

Hydro One adapts payroll functions to help manage disruption

New ServiceNow platform and expedited processes help employees

Hydro One is Ontario's largest electricity transmission and distribution provider with approximately 1.4 million residential, business, and industrial customers across the province of Ontario. The company generated 2019 annual revenues of approximately \$6.5 billion CAD and its 8,800 skilled and dedicated employees proudly build and maintain a safe and reliable electricity system, which is essential to support strong and successful communities.

On March 17, the Province of Ontario declared a state-of-emergency shutdown to help contain the spread of the coronavirus and all non-essential businesses were required to close. Hydro One is an essential business, responsible for energizing life for customers and communities across Ontario.

When the province announced the shutdown of non-essential businesses and a directive for employees to work from home, the payroll team quickly worked to move operations off-site and keep its processes on track.

“During this time of change, Hydro One appreciates the payroll team's support and partnership. We play a critical role in energizing life for people and communities across Ontario and we're thankful for the payroll team's collaboration and swiftness to action new ways of working. Most importantly, we're pleased the team has been able to maintain service levels without skipping a beat.”

Susan Sutton

Director, HR Shared Services
Hydro One

ServiceNow works from home

In the past, Hydro One employees needing support or information from Hydro One Human Resources or Inergi had to rely on email communication to various inboxes. For payroll requests, emails were printed and distributed to various individuals for action. With this paper-based process, employees could not check on the status of requests or monitor progress. Detailed reporting was also not available to track employee requests.

As part of a larger transformation effort, Hydro One selected enterprise-cloud software company ServiceNow to power a central hub for employee interaction. It provides a platform for employees to submit requests and inquiries and also a mechanism for feedback, so Hydro One HR and Inergi (a Capgemini company) can track the employee experience and improve based on their inputs. Inergi team members support Hydro One payroll, staffing, and resources.

Capgemini worked with Hydro One on the design, development, and implementation of ServiceNow, and the new system was launched in November 2019. It replaced email inquiries with a one-stop shop for employee needs and requests. This included a portal where employees can make requests and open inquiries for Hydro One HR and Inergi. Rather than a trail of emails, the system allows employees to seamlessly track their requests or cases and access all related information. This enabled payroll to go paperless for employee requests and inquiries.

ServiceNow is also used as the day-to-day tool for communications between Hydro One HR and Inergi. This system was absolutely critical in enabling HR and payroll to work from home. Its cloud-based platform allowed the teams to transition quickly and with minimal to no impact to Hydro One operations.

Managing the changing workforce

Hydro One is a complex organization. Payroll payments are weekly or bi-weekly, with pensioners paid monthly. An average month can have 11 different payment cycles that need to be completed, covering all employees and pensioners. Even with Inergi working from home, all payroll obligations have been met during the shutdown.

Hydro One HR was even able to introduce special arrangements to employees impacted by COVID-19. These were implemented by Inergi with very short timelines. Hydro One HR and Inergi continue to work together to support the employees. For example, companies are required to supply a Record of Employment (ROE) within five days following a lay off but, to expedite the processing of government benefits, Inergi completed the ROE submissions within one day.

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