



UKG

Winner

Reducing burnout during Covid-19

Recognizes effective processes to improve work/life balance, foster a healthy DevOps culture, and ultimately prevent burnout

About

[UKG](#) provides human resources, payroll, and workforce management cloud solutions. It was formed in 2020 through the merger of Ultimate Software and Kronos Incorporated. The company serves more than 70,000 organizations.

Challenges

With a culture based on the slogan “*Our purpose is people,*” UKG helps its customers create positive workplace experiences for all people. The company has put this guiding idea into practice with its own staff and has won numerous awards for being a great place to work, including ranking on the Forbes 2022 America’s Best Large Employers list.

Global workforces are changing at an unprecedented rate, with employee turnover skyrocketing due to burnout, staff working remotely, and added stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic. UKG’s Life-work Technology approach to solution design aims to help organizations support the unique needs of each person and allow individuals to work in a way that helps them thrive both at work and in life.

One example is the UKG Dimensions workforce management solution, which supports more than 1,500 organizations around the world. The platform uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to empower employees throughout timekeeping, scheduling, payroll, and other administrative processes on a unified interface.

UKG understands the need to continuously evolve to meet changing employer and employee needs. This demands modern, streamlined technology delivery and high service reliability.

Objectives

To support this drive, UKG’s technology team set out to embrace DevOps, a mindset and set of practices that speed up software delivery, increase service reliability, and strengthen IT organizations.

“The reality is that the rules of work are being rewritten, and we wanted to be part of rewriting those rules rather than just reacting to what’s happening with so much uncertainty,” says Cecile Leroux, Group Vice President of Research & Innovation at UKG. “This need to be incredibly adaptive led us to really wanting to take a DevOps approach. How do we implement Life-work Technology internally as well as for our customers? One of the things we recognized was we had to be hyper, hyper aware of whether individuals were nearing burnout.”

Solution

To achieve its goals, UKG designed key changes to enable more frequent and less complex delivery of updates, reduce downtime, and improve time-to-value for customers.

In 2021, the company rehosted its services to Google Cloud. Using DevOps practices, it migrated legacy monolithic applications that hold 10 petabytes of data and serve thousands of enterprises.

By the end of 2021, UKG was moving away from manual processes and set cloud-native goals to adopt universally by the end of 2022. These called for self-healing systems, horizontal autoscaling, zero-downtime upgrades, multiregional availability, and native managed services at the optimal levels.

UKG adopted “cloud-native attributes and capabilities that would actually support decoupling our releases from the development lifecycle so we could accelerate and bring more value to our customers,” Leroux explains.

Results

UKG has seen dramatic impact from moving its flagship solutions to Google Cloud, including accelerated troubleshooting, cost savings, disaster recovery capability, and faster release cycles. Leroux says, “The most important benefit that we found... [was] to reduce downtime significantly and add resilience to our overall delivery. So, being able to do continuous integration, continuous delivery.”

Among the results:

- Maintenance window decreased from 36 hours to three
- Customer defect backlog fell by more than half
- Incidents affecting multiple customers simultaneously dropped by 80 percent
- Average time to resolve a defect decreased by 59 percent
- Engineering time per case declined by 72 percent

Rapid deployment of COVID-19 vaccination verification and contact-tracing processes to Dimensions exemplified how moving to Google Cloud helped UKG become more nimble and help employers swiftly address new requirements forced by the pandemic. This took weeks instead of months or quarters.

The changes have supported innovation at UKG. The company invested in artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance the ability of Dimensions to detect signs of employee burnout and identify employees at risk of quitting.

UKG wants to help organizations understand the factors that contribute to burnout so they can limit it. Giving employees tools that provide greater control over their own schedules is one preventive approach. Because Dimensions uses AI to evaluate time-off and shift-swap requests, the platform enables workers to manage their schedules in real time.

With Dimensions, managers can also understand the larger context by seeing how often a person is taking time off, if their time off has been approved or rejected, and how much overtime they may be working—not just for a given pay period but across a long stretch of time. It’s important for an organization to be able to do this at scale across tens of thousands of employees. These capabilities may have contributed to the 38 UKG customers that made the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2022.

With increased agility from cloud architecture, UKG anticipates increasing the scale of Dimensions by 60 percent and tripling the API call volume it can handle by the end of 2022.

UKG development teams in Massachusetts, Florida, and India executed the project while working remotely. UKG worked to ensure its teams were able to manage consistent output without overtaxing individuals.

Working with Google

UKG worked collaboratively with Google Cloud, including partnering across all UKG product areas from migrations to fully managed services and AI/ML. UKG drew on Google Cloud’s expertise in domains including customer engineering, technical support, product teams, and the professional services organization.

To learn more about UKG Group’s successful project, [check out this video](#).

