Real Estate Firm Lays a Foundation for Sky-High Growth with Paylocity

paylocity®
Forward Together.

10 hours saved per month through employee self-service

10 hours saved per month processing paychecks

20 hours saved per month on HR reporting

WR WATTERS INTERNATIONAL REALTY

www.christopherwatters.com

Real Estate

80+ employees

4 locations across Texas

As small businesses grow, they often reach a tipping point. Perhaps it's when they hit a certain threshold of employees or revenue, and new legal or financial regulations kick in. Whenever it happens, the business must evolve—quickly.

As Watters International Realty expanded into new cities across Texas and extended its franchise model across the US and Canada, its leaders realized that this tipping point was looming. It needed to make the transition "from founder to firm"—from a business run by individual entrepreneurship to one governed by efficient operating procedures and streamlined, well-documented processes.

From an HR perspective, growing headcount meant that Watters would soon need to comply with tighter regulations around recruiting—for example, posting jobs internally before advertising them externally. HR leaders also wanted to increase standardization and adopt best practices in areas such as pay and performance reviews.

Above all, it was vital for HR to help build a culture that both embraced the values of the company's founders and aligned with its strategic vision for the future.

> "Our consistent growth demanded an HR and payroll platform that could easily grow to 1,000+ employees. Paylocity could easily get us well beyond that if we need to."
>
> Amanda Gonzales, Chief of Staff, Watters International Realty

Clearing the Way for Connected HR

Fragmented HR and payroll systems made it difficult for Watters International Realty to build streamlined processes that would support rapid growth.

Achieving Ambitious Goals

One of the things that makes Watters International Realty unique is its team-based operating model. In most realty businesses, agents work as individuals—each agent does their own marketing, makes their own appointments, and even puts up their own signs. By contrast, Watters provides marketing, inside sales, and operations teams that handle these tasks for agents, so they can focus on their core role: selling clients' homes quickly, reliably, and for the best price.

This model gives the business greater growth potential, and Watters International Realty intends to more than double the number of transactions it handles over the next three years. "One of our big, audacious goals is to have 95 offices across the nation and grow our franchise business from around 15 to over 200 franchisees in the next decade," says Chief of Staff Amanda Gonzales. "That is a lot of payroll for agents. You can clearly see why we need a system that can scale."

Making HR Scalable

However, the company's growth trajectory was being dragged down by the various tools it had adopted to support its HR processes. For payroll, the HR team used ADP, which they considered inflexible and expensive. For recruiting, they built an applicant tracking system in Salesforce, but found it cumbersome to use. They ran surveys with SurveyMonkey, but it was difficult to track employee feedback trends over time.

None of these systems were integrated with each other or with the company's other financial or operational systems. "We had all of our information scattered around among different applications in different departments," says Jimmy Campbell, Director of Human Resources. And as Amanda Gonzales points out: "HR has to be connected with the rest of the business. Nobody wants to log into 17 systems to get one thing done."

> **"Paylocity has phenomenal customer service. I'll just pick up the phone and call and know that I'm going to get a rep by the third ring. And every rep is so knowledgeable, I never leave a chat or a phone call with the problem unsolved."**
>
> Amanda Gonzales, Chief of Staff

Building a New Home for HR and Payroll

With Paylocity, Watters International Realty has a single, integrated platform for all its HR needs.

Streamlined Payroll and Employee Self-Service

Paylocity provides a more efficient, transparent Payroll process that Watters can run either bi-monthly or ad-hoc, and that gives agents instant insight into how each sale impacts the commission in their paychecks.

Meanwhile, Employee Self-Service gives employees instant access to a wide range of HR tools, such as using the Paylocity Mobile App for Expense reporting. Jimmy comments: "I've been around the corporate world for 25 years and Paylocity is by far the smoothest system for doing your expenses. Hands down, it's the best."

Boosting Consistency in Performance Management

As part of its transition from founder to firm, Watters is standardizing its operating procedures around employee performance reviews. Paylocity's Performance module provides templates that the HR team can customize to provide consistent reviews that align with the company's culture.

Creating a One-Stop Shop for Recruiting

Recruiting is easier with Paylocity too. The HR team now has a library of job descriptions that managers can tweak and send for approval in 10 minutes. Integration with Indeed and JobTarget makes job posting and applicant tracking a seamless process. And once a candidate is hired, Paylocity can send them their documentation to sign and adds it to their employee record.

Building a Culture That Listens to Employees

Surveys have helped Watters International Realty gain employee feedback on its core values and define its culture as the business grows. For example, one survey prompted the HR team to set up a monthly social event to recognize and celebrate employees' success. Jimmy comments: "That wasn't something that I came up with—it all came from the survey, and it's become a huge part of our culture."

Payroll streamlines and adds flexibility to bi-monthly and ad-hoc pay processes.

Recruiting and job platform integrations build a better recruiting pipeline and helps in closing candidates.

Performance provides templates for easier employee reviews and ongoing engagement.

Surveys give employees a voice in shaping corporate culture.

Insights & Recommendations enable detailed P&L analysis.

Real Estate with Real Purpose

Paylocity is empowering Watters International Realty to transform its organization and build a culture that is fit for the future.

Empowering Agents to Do Business, Their Way

Paylocity aligns perfectly with Watters International Realty's strategy of providing services that empower its agents to focus on selling real estate, not pushing paper. "The self-service tools mean that our agents don't have to go through me to update their information," says Amanda. "It's faster and more flexible for them, and it frees up my time too." It also helped consolidate multiple systems into one which saves time and money for the company. Employees can access everything they need in one place.

Saving Time for HR

The time-savings for everyone involved in HR and payroll are significant. Amanda estimates that she saves 10 hours per month on answering payroll questions, and a further 10 hours on running ad-hoc payrolls. "Cutting paychecks is so easy, I don't know why every real estate brokerage isn't on Paylocity," she comments.

Propelling the Business Forward

Amanda also saves more than 20 hours per month by using Paylocity to produce payroll and commission reports for leadership—including P&L reports for each of the company's markets. "Paylocity gives me more time to help the directors make decisions that propel us forward," she says. "It frees up that time to spend with them to analyze the bigger picture."

A Platform for Growth

And in that bigger picture, Paylocity is helping Watters build the strong culture and the standardized, efficient processes that it will need to fuel the growth of its business. "Paylocity is a game changer for a company like ours," Amanda concludes. "Our payroll is going to be more scalable, our performance management will be more consistent, and our recruiting practices are going to be more compliant, thanks to Paylocity."
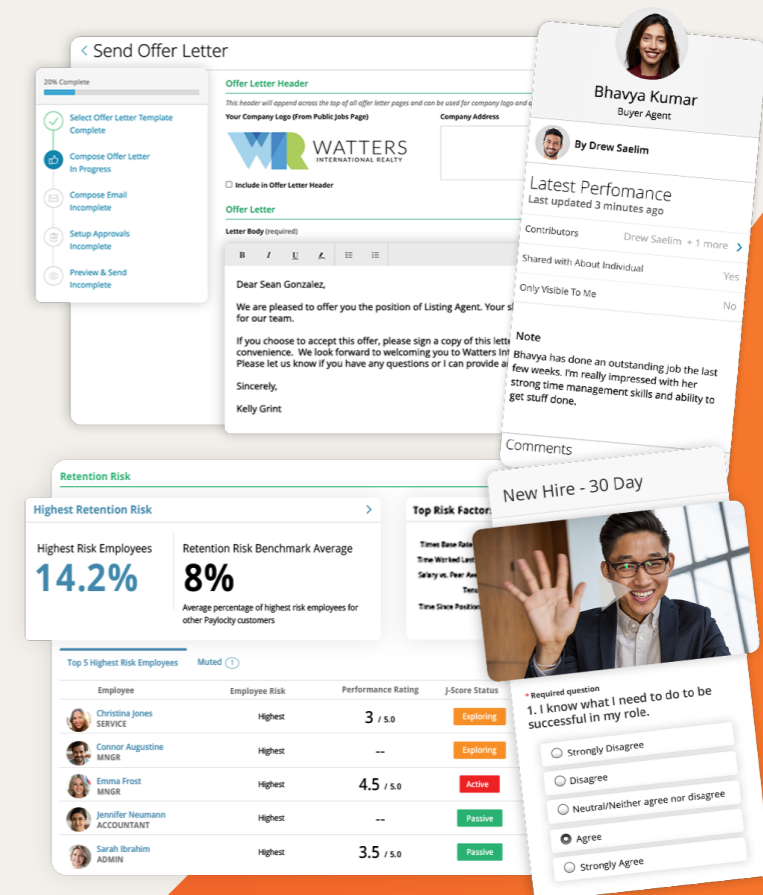
"Paylocity covers the bases for applicant tracking, recruiting, payroll, employee records and document management. It does all the things that our company needs to do, and it's reliable technology that has a great support system behind it."

Jimmy Campbell, Director of Human Resources