SourceAmerica®
USA

SourceAmerica

"Superior customer service."

Summary

SourceAmerica® is a nonprofit that's been creating job opportunities for people with significant disabilities across the U.S. since 1974. In 2018, they selected Penelope by Athena Software as a unified case management system for sites delivering the SourceAmerica® Pathways to Careers Initiative.

Reasons Penelope was chosen

- Commercial off-the-shelf system that was flexible enough to document and accommodate the initiative's complex processes
- Built-in collaboration tools allow for secure collaboration between staff, as well as automating of workflows and task management

Benefits from Penelope

- Expertise and experience of deployment staff helped ensure successful transition to unified electronic system
- Configurable smart forms and data collection tools with ability to pre-populate data will help streamline processes
- Single database that can accommodate multiple sites/locations with secure, role-based access

Introduction

Since 1974, SourceAmerica® has been creating job opportunities for people with significant disabilities. SourceAmerica® works with more than 750 community-based nonprofits across the U.S. to facilitate the federal AbilityOne Program, and provides an important bridge to employment for people with disabilities by matching potential customers with nonprofits dedicated to providing job training and employment.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in 2018 the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was more than twice the rate of those with no disability, a ratio that SourceAmerica® is trying to reduce.

In late 2017, SourceAmerica® issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to find a cloud-based case management system for the SourceAmerica® Pathways to Careers Initiative, which helps people with disabilities find meaningful employment.

The goal of the RFP was to find case management software with exceptional capabilities in configurable form creation, reporting, data collection, and billing. After reviewing proposals from multiple vendors, Penelope was selected in April 2018.

For the first phase of deploying Penelope, the software was rolled out to a number of pilot sites, some of whom were previously using paper to maintain files, while others had been using a variety of electronic systems.

Helping SourceAmerica® achieve its mission

Brian DeAtley is the Senior Research Manager at SourceAmerica®, and he said Penelope will not only provide the organization with a unified system for data collection and reporting, but will also help make life easier for staff as they navigate complex SourceAmerica® Pathways to Careers Initiative processes.

"What the system I think does for us more than anything is it's going to help staff understand processes and roles, and access information a lot easier than they once did. And it's a few hundred-point process, but I think the system will help clearly define that, both in terms of the demonstration sites we're currently working with and hopefully in terms of pushing the system out and making the processes more attractive to others who may be interested," he said.

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Brian said the early feedback from users has been "very positive," and that Penelope can become an important tool in helping SourceAmerica® achieve its mission of connecting persons with disabilities with employment opportunities.

"All we're trying to do is help people with disabilities get work, and to develop systems that help us do that," he said.

Deploying with Athena

Deploying a new case management system across multiple locations can be a complicated process involving multiple stakeholders, but Brian said Athena Business Analyst Danielle Duncan provided exceptional leadership throughout the project.

"I can't imagine being able to get it done with anybody else," he said. "Ten out of ten, exceptional, patient, smart. She understood what we needed, she was quick to understand who was who here, so she could provide us guidance on helping to manage the process. And she did it in a way that wasn't overbearing, that was just smart and she listened, and she always had time, she always picked up the phone if somebody called her. And she understood the SourceAmerica Pathways to Careers Initiative, and that's not an easy thing to understand."

Since 1974, SourceAmerica® has been helping people with disabilities across the United States find meaningful employment.

The deployment experience and services provided by Danielle and Athena were outstanding, Brian said.

"You're patient and you listen. You have regular check-ins, and most importantly, you understand what we're trying to do," said Brian. "In fact, I just felt like I got the best there was – I don't know if I could have done it without (Danielle)."

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A unique solution

The combination of Penelope's flexible and configurable platform, and Athena's wealth of experience mean that SourceAmerica® received "superior customer service, (and) a solid system that worked in terms of modifications to some very, very unique issues and challenges that we had," Brian said.

"What we needed was customer service and what we needed was expertise, and what we needed was somebody who understood what we were trying to accomplish, and those things are what built the system."

All of which adds up to a unique and effective tool that allows SourceAmerica® to help more people with disabilities find work, said Brian.

"There really is nothing in my world that is anything like what we've built. It's the first of its kind as it relates to supported or customized employment."

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