Ensuring insight and compliance with Zenefits

Dawn Palcisko built her career as a recruiting and human resources leader at large multi-national services organizations like Ernst & Young before joining Paragon Consulting in 2014. She was attracted to the Cleveland-based web development and advisory firm for its award-winning services and business growth as well as the opportunity to expand her role as its Chief Human Resources Officer.

The challenge
“I was hired to build HR programs, but quickly realized that—as a team of one—I needed to change the manual, paper-heavy processes,” said Dawn. “Hiring and onboarding new employees took hours, and a lot of follow up, to ensure all paperwork was in order and each employee was enrolled properly in benefits. To become a valuable business partner to the leadership team and the organization, I couldn’t afford to spend so much of my time on administrative duties.”

The solution
Paragon selected Zenefits in 2015 when it offered a broker services business and HR software for no cost. “I recognized that in addition to benefits support, Zenefits was an easy-to-use tool for HR and onboarding that would allow me to streamline the process and centralize all our employee information in one place. And it was radically simpler than any HRIS system I’d used at much larger, global firms. Initially, I needed to prove its value in order to change the broker we’d had for years. I’ve stayed with Zenefits through the transition from free to paid because the tool has proven itself.”
Building flexibility into a highly skilled, high value team
Paragon Consulting builds the content management systems and digital strategies behind the brands of large Fortune 500 companies. Their work, in turn, helps them build their own brand as an employer of choice in the Midwest.

“Our roots are in custom application development and professional services. We have an outstanding leadership team, and pride ourselves on innovation and expertise, as well as work/life balance, which is essential in recruiting some of the most experienced developers in the nation.”

Dawn’s role is to ensure implementation of the best people initiatives and culture to attract and maintain its high caliber of talent.

“I need data-based insight to make thoughtful business decisions about business structure, staffing, promotions, and competitive compensation. I’ve worked with plenty of other HRIS and payroll technologies in the past such as ADP. And I knew that using them was a very cumbersome process for me and for our employees. Paragon is a tech-based consulting firm, so I knew that wasn’t going to fly here.”

Ensuring compliance
Compliance with employment and benefits laws is key for any HR Department. Dawn says that Zenefits takes much of the leg work out of the day-to-day duties with the Compliance Assistant, which updates things like I-9 compliance, ACA compliance, generates summary plan descriptions, and more. And she taps the Zenefits HR Library to track laws by state.

“Zenefits stays up to date on compliance, so I don’t have to. It is a great benefit.”

Adding up value
Dawn estimates that she’s freed up almost 25% of her time per year. For example, in onboarding alone, Dawn estimates saving about 7 hours per hire—that’s a little over 2 weeks of time last year alone. And moving from multiple spreadsheets for HR management to one centralized Zenefits system saves almost 2 months of time a year. Finally, the onerous job of ensuring compliance—particularly staying ahead of out-of-state changes—is another 50 hours of time.

With Zenefits taking on the administrative overhead, Dawn has more time to lead strategic initiatives. One such strategic change helped to distribute management responsibility for Paragon’s team of developers. As a result, it removed bottlenecks in performance reviews, streamlined workflow and communications, and provided career growth and opportunity across that organization.

Smart HR consulting for smart consultants keeps Paragon’s business nimble.

As a business, we make people’s lives easier with technology. So it’s very important for new hires to see that we have the tools and resources that do what we do. With Zenefits, we make a great impression from the beginning with 10-minute onboarding.”

DAWN PALCISCKO, CHRO