

Director of Benefits Brings Outsourced Process In-House, Achieving Superior Compliance

Aspen Group Transforms Leave Management for 20,000+ Employees with Lean Team of Four



The Challenge

Before Pulpstream, the Aspen Group outsourced their leave management, creating significant challenges. "We were outsourcing before Pulpstream, and so that led us to our leave and accommodation process being very fragmented and heavily manual," Stephanie recalls. "Documentation lived in too many places. There were a lot of cooks in the kitchen."

The outsourced model couldn't handle their complexity. "We are a very outside-the-box organization. And we work in every single state. We have our own internal leaves." The result was a poor fit that degraded the employee experience. "It really feels, at least for us as an organization, like it was a round peg in a square hole, which is not productive experientially for my team behind the scenes, but more importantly, it's a really degraded experience for the team members that are going through really important milestones in their lives."

Beyond operational issues, the TPA lacked true partnership. "When you're outsourcing something, you are one of a lot of different clients. There isn't someone who really understands you as an organization that can be in a true partnership."



The Solution

The Aspen Group selected Pulpstream for its unique customization capabilities. "Other platforms didn't have the ability and have as much control of their code to be able to allow for the customizations that we needed as an organization," Stephanie explains. "I had to have someone who was going to be able to mold to us as opposed to trying to make us mold to them."

The implementation speed exceeded expectations. "What surprised me the most was really the implementation process and the speed at which we were able to operationalize the system, and then the transparency that it created." They also implemented Workday connections, creating "some 360 really cool off-the-shelf solutions that are happening for the uniqueness of our organization."

The partnership approach set Pulpstream apart. "The team has been great. They're very responsive, thoughtful, and collaborative. It's like having an extension of my own team," Stephanie reflects. "A lot of times, vendors will try to fit you into their mold instead of being willing to have the dialogue and have a true partnership. This has definitely felt like a true partnership."

Challenges:

- Fragmented, heavily manual leave process through outsourced TPA
- Documentation scattered across multiple systems with "too many cooks in the kitchen"
- Organizational nuances not represented appropriately by vendor
- "Round peg in square hole" approach degraded employee experience
- Complex multi-brand portfolio requiring flexibility across all 50 states

Achievements:

- Brought leave management in-house with team of four supporting 20,000 employees
- Centralized case tracking managing thousands of active leaves
- Automated communications and standardized workflows across multiple brands
- Real-time dashboards enabling proactive planning and trend analysis
- Improved compliance with fewer administrative reviews

Background:

The Aspen Group is a multi-brand organization supporting 20,000 team members across all 50 states. As Director of Benefits and Workforce Support Services, Stephanie Brazil oversees benefit administration, leave management, workforce support services, and the HR contact center, delivering accurate compliance and empathetic support to 20,000 team members across the country.

The Results

After just over a year with Pulpstream, the Aspen Group manages leave for 20,000+ employees with a lean team of four.



Operational Efficiency

We stood up a brand new team to be able to support everything in-house. It is a team of three and a manager." They manage "a couple thousand leaves in flight or people actively or re-certifying or needing to do accommodations for" through "centralized case tracking, the automated communications and the standardized workflows. Real time dashboards have improved our efficiency, more importantly, our compliance and our turnaround times."



Enhanced Compliance

"I am much more confident in the compliance than I was before. We have not had the level of administrative reviews of compliance issues that we had, not having it in-house and leveraging outsourcing."



Seamless Employee Experience

Integration with their short-term disability vendor created a holistic experience. "When someone is going through one of the best times in their life of giving birth to a child or one of the hardest times of their life of going through a critical illness, we want it to be intuitive and be easy, and not be a burden in that journey."



Comprehensive Success

Results came quickly: "Our ability for my team to take every leave in-house with having such a lean team successfully and getting kudos from the team members within the leave process that this was more intuitive, they got the information they needed. Those are the things that didn't surprise me, but it surprised me how quickly it all came to fruition."

Harness the Power of Pulpstream's Leave Management Platform

See for yourself how Pulpstream is transforming leave management processes for organizations across all industries. Contact our team for a customized demo tailored to your company's specific needs.

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"I've recommended it quite a bit. It's flexible, it's intuitive, it's built with compliance in mind. And especially with organizations that have complexities like mine and high volume LOA populations, I think it's a must have."

Stephanie Brazil
TAG – The Aspen Group

