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The prescription for better payroll: Inside Apex Pharmacy Network's transformation

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At a glance

Company	Apex Pharmacy Network
Location	Australia wide

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compliance built in

- ✓ You want to reduce complexity and gain full visibility across your organisation

Managing rural pharmacies from afar

[Apex Pharmacy Network](#) (APN) is a unique business unit originally part of Independencies of Australia (IPA), soon becoming a standalone entity. APN oversees over 40 pharmacies, many located in rural and regional Australia, where the owners don't always live nearby or work in the stores.

"We fully manage pharmacies on behalf of the owners," explained David Huxley, General Manager of Operations at APN. "We make sure that the pharmacies are compliant with all their regulatory requirements and that the business runs efficiently and effectively."

This decentralised model creates a need for systems that provide consistency, oversight and compliance, particularly across payroll.

Searching for a better payroll and rostering solution

When David joined the business eight years ago, payroll was managed using a mix of systems. Tanda was used for rostering and timekeeping, but it required separate payroll processing in Xero.

wasn't a full payroll system, so

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David trialled Employment Hero

"We needed labour components information," said David.

Hero for usability

APN explored other options during their search, including ClockOn and FoundU. While each system had strengths, Employment Hero stood out in areas that mattered most.

“FoundU didn’t take any accountability for the award interpretation or when pay rates were updated, we had to manually go in and do that. That would’ve meant either someone in our office doing it, or asking bookkeepers to do it for each site,” said David.

The ability to automate award interpretation became a key differentiator for Employment Hero.

“The pharmacy award has some quirks. Having a system to manage that is super helpful. As far as I know, no other system we looked at was prepared to do that.”

A complex rollout done in-house

The team developed a rollout plan to introduce Employment Hero across their entire network: over 40 pharmacies and 600–700 employees.

“It was a pretty significant project. We did it all in-house. There was a lot for the retail and pharmacist managers to get their heads around in terms of changes to rostering and timesheet approvals. The help desk, especially the chatbot, was incredibly helpful. We had so many questions along the way, and every response we received was clear, timely, and genuinely useful. It made a huge difference to our experience.”” said David.

Visibility, consistency and streamlined compliance

Since moving to Employment Hero, APN has experienced several key benefits, starting with

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roll functionality for every one of standard for us.”

function, which gives the team

like accrued overtime and area-ur workforce data so much

Having all pharmacies on one system has also built shared knowledge across APN’s team, bookkeepers and stores. Compliance has also improved, with Employment Hero acting as a

single source of truth for documentation.

“All our training records, [employment contracts](#), licences and registration details are stored centrally. We don’t need to shuffle documents between managers or keep physical copies in drawers,” said David.

Making data-driven decisions faster

For David, Employment Hero has become a vital tool in day-to-day operations.

“If a pharmacy is running wages above budget, I can pull up all the information I need with a couple of clicks and have a conversation with the area manager or pharmacy owner,” he said.

When IPA rolled out a new [learning management system](#), Employment Hero made onboarding seamless.

“We had 600 employees loaded into the learning management system in a day. We didn’t have to jump into four or five different systems or call stores. The records were already there,” David shared.

Designed for healthcare and pharmacy complexity

The healthcare and pharmacy industry comes with unique challenges, especially around awards and employment conditions. Employment Hero helps APN navigate compliance and operate efficiently.

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Employment Hero is now business-as-usual

For APN, Employment Hero is now a standard part of every new pharmacy's setup.

"Once the Employment Hero file is created, I just go ahead and start loading everything into it. It's part of our process now," David said.

What started as a search for better payroll reporting has evolved into a more transparent, efficient and scalable way to manage a growing pharmacy network across Australia. Want to simplify award interpretation and improve payroll compliance in your healthcare business? [Book a demo](#) with Employment Hero today.

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