety of workflow automation use cases that now includes procurement, finance, knowledge management, and human resources.

ServiceNow's HR service delivery capabilities provide a unified employee service experience, standardized knowledge content, employee self-service, document management, and performance analytics, among other functions. One feature that was of particular interest to the Midwest healthcare provider was the virtual agent, which enables users to resolve most questions and requests in seconds through a chatbot interface. The chatbot is even outfitted with a "personality" that provides an empathetic tone and a consistent voice that is appropriate for HR engagement.

By embedding intelligence in every interaction, ServiceNow's technology enables individuals to resolve many of their own questions without any human involvement at all. For example, the virtual agent is trained to answer basic questions and serve up articles from a knowledge base covering the most frequently asked questions, based on user journey maps and visualizations that anticipate the most common conversation flows. Conversations can smoothly be transitioned to a live agent if needed, and no-code development tools enable business users to easily update the knowledge base and map new entities to the platform without IT oversight.

Automated forms routing ensures that submitted requests are delivered to the appropriate people with full workflow auditing and guaranteed resolution. This feature alone addressed one of the healthcare organization's most vexing problems, which was tracking and resolving inquiries.

A new employee portal is born

Deloitte, a premier partner with ServiceNow, immediately saw the potential to apply the HR service delivery technology to meet the healthcare provider's needs. Beginning in March 2020, Deloitte and the organization spent nine months constructing an employee portal, which is tied to rich case management at the back end.

A companion knowledge base was created, comprising answers to frequently asked questions, operational documents, job aids, quick reference guides, and commonly used forms such as employee evaluations and government documents.

Creating the knowledge base was one of the most challenging parts of the project. The process was labor-intensive, combining client specific discussions with industry knowledge to assemble the most commonly asked questions. The payoff was that instead of taking the time to respond repeatedly to one-off requests, HR professionals needed to create only one well-crafted answer that could be tagged and saved for automatic retrieval.

"The healthcare provider liked the fact that the hard work up front developing a lot of documents and articles would help them on the back end," Warwick says. "We used our vast experience from other projects to provide them with a list of topics we typically see that are helpful to coworkers. Once they started building the articles and seeing them as they went in the system, they really got excited about building new capabilities."

Deloitte also leveraged the experiences of the healthcare organization's IT team to demonstrate the possibilities and value of reducing case volumes and increasing self-service adoption.

The result is a transformed HR experience. Now when employees need a question answered, they can visit the portal and be greeted by a chatbot. The virtual agent can answer common employee questions such as how to change an address or request a financial report directly from the knowledge base as well as guide them to forms and documentation.

Deloitte and the healthcare provider also worked together to integrate the HR portal with the company's Workday human capital management system. This integration enables shared services to track service-level agreements and other key performance metrics as well as to assess workloads and provide accountability to their internal customers. It also addresses transactions in Workday that require action to be taken by shared services. When necessary, Workday triggers a case to automatically be created in ServiceNow.

"We helped them build the organization from the ground up and put in enabling technology that makes them more efficient, but what was remarkable was the partnership with the organization," Warwick says. "Their IT support team told us they had never seen such a clean project from start to finish and a level of documentation that completely enabled knowledge transfer."

Because the project was built with cloud-native platforms, Deloitte was able to take advantage of features such as application program interfaces (APIs) to shortcut integration with other systems as well as to minimize coding. APIs can be used to expose services selectively and to enable the user interface to be customized without touching the underlying code. Although there was a small amount of custom development, ***"about 95 percent of what we created was off the shelf and configurable,"*** Warwick says.





Questions?

Please email servicenowglobal@deloitte.com.

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The results

The healthcare organization's new shared-services portal not only resolves inquiries far more quickly than in the past but also improves HR accountability through a case management system that ensures that requests are tracked. Administrators can see performance metrics over time and find opportunities for improvement. "The solution allows them to develop and publicize a set of key performance indicators and service-level agreement metrics that keep them accountable to the business," Warwick says.

The project was so successful that elements were also expanded into the finance and supply chain organizations, enabling specialists to access needed information in Workday without writing complex queries.

Visitors to the HR portal no longer need to search for the right person to contact or scroll through a SharePoint site that had no taxonomy. Instead, everyone has a one-stop shop for HR information. Questions that can't be answered in the knowledge base can be entered into a form that goes through a series of structured prompts to give the receiving agents all the details they need. There's no more guesswork, requests are no longer lost, and ambiguity isn't a concern.

All of which enables the healthcare provider's employees to do what they do best: take care of patients.

