

CENTRAL MINNESOTAN KENSINGTON BANK REPORTS SUCCESS IN IMPLEMENTING AND EXPANDING ISOLVED VIA PARTNERSHIP WITH ASSETHR

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What You Need to Know

Without modern technology for human capital management (HCM) and the advancements in automation it has to offer, HR is unnecessarily inefficient. This inefficiency can be especially pronounced at small organizations, where, typically, nothing at all aside from email, spreadsheets and paper is in place to manage it. It is this inefficiency that usually compels such organizations to seek relief. Here is where many potential pitfalls lurk. Choose the wrong solution, and the organization sets itself up for long-term difficulties in exchange for, possibly, short-term relief. Any organization that finds a trusted partner to help navigate the HCM vendor landscape and choose a capable solution and implement it in a capable way goes a long way in sparing itself future frustration ([3Sixty Insights BWSCS20121 - isolved Partners with a Nonprofit Client to Deepen and Broaden HCM System Utilization, December 2020](#)). Any partner committed to a long-term relationship after implementation and that promises onboarding support and training for new users is worth considering closely. The following pages recount the success one such small business, Kensington Bank, has experienced with AssetHR, an implementer of isolved.

About the Participant

Kensington Bank operates seven locations in central Minnesota and employs approximately 80 in staff. Founded in 1898, Kensington Bank is a recipient of the top rating, five stars, from Bauer Financial, an independent firm that has analyzed the financial condition of U.S. banks since 1983. Kensington Bank's mission is "to be a trusted partner in the financial success of our customers one relationship at a time and give back to the communities we serve." 3Sixty Insights spoke with Connie Isaacson, a twenty-two-year veteran of the company who is both vice president of HR for all of Kensington Bank and branch manager at the Cokato location.

The Situation

Prior to deploying isolved with the help of AssetHR, "we did not have any type of automated HRIS system," Isaacson says. Inefficiencies abounded. Previously, Kensington Bank outsourced payroll to

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AT A GLANCE

Solution

AssetHR | isolved

Research Participant

Kensington Bank

The Situation

- No dedicated HR software
- Heavy administration based in spreadsheets, email, and hard copy paperwork
- Unnecessarily drawn-out, tedious workflow for mission-critical HR activity
- No room to approach HR in a strategic manner

Success Highlights

- **isolved automation** — 70 percent aggregate reduction in a one-person HR department's weekly administrative load
- **Customer service** — much improved in payroll and overall, with excellent responsiveness from partner AssetHR
- **Modernization** — elimination of workflow based in spreadsheets, email, hard copy paperwork

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Paychex, “everything else was just done internally with spreadsheets that tried to keep track of everything — which was a nightmare.”

Eventually, in October 2019, Isaacson was shown another company’s human resource information system (HRIS). “I was just blown away. I couldn’t believe all the bells and whistles.” So accustomed to years of a heavily manual process to carry out HR, Isaacson was unfamiliar with the potential of a modern HRIS. The experience motivated her to launch a search for a new HR system to replace Paychex and a menagerie of email, hard copy paperwork, and Excel spreadsheets.

Why AssetHR and isolved?

Isaacson and her team eventually narrowed things down to Paylocity and isolved (i.e., via AssetHR). For HCM, AssetHR was and remains an implementer exclusively of isolved, whose solution 3Sixty Insights has analyzed extensively. As for AssetHR, the firm remains a partner to its clients over the life of their isolved deployments. At the outset of its relationship with Kensington Bank, AssetHR had a homefield advantage, having come to the attention of Kensington Bank’s CEO on the strength of the latter’s friend, a local insurance company associate who had “heard nothing but rave reviews from AssetHR’s customer success perspective,” Isaacson recounts.

Any organization that finds a trusted partner to help navigate the HCM vendor landscape and choose a capable solution and implement it in a capable way goes a long way in sparing itself future frustration. Any partner committed to a long-term relationship after implementation and that promises onboarding new users and training them in the new solution is worth considering closely.

Paylocity’s HCM suite offered “more than what we were looking for, because they’re dealing with companies that have hundreds, if not thousands, of employees,” she says, whereas, as a company employing far fewer than 100 employees, “we’re very small scale.” Having just acquired another local bank at the time of decision, Kensington Bank had grown to about 85 employees.

As Isaacson vetted the two vendors, Paylocity touted its excellent customer service, a claim that Isaacson does not contest. However, “what really sold us was the dedication and hands-on attention that Chris Kelly gave us during the entire process.” It crossed her mind that Kelly, president and founder of AssetHR, may have just been great at saying the right things. “So, we asked for references. And we called all of the references.”

What struck Isaacson the most was a conversation with one reference in particular who had had utilized AssetHR at his previous employer and convinced the next organization he joined to use AssetHR too. “He’d been with them twice. And he said, ‘I

About AssetHR

AssetHR provides web-based solutions that are designed to handle the more complex requirements for managing and manipulating employee data. Both large and small organizations can benefit from the company’s exclusively isolved-based human resource management systems (HRMS), which offers organizations the opportunity to squarely focus on the key components of HR functions: payroll and benefit administration, retirement planning and savings, plus HR management practices.

CASE STUDY

know it sounds too good to be true. But their customer service is phenomenal.' And so are their rates, frankly, because they pride themselves on word-of-mouth referral business. That's how we made our decision. And I have been extremely satisfied."

As Vice President of HR Connie Isaacson vetted AssetHR, "what really sold us was the dedication and hands-on attention that [AssetHR President and Founder]Chris Kelly gave us during the entire process."

Go-live for deployment was Oct. 1, 2018. With isolved, her team elected to start slow, implementing solely the HRIS at first, "especially since we were in the middle of an acquisition." The thinking was that all the bells and whistles deployed at once, right at the beginning, would overwhelm Kensington Bank and become underutilized or mis-utilized. Kensington Bank did immediately replace Paychex with isolved, however, including related function, such as time off requests. From there, the company has slowly expanded its isolved deployment to include recruiting and related tracking for Kensington Bank's affirmative action programs. Kensington also has all its COBRA facilitated through isolved and uses the isolved system for benefits administration, as part of the HRIS, modern employee self-service (ESS) functionality. Portions of performance management are in place, and learning and training are on the future roadmap.

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With the help of AssetHR, Kensington Bank deployed benefits administration functionality from isolved in time for the 2020-2021

Success

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Benefits Administration

Annual open enrollment can be an administratively inefficient activity for HR. A company's small size can exacerbate this. Such was the case for Isaacson. Before engaging with AssetHR and deploying isolved,

About isolved

Founded in 1986, isolved provides a full suite of HCM functionality designed for the upper SMB market and the lower midmarket. Through broad and deep capabilities in talent management, core HR and payroll, workforce management, and engagement management, isolved People Cloud helps clients with the following HCM outcomes:

- Workforce Effectiveness
- Retention & Development
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Wellbeing
- Employment Value Proposition
- HR & Employee Efficiency
- Work-Life Balance
- Journey & Career Support

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open enrollment period—no small feat. Under the old scenario, she would have to fill out the same information for six separate forms for all of Kensington Bank’s carriers, for every employee. This process is now integrated into *isolved*. A broker firm works directly with AssetHR to upload all relevant information into the system (e.g., new rates, terms, etc.). From there, it’s launched to employees. Isaacson gives them two weeks to respond. Then, everything is mass-emailed to the carriers. Once billing comes out, she’ll go over it and make sure everything looks correct.

“From that point on, I really don’t have to touch it anymore. I just do that for my own sanity,” she says. “I’m not having to save all that paper.” Gone is the manual tracking and scanning of signatures and sorting it all in folders. The employee has the capability now to take on most of the workflow, a much more efficient way of doing things, and Isaacson now simply verifies at the end of the process. “It’s easily an 80 to 90 percent reduction in the time I spend on open enrollment.”

Before engaging with AssetHR and deploying *isolved*, open enrollment at Kensington Bank was a heavy annual lift for Isaacson, who handled it essentially by herself. From October of every year through January of the next, Isaacson would be at the office “I don’t know how many hours a week. I don’t even want to guesstimate.”

Employee Self-Service and the *isolved* HRIS

Giving employees more power over their own information has streamlined much more than benefits administration. Through deployment of the *isolved* HRIS, much of the day-to-day tedium of running HR has lifted. Employees can now punch into their shifts remotely via mobile punching and initiate workflow for vacation and other time-off requests. For the latter, they can view a history of their W2 Forms and, in their electronic paystubs, their PTO accruals. The history is permanent for employees’ viewing afterward, if they leave Kensington Bank.

“Another nice thing that I like is the I-9s,” Isaacson says. Strict compliance goes along with I-9 Forms. Organizations must retain them for several years after an employee leaves. “The system makes sure that you’re telling the truth, believe me. You have to verify a new hire’s identity the day they start, because if you do it the next day, this system will not allow you to backdate. So, the system keeps you honest, and you can’t fudge the rules and say, ‘Oh, well, they just forgot their Social Security card on day one.’ For us, we’re highly regulated by bank examiners.”

The volume of inquiries incoming to HR for basic information (e.g., to obtain a paystub for employment verification) has decreased considerably. And the ESS-based tracking of things has alleviated matters significantly. She used to track vacation accruals in Excel



I call up AssetHR and ask them to help me, and they will have an answer. They’re so easygoing. It’s just a breath of fresh air. They’re always there, always available. If they don’t know the answer immediately, they’re always responding anyway.

Connie Isaacson

Vice President of HR
Kensington Bank

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spreadsheets, for example. “It was very labor-intensive.” In all, Isaacson estimates that time she spends on employee inquiries has dropped by approximately 75 percent because of the new ESS. Some days were inquiry-free, but on average she was spending roughly two hours daily responding to employees’ basic questions and request—information now available to them via ESS.

Compliance

“Being a bank, we’re regulated to do certain things annually. One of them is for employees to acknowledge that they’ve reviewed the employee handbook whether we’ve had changes to it or not,” says Isaacson. With isolved, she can simply upload the handbook into the system and send a mass email to all employees prompting them to log in and review this document. The system enables them to provide electronic acknowledgment that they have read and understood the document. “I can also set up email reminders. So, every seven days, the people that haven’t done it, will continually get an email. And then I can also run a report to see who hasn’t done it.” She notes that this audit trail is also helpful when she needs to deal with employee performance issues, incidentally, as she can verify when and whether a member of staff under managerial review has acknowledged being familiar with the latest employee handbook.

Overall, the isolved system has significantly lightened Isaacson’s load associated with compliance tracking. She believes that the time it takes her to track and ensure compliance has in fact decreased by 85 percent. For requirements with employee handbook acknowledgement alone, for example, “I used to have to keep a spreadsheet of an employee roster of the date that I launched the acknowledgement. They would physically have to sign a piece of paper, scan it back to me, and I’d have to upload that into their employee file.”

“When you’re dealing with payroll, you need to get pretty much an immediate response,” she says. With the previous payroll provider, “it would often be days before I would hear back.” The switch to isolved and AssetHR as the trusted go-between has resulted in very responsive service in this regard.

Payroll

Functionality from Paychex was adequate, but Isaacson struggled with the vendor’s customer service and concluded that Kensington Bank wasn’t big enough for Paychex to give the necessary attention. “When you’re dealing with payroll, you need to get pretty much an immediate response. It would often be days before I would hear back from Paychex.” The switch to isolved and AssetHR as the trusted go-between has resulted in very responsive service in this regard.

Newfound Efficiencies

Whenever a small business gets to the point when it decides to deploy software to handle HR, the administrative load drops precipitously, and the organization benefits from noticeable time savings. With its deployment of isolved, aided by a long-term relationship with AssetHR, the story at Kensington Bank has been no exception, making a welcome difference to Isaacson’s daily workload:

- **Benefits Administration:** 85 percent reduction in time spent completing annual open enrollment
- **Employee Self-Service:** 75 percent drop weekly in time spent responding to employee inquiries into the basics of their employment
- **Compliance:** 85 percent decrease in time spent tracking, ensuring regulatory compliance

In all, Isaacson estimates that these newfound efficiencies have reduced her previously administrative load by about 70 percent weekly.

Next Steps with AssetHR and for Utilization of the Isolved Solution

As for future plans for the relationship with AssetHR and her use of the Isolved solution, Isaacson has two specific initiatives in mind. One is to start utilizing the performance review module, Isolved Share & Perform. "I haven't gone there yet. I already have the ninety-day review, when somebody is first hired." For this, the system automatically emails all stakeholders prompting them to complete the process. "I want to do it for annual performance reviews too." Kensington Bank does monthly check-ins, as well, and she wants to incorporate that with similar automation, "because that's really labor intensive for our managers and supervisors," who have to fill out a PDF that gets electronically signed and sent to Isaacson, who places it in a folder. "Why not just fill it out through Isolved and save it? And then I could go see it? So that's one area."

Another area is training. Kensington Bank has an employee engagement survey (also within Isolved Share & Perform), and "a resounding theme has been training," she says. Employees report that they think they could receive better training at the outset of their employment with the company. AssetHR has shown Isaacson Isolved's Learn & Grow solution, which includes a Learning Management System with a "really robust training program, and I haven't really dug into a lot of the coursework yet. From a training

perspective, there's a lot of opportunity there. There's a lot of things for supervisors and managers. I would like to implement the training one sooner than later, just because I want to give our employees every opportunity to have all the tools in their tool belt to be successful."

Isaacson believes she's been able to slash her time spent on administrative-heavy activities by approximately 70 percent on a weekly basis through the relationship with AssetHR and associated deployment of Isolved.

Totaling the Benefits and Setting the Stage for the Long Term

Isaacson notes Isolved's robust online library of FAQs for users. Even so, "sometimes, if I'm knocking my head against the wall, this is where AssetHR comes into play," she says. Kelly and his team are always highly responsive. "Say I've had an extra tough day and just tried to do a small change. I don't really feel like looking in the library. I call up AssetHR and ask them to help me, and they will have an answer. They're so easygoing. It's just a breath of fresh air. They're always there, always available. If they don't know the answer immediately, they're always responding anyway."

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Peering into the Future

Now that her administrative load has been significantly lessened, Isaacson is looking into working with AssetHR to deploy additional functionality found in Isolved.

One area in which she plans to expand is in Share & Perform, Isolved's performance review platform. Functionality for 90-day reviews is already in place, automatically prompting all stakeholders in the process via email and more, and "I want to do it for annual performance reviews too."

The other area is training. Using Share & Perform to conduct an employee engagement survey, Isaacson learned that "a resounding theme has been training." Employees report that they think they could receive better training at the outset of their employment with the company. AssetHR has shown Isaacson Isolved's Learn & Grow solution, which includes a Learning Management System with a "really robust training program."

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deployment of isolved. Between her own lightened administrative load and the deployment of a modern ESS for employees, she estimates that newfound efficiencies for Kensington Bank translate in dollars to a savings in labor expenditure approximately three times isolved's software-as-a-subscription fee and associated fees for the AssetHR relationship.

“I’m getting close to where, hopefully within about five years, I’m going to be retiring,” Isaacson says, and she believes the deployment of isolved, with the help of AssetHR, is proving instrumental in helping her to set the stage for a smooth transition. “I want this to be a good foundation, for whoever takes my spot. I want to leave it in good shape.”

Perhaps best of all, Isaacson now, finally, has an assistant to help her expand the vision for HR at Kensington Bank. This includes, as mentioned, a modernization of the performance review process and the deployment of isolved's training and learning capabilities. She also plans to get to a place where she can analyze salaries for regional appropriateness and otherwise look deeply into employee data, which is available via isolved Predictive People Analytics.

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