

GTM Client Profile: Town of Queensbury, NY

Background

The Town of Queensbury had been doing their payroll in-house since 2005. In 2013, the town had approximately 120 employees and 200 seasonal part-time across multiple departments, and processing payroll in-house had become far too time-consuming and complex with a variety of positions, hours, and pay rates. Seasonal employees had to be chased down if they forgot to submit their hours, “buddy punching” was a problem, and handling paper timesheets was inefficient. The Town is also required to process payroll every week, and in the event a storm or electrical outage occurred, it sometimes meant that employees were not paid on time. The Town recognized that they could avoid such issues by outsourcing their payroll processing.

Making the Decision to Outsource Payroll

Following the town’s payroll clerk retirement announcement in 2013, the timing was right to consider other payroll processing options. The Town of Queensbury’s accounting firm recognized a need to better manage the town’s labor expenses, process taxes in a timely manner, and improve their productivity, so the firm recommended the town outsource its payroll. The town narrowed their search to GTM Payroll Services and a competitor, and eventually chose GTM based on two critical factors – GTM’s local presence and dedicated account managers. The town wanted a single point of contact for all payroll issues, and having someone local meant that emergencies could be handled quickly. GTM’s security measures were also a key aspect of the town’s decision-making process, as data confidentiality and privacy is crucial for a government entity. Barbara Tierney, the town’s budget officer for the past 10 years, recommended using GTM to the Queensbury Town Board, and in November of 2013, GTM received the Board’s approval to become their payroll service provider.

Implementation

GTM began implementing the town’s new payroll system by placing electronic time clocks in various departments, which provided an accurate accounting of employee time and eliminated the need for paper time cards. GTM worked with the town to ease the transition to a new system. GTM’s new accounts staff provided training on using the new time clocks, and Ms. Tierney and other town staff came to GTM’s office for training on using the new payroll platform. In the years since, they have come back for refresher training sessions to ensure they are aware of any new features and stay up to date on using the payroll system. “Once the department heads saw how efficient the new system was and operator errors ceased, they were all on board,” Tierney says. “It used to take us two full days to process payroll and file records. Now our department heads enjoy being able to approve their payroll online at their convenience.”

Benefits of Outsourcing

The town began to see the cost savings achieved through automating their time and attendance system, as “buddy-punching” was no longer a problem, employee accountability increased, and the town’s processes became more efficient while using GTM’s platform. After making the decision to switch to GTM, the town estimated a cost savings of about \$32,000 per year.

“With GTM I have the ability to get people a straight 40-hour week payroll done with a phone call, and we can worry about things like accrual use and overtime later,” says Tierney. “Plus what used to take us eight hours to approve time and make any necessary adjustments now only takes four, freeing up our staff’s time and energy to focus on other issues.”

Ms. Tierney also reiterated how important it is to have a dedicated account manager: “Having a representative that gets to know us and how our operation runs has been such a convenience. Issues are solved quickly and we don’t have to run around trying to track down missing timesheets or anything like that.”

“GTM has provided us with peace of mind,” says Tierney. “If we have to shut down due to a weather disaster, we know our employees are still going to get paid.”

That peace of mind also extends to compliance issues, as the town can rely on GTM to keep them advised of changes to labor laws, and to automatically implement those changes in their payroll system.

She also recalled a time when doing payroll in-house caused employees to not get paid. “I went through the ice storm back in 1999. UPS, FedEx, and the postal service could not get through to deliver paychecks, and people went without pay. Timesheets could not be faxed as lines were down for over a week. That kind of weather shutdown could happen here in Queensbury too... but not with GTM as a partner!”