

Northgate Markets

Managing Rapid Growth with Ultimate's Unified HCM Technology



Company Profile:

Northgate Markets, owned and operated by the Gonzalez family since 1980, sells groceries and offers services targeted toward the Hispanic population. Northgate's reputation for customer service, products that remind customers of their native countries, and the use of Spanish (in addition to English) within the stores has resonated with customers. Since 2008, the company has experienced 100% growth in stores, opening dozens of new stores each year. Currently, the company is operating in three Southern California counties as well as expanding its presence to New Mexico and Texas.

The Challenges:

The independent supermarket chain has more than tripled in size within recent years, and the company's rapid growth was becoming increasingly difficult to manage using its previous processes, which included relying on a payroll service bureau, manual efforts, and spreadsheets.

To support its expansion, Northgate's leaders wanted a scalable HCM solution that could increase their insight into the company's operations and talent as well as support the development of potential leaders, the onboarding of employees, and strategic performance management. In addition, Northgate had to find a technology solution that could accommodate its multigenerational, multilingual, and highly dispersed workforce. The company went live on Ultimate Software's UltiPro in 2011.

The Solution:

"We have a multicultural, diverse demographic of employees. We have employees with 35 years of tenure and people who just started today, and we want them all to be happy and engaged," said Teresa Anaya, senior talent manager at Northgate Markets.

"With UltiPro, our people can select the language of their choice, access information at their convenience, and manage many processes on their own — which says a lot about UltiPro's person-centric capabilities since some of our employees have had minimal computer experience."

The company's diverse workforce is using UltiPro for job applications, onboarding, benefits enrollment, and access to their personal HR and payroll details, and Anaya credits UltiPro's flexibility, ease of use, and 24-7 direct access for the high adoption rate among employees.

Ultimate
SOFTWARE
People first.

The Customer

Northgate Markets

Industry

Retail

Number of Employees

9,000

Key Benefits

- Supporting multicultural, diverse demographic of employees
- Increasing speed and accuracy of HR, payroll, and talent operations
- Developing and building talent pipeline for critical roles during rapid expansion

"We are proud that our technology is attractive to the newer generation of workers, but yet not too complicated to deter our people who might have less exposure to technology. UltiPro can accommodate each person and his or her preferences, background, or experience," said Anaya.

"Because we have one single solution for all of our HCM processes, the consistency of our operations has improved and communication across our many locations is better."

For Northgate, UltiPro is improving communications among its dispersed workforce; enabling instant, 24-7 access to employee pay, benefits, and HR details; eliminating many inquiries to its HR and payroll teams; providing strategic HCM metrics to decision-makers; and delivering a positive user experience by enabling employees to select personal preferences and individual settings, such as language.

Before UltiPro, Northgate had more difficulty communicating with employees and managing information. Northgate used a service bureau for payroll, and Anaya and her team had to rely on paper, emails, and spreadsheets for HR, which created extra manual effort and costs. Data was not consistent from location to location, and accurate, real-time reporting was difficult. Today, paper-laden processes like onboarding, benefits enrollment, and performance management are automated while employee data is consistent, reliable, and available for instant analysis at any time.

From a financial point of view, the operational impact of moving to UltiPro was immediate. With one centralized payroll, Northgate removed the 100 hours it took each week to run payroll, saving the company \$40,000. Plus, the company hired 2,500 new employees and opened eight new grocery stores without having to add more corporate HR employees.

"UltiPro has really helped us do our work better. For example, UltiPro Onboarding has been a huge win for our business because we can do so much in a fraction of the time with so little paper and with much more accuracy — which adds key business value with the kind of expansion that we have experienced and that we have planned," said Anaya.

"Other improvements have been with benefits enrollment, which reduced several days of work from our previous methods; the speed of our payroll processing, which has decreased from hours to minutes; and increased strategic insight because of the in-depth workforce analytics that come with UltiPro Business Intelligence."

Because UltiPro provides a single source of real-time information on any employee or population of employees, Northgate's employee information has become significantly more consistent and accurate — a critical factor in this retailer's expansion. For example, the company can develop a more holistic view of the talent pipeline for its critical roles, including store director, assistant store director, and customer service manager.

In addition, the data in performance reviews allows Northgate to identify and redeploy its highest performers to assist with opening new stores, a crucial component when opening new locations on time and meeting new store revenue projections.

"With UltiPro Performance Management, aligning individual and team goals with company goals is easier, we're all in sync, and accountability has increased," said Anaya. "With a plan to grow five stores and add hundreds of new employees per year, UltiPro has streamlined the path for our workforce to grow and develop."



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Teresa Anaya
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