

Improving business efficiencies and transforming an IT department

A Massachusetts college implements multiple cloud-based Workday solutions

A comment CIO Ravi Ravishanker consistently heard when Wellesley College hired him nine years ago was that the Massachusetts school needed a new ERP system. The 1,100 employees at the women's liberal arts college wanted a cloud-based solution that anyone could use.

"Unfortunately, there weren't many choices available at the time, so I renewed our current system to buy some time," says Ravishanker.

Adopting three systems

By 2015, Ravishanker saw Workday's Human Capital Management and Financial Management systems as potential replacements. However, he also needed a new student information system, and the company's Student module was still in development.

So in 2016, Ravishanker negotiated a deal to deploy the first two systems followed by the Student module if it were far enough along in development.

HCM went live nine months later, followed by Financial Management in July 2017. "Workday was making a lot of progress with Student, and given our goal for full implementation in 2019, we felt confident it would satisfy our needs."

The Student system is currently in phase one of deployment.

On-site professional development

To get his staff up to speed on the new systems, Ravishanker contracted implementation consultants from Sierra-Cedar to provide on-site training. The consultants observed staff throughout a normal workday to provide feedback and answer questions, and they



"We can now analyze data and make crucial changes very quickly because Workday is such an agile system. Overall, we are able to accomplish a lot more with Workday, and are much more compliant and transparent."

remained on-site for one month after each system went live. "This was helpful, especially if we experienced any potential issues," says Ravishanker.

Improving compliance, transparency

Before Workday, employees usually bypassed the cumbersome ERP system and reconciled expenses late. Sometimes, reports never even made it into the system, so other employees couldn't readily access information.

"Everyone now enters data into Workday, so anyone can find data easily. This allows us to accomplish a lot more very quickly," says Ravishanker.

'We've turned into business analysts'

Since staff can use Workday without specialized knowledge, Ravishanker hired IT employees with skill sets other than those used for traditional system maintenance and programming, such as the ability to identify solutions that enhance teaching and learning.

"With our first ERP system, we'd write programs or modify the system. That's costly," says Ravishanker. "With Workday, we have become business analysts, working closely with HR and finance. We now understand their business needs and can configure the system to deliver the efficiencies they require."