



Case Study: **Metroland**

Publisher of Canada's highest-circulation local newspapers focuses on internal digital innovation.





Synerion x Metroland

Publisher of Canada's highest-circulation local newspapers focuses on internal digital innovation.

Metroland partners with Synerion to modernize their workforce management processes and save costs during enormous industry evolution.

HELPING THE HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND HURTING



A LITTLE ITALY IN MY KOREAN CUISINE



OPINION SORTING OUT LIFE'S BEGINNINGS

Challenge:

Turning the page on long overdue processes.

During the rise of Internet 2.0, few industries were impacted as dramatically or thoroughly as the media industry, and notably publishing. The digital transformation has permanently altered the landscape of the media industry, and this disruption has demanded a sea of change in how all groups inside media companies adapt, evolve and, ever more crucially, create value.

As traditional revenue models continue to be upended by the ongoing evolution to digital, media companies need to look for inefficiencies in all areas of their organization because they simply can't afford to be inefficient anymore.

Following legacy processes for too long, many media groups found themselves with a very urgent need to modernize as soon as possible. Metroland Media Group, driven by a mission to innovate in a rapidly changing industry, knew that internally some of their own processes were outdated, inefficient and ultimately costly.

After decades of growth and steady acquisition, Metroland realized that some of its processes hadn't advanced in step with its size. Attendance and work hours for thousands of employees were being manually tracked, either in Excel or on paper, with no unified time and attendance platform in place. The intention over the previous 20 years had been well-intended – Metroland wanted newly acquired employees to feel welcome and not overwhelmed by new 'corporate' processes. This led to a benevolent approach that allowed disparate processes to stay in place well past their due.

Ultimately untenable, the end result was one diversified company with many different time and attendance processes across hundreds of locations.



A man with a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt, is focused on his work in a factory. He is looking down at a piece of machinery, possibly a printing press, which is partially visible in the foreground. The background shows industrial equipment and a chain-link fence. The lighting is bright, and the overall scene conveys a sense of industriousness and precision.

Solution:

A new workforce management narrative is developed.

When Metroland made finding the right modern, scalable time and attendance platform a priority, they embarked on a search for a workforce management solution that could meet the unique challenges of their industry, address their legacy issues and be flexible enough to continue to grow with them.

They found that perfect partner, and more, in Synerion.

As they began to determine the full scope of what needed to be done, Metroland quickly realized that their project would need to go beyond just implementing a brand new solution. With many, many employees manually conducting their time and attendance processes in many, many locations, they'd first need to complete a full-scale audit to better understand how and what they were doing before they could address how to make improvements.

With that in mind they decided to try a pilot approach in one large Metroland warehouse in Burlington.

Not only was the cost far more affordable than Metroland had been quoted by Kronos, but the real key was the fit and close ties of the relationship. "It just felt right. The personnel and response from Synerion were light years beyond what we were experiencing," said Derek Fleming, VP & Chief Financial Officer, Metroland Media Group.

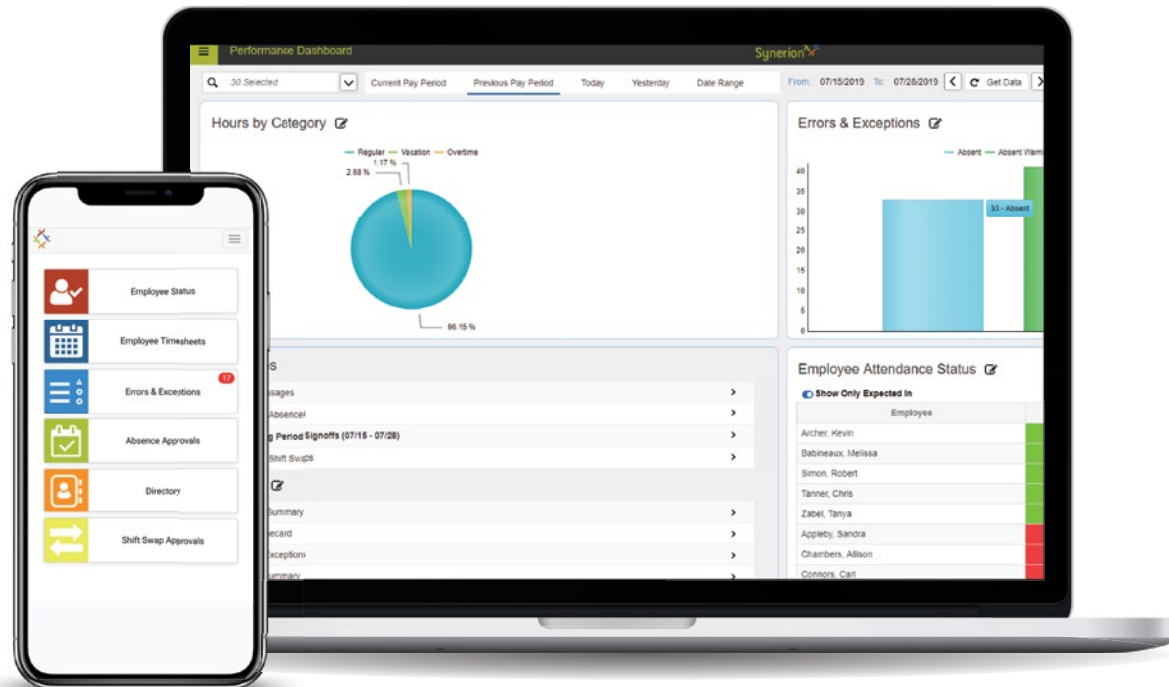
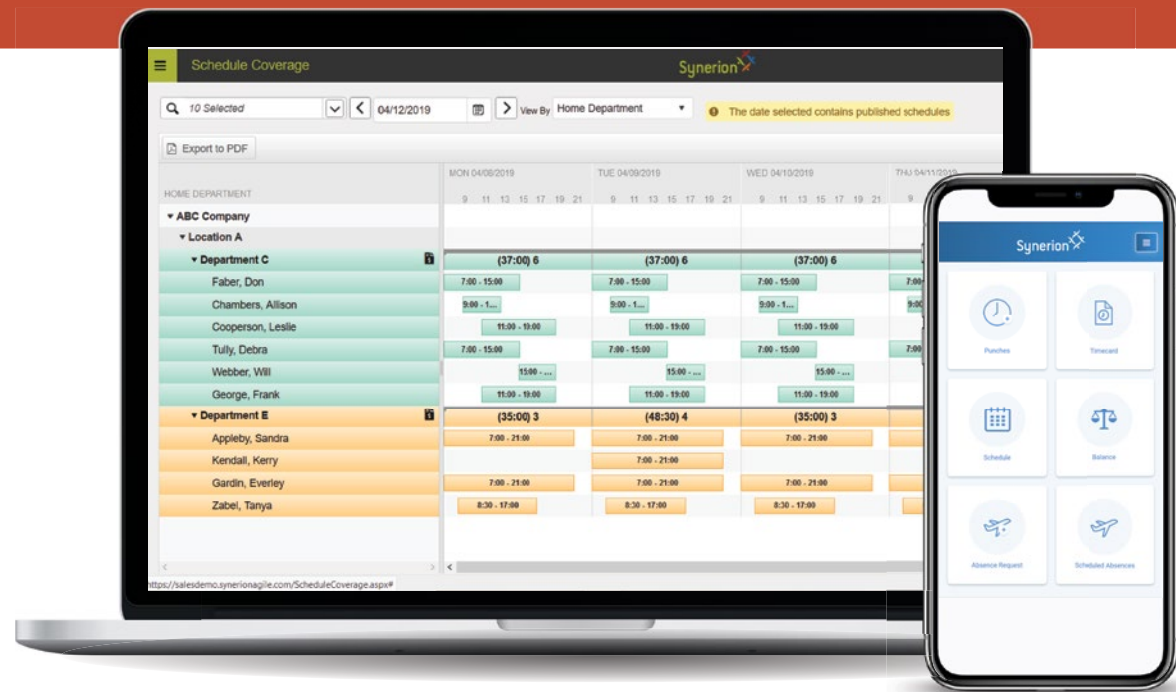
Synerion's small business Agile solution was brought online in Metroland's Burlington distribution centre to facilitate the pilot. As a hub for the heavily populated area from Oakville to Niagara, several hundred employees in this 75,000 square foot location package and process billions of newspapers and flyers for home delivery each year.

It's a bustling space that needed a unified attendance platform that could keep up with the busy pace and interface flawlessly with the existing payroll system.

In just three to four months the rollout and initial testing was complete. The switch to the new Synerion system was fast and self-directed with work rules. As they tested through workbooks, Metroland was able to use the more sophisticated Synerion platform to identify other areas of opportunity throughout its processes and uncover ways to optimize further that they hadn't even anticipated.

Results:

The proof is in productivity. End of story.



Immediate results included workforce efficiencies and a smoother, more streamlined check-in process for hourly staff. With up to 400 team members coming in and out for shifts, production workflows were almost instantly made cleaner. On top of that, needed integrations to payroll and other existing HR systems were connected flawlessly.

“We implemented Synerion first in Burlington, where we had a strong need. Their Agile product was both quick to implement and easy to adopt for a low cost,” said Derek. “It was great that one vendor could be such a nimble partner when we needed them. Managers and employees have been happy ever since.”

In the end, the Burlington test with Synerion passed with flying colours. Even better, it gave Metroland the perfect chance to build trust together with Synerion before moving to a larger Enterprise system.

As Metroland used its learning to help prepare for the much broader rollout of Enterprise, they also noted the added, and unexpected, benefits of how the test rollout helped them to simply learn more about their own payroll processes. “It forced a lot of meaningful conversations about what we do, why we do things and how we can standardize them better,” said Derek. “Lots of idiosyncrasies were uncovered, both fascinating and frustrating. We learned so much about how we do things and, when necessary, how we can improve it.”

The discovery of a number of time and attendance process vulnerabilities was thanks to the pay rules nature of Synerion Agile. Metroland operates in an incredibly complex environment, including more than 21 separate very intricate labour union agreements. So, while the large-scale project to simplify and standardize payroll rules was daunting,

Agile was the foundation that gave them the process they needed to review and standardize where possible and the metrics to make data-driven decisions.

Now that Synerion has been broadly implemented, feedback across the larger organization, both from within HR and the broader employee base, has been noticeably enthusiastic. Each employee now has a simplified process for tracking vacations, shifts, requests and more. Supervisors responsible for managing approvals and scheduling have improved clarity into the needs of their teams and more time to focus on driving results that matter.

“Anything that replaces manual processes and creates efficiencies is a good thing for a company. We finally have a single time and attendance system that everyone is using and that puts us in a better position to know our pay rules and how things are processed,” says Derek. “As we continue to discover new complexities and non-standard ways of doing things we’re now able to address them.”

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