



## Seeing cloud-enabled HR transformation from both sides

Workday implementation at Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) provides a fresh perspective on the client/provider relationship

Doctors are often said to make the most difficult patients. If true, does that imply integration service providers make the most demanding clients in a software deployment? Serving as both the systems integrator and the client in an ambitious Workday implementation, Deloitte &

Touche (Ireland) had the opportunity to find out. In a recent interview, Jen Walsh, representing the HR organization, and Declan Breen, representing the IT team, shared lessons learned from experiencing cloud-enabled HR transformation from both sides of the client/provider relationship. [▶](#)

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**Declan Breen**  
**Deloitte & Touche (Ireland),**  
**Senior Consultant**  
**Workday Integrations**

### **The challenge**

Over the last few years, Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) has been challenged to keep up with its growth. The organization has expanded rapidly to encompass 2,500+ people who provide audit, tax, consulting, and corporate finance services to public and private clients spanning multiple industries. With growth remaining strong, the organization’s highly customized legacy HCM system had become incapable of meeting current and future business needs. It lacked direct integration with the practice management system and it didn’t have self-service capabilities. These deficiencies made it difficult to manage the onboarding processes for a large number of new hires annually. Reporting processes had also become cumbersome, requiring considerable manual effort and long lead times. In addition, performance management activities had become disjointed. During the review process, managers often had to interact with their employees via email rather than through the HR system. Like many of the companies that engage Deloitte for Workday-related services, Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) needed to provide its managers and employees with an easier way to complete tasks, access data and perform analytics.

### **The client’s objective**

Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) set out to find a solution that was scalable, agile, and capable of enabling people to easily access their own data. With these criteria in mind, the project team developed an RFP and began reviewing demos with several different vendors. Workday came out on top largely because of its usability, with decision-makers noting that the demo gave everyone a clear understanding of what the system could do. The fact that very little training would be required in the rollout was also important since the implementation team was small (i.e., only four people from HR and three from IT), and they needed a system that could be rolled out quickly and efficiently.

In light of their business needs, Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) decided to adopt Workday in six key areas:

- Core HCM
- Compensation and benefits
- Talent management
- Absence (in terms of scheduling absences, not time tracking)
- Reporting and analytics
- Integrations

### **The implementer’s perspective**

In addition to common challenges, such as tight timelines and resource constraints, the implementation team had to overcome some atypical hurdles associated with deploying Workday in the professional services space for their own organization.

“When you’re doing an implementation for your own firm, one of the most challenging aspects is data security and privacy, which is more extreme than you’ll see at other clients,” observed Breen. This required the implementation team to take a different approach around data security and General Protection Data Regulation (GDPR). He further explained that the implementation team usually has access to all areas of Workday, but in this instance, extra governance and controls were required for the management of data such as performance and compensation information.

The implementation team faced another challenge related to the organization’s unique reporting structure. The concept of having one fixed manager to whom an employee consistently reports just doesn’t exist within a professional services firm. Instead, employees may work for many different engagement managers (i.e., partners and principals) throughout the year. Further complicating matters, Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) has 80+ partners with differing responsibilities across service areas and service lines. “This spawned

a lot of discussion around how we could build the organizational structure within Workday to best fit our firm,” explained Breen. “We ultimately went with a service-line structure where we have a key partner for each service line, and each employee rolls up into each of those partners. This was a creative way to work within the global structure that Workday provides.”

### The results

Deloitte & Touche (Ireland) went live with Workday a short 7 months after starting the project. Using the standard Workday EVD methodology, all 2,500 employees went live on the new system in a single day. As Jen Walsh explained, results came quickly. “We were all really delighted with a successful go live, and adoption has been quite fast,” said Walsh. Within 10 days of go live, HR launched its first main process, which was benefits open enrollment. Soon after that, HR launched its first task, where people transferred their objectives into Workday. “These launches drove a lot of traffic into the system, so within a couple of months of being live, we had 95 percent log-ins and engagement was very good,” she added.

Since go live, the HR team has been executing its strategy for progressively rolling out capabilities and refining process efficiencies. These efforts include:

- Embedding Workday into induction schedules for new hires.
- Featuring Workday in key development programs being rolled out by the learning and development team.
- Rolling out reporting and analytics to business leaders.
- Using the system to set objectives as well as to conduct mid-year and year-end performance reviews.

Ms. Walsh emphasized the importance of having a strategy post go live. “It really is a journey, and the go live is just the start,” she stressed. “Once the implementation is over, you have to look to the future because Workday is a system that keeps adapting,

with new features constantly being added.” Mr. Breen concurred, “Once Workday goes live, people tend to think ‘job done.’ As we’ve learned first-hand, this couldn’t be further from the truth.” Accordingly, he now encourages his clients to invest in the testing phase so they’re more comfortable when approaching go live and they can push forward quickly afterward.

Breen and Walsh both agree that the Workday system has changed their day-to-day lives for the better. Ms. Walsh noted that having more traceability throughout the hiring, on-boarding and even off-boarding processes has been particularly helpful. Meanwhile, Breen has found the talent and performance management capabilities to be very useful because they eliminate ambiguity around objectives, which supports better conversations at year-end.

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### Jen Walsh

**Deloitte & Touche (Ireland), Workday and HR Manager**

“As an implementer, the cycle is usually 4-6 weeks and then we roll off, but we always wonder about how the client is going to utilize Workday,” said Breen. “Now we know!” he concluded.

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