

CERIDIAN



Longo's fruitful collaboration

Employees
6,100

Industry
**Retail
(grocery)**

Location
**Ontario,
Canada**

Solution
Dayforce

The grocery chain's longstanding partnership with Ceridian allows it to manage day-to-day operations while continuing to live its values and innovate.

Step into any one of Longo's stores in the Greater Toronto Area and you will find someone who can speak to the three pillars upon which the company was built.

In 1956, honesty, trustworthiness and mutual respect were the principles guiding a trio of brothers Tommy, Joe and Gus Longo – when they opened their first fruit market at the intersection of Yonge Street and Castlefield Avenue in North Toronto. Today, as their grandchildren join the family venture, the same values apply. A business doesn't expand from a modest 1,500-square-foot shop to a 32-location grocery institution without a clear philosophy and a solid plan.

Ask any one of Longo's 6,100 employees – officially, and affectionately, known as "team members" – what sets their employer apart from the competition and they will refer to a series of service-related instructions gleaned during staff training sessions.



If a customer is looking for an item, don't just point them to the aisle, bring them to the product. If it's raining, grab one of the store's umbrellas and escort patrons to their cars. If a client wants to try something in the produce section, wash said fruit or vegetable and offer them a taste.

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Anthony Longo, CEO

Without a doubt, Longo's is a traditional grocery store – the company's slogan is, after all, “A Fresh Tradition.” It is committed to high-quality products, loyal to family in all its permutations, and devoted to approaching matters from the customers' point of view. It is, however, anything but traditional in the scope of its ambition. “Growth” and “innovation” are important keywords at Longo's, touchstones for a forward-looking, 21st-century incarnation of a bricks-and-mortar business.

Case in point: After buying Grocery Gateway in 2004, the company has actively bolstered the online shopping service in anticipation of a mounting demand among increasingly time-crunched customers looking for home delivery of food and alcohol. The gamble has paid off: A decade and a half later, Longo's is seeing a steady increase in the number of new shoppers, regular shoppers and order sizes.

A partner to tackle complexity

A small 1950s fruit market is a very different beast than a business with dozens of stores, a distribution center, a production facility and a Grocery Gateway warehouse. Administration is an essential piece of the puzzle when running a company with thousands of employees

that include students, part-time, and full-time staff paid on an hourly or salaried basis. And tracking hours becomes even more complicated when employing a model of multiple shifts based on customer need that may peak during the holiday season, for example, then taper off.

A strong partner is a non-negotiable if you want your business to not only run efficiently but to flourish. For Longo's, that partner is Ceridian – and Dayforce, which Longo's began using in November 2009.

As with most retailers, human capital is the company's largest controllable expense. If Longo's was going to sustain continued growth in a fiercely competitive field, it needed to be able to deploy its employees as simply and efficiently as possible.

However, the combination of solutions the company was using prior to Dayforce –which included an HR database, a time-and-attendance system and manual spreadsheets – required staff to make custom, costly and ultimately imperfect accommodations. A change needed to be made.

“Before Dayforce, we were still paper-based on several fronts,” says Joann Bokanovic, Director of Total Rewards. Now, a department manager can go into the system and make adjustments immediately, ensuring that benefits administration, team-member changes and status changes can happen within a pay period, rather than the five to six weeks it would require in the past. “Team members are much happier about it,” says Bokanovic.

Rapidity of execution has been a boon for team members at all levels. “We're always looking for different tools to expedite what we're doing,” says Glenn MacNab, the Store Manager at Toronto's Leaside location. With Dayforce, Glenn and the larger Longo's team are better able to get a clear overview of budgets, sales, forecasting, staffing, scheduling, payroll, benefits and other facets of the business. “Dayforce is quick, efficient and easy. It's a system that allows me more time on the floor, which is where I think most store managers want to be.”

Senior Director of Operations Bill Zachopoulos agrees. The breadth of Dayforce's tracking capabilities was an unexpected bonus: “It seems

like every week we're uncovering something different that can help us run our business. And the easier it is to operate our business, the more time we have to be serving our customers."

Access anywhere, any time

Ease of use is primordial when your workforce ranges in age from 15 to 74. "When I first saw Dayforce, I thought 'Oh my gosh, there is so much to learn,'" says Marlena Skiba, a File Maintenance Clerk at Longo's. Initially, she was concerned whether some of the older team members would be able to navigate the Dayforce platform, which currently stores, among other things, team members' T4s and pay stubs. The worrying was for naught, she divulges: "It's surprisingly simple. I haven't heard one complaint."

Quite the contrary, in fact. Team members have embraced the Dayforce mobile app with gusto – not everyone on staff has a computer, but everyone has a phone. The app allows them to view their pay (enabling them to better manage their finances), consult their schedule, request a day off or leave a note for their department head. Using the app, rather than word of mouth, posters or email blasts for messaging, has also proven to be a much more effective mode of communication. Everything is now, quite literally, at team members' fingertips.

As for Skiba, the platform's cloud-based nature has vastly improved the quality of her work life, too. Prior to Dayforce's implementation, Fridays and Mondays – the weekdays on which she did scheduling and payroll, respectively – were spent in-office, no exceptions. The newfound ability to perform those tasks from any location allows for greater flexibility when faced with an unexpected commitment or roadblock.

A next-level partnership

If service at Longo's is "about taking care of customers every day, with every interaction," the same can be said of Ceridian. Ultimately, customer service is about offering support: a dependable shoulder to lean on and ear to bend.

“The customer service experience at Dayforce has been fantastic. It is not an organization where you purchase the product and then you’re left on your own. Whenever there’s an issue, we know exactly who to call and they always answer the phone.”

Joann Bokanovic, Director of Total Rewards

But what has pleasantly surprised Joann the most is Ceridian’s willingness, even eagerness, to collaborate. “Dayforce is the first place we go when we have a new business challenge,” she says. “We’ll ask, ‘How can we innovate? How can we make things a bit more efficient?’ and they’ll work with us. We haven’t found that level of partnership elsewhere. Ceridian definitely takes satisfaction in understanding how we operate.”

Greater understanding leads to greater empathy and goodwill. And sharing common values, cultures and goals makes a flourishing partnership that much more likely. “Dayforce cares about our business and we care about theirs,” adds Joann. It isn’t, she emphasizes, a one-sided relationship.

Technical help when they need it

Synergy is a crucial element with regards to the companies’ mutual success. Weekly calls with a Technical Account Manager (TAM) at Dayforce allow both sides to ask questions, address outstanding issues, share information and plan for the future. At Longo’s, the Dayforce TAM is considered an extension of the team.

“Our Technical Account Manager is a great person and a fantastic partner,” says Angela Tassone, the HCM Manager at Longo’s. “She is honest. She is trustworthy. She’s respectful and she has my respect. She embodies those three core values that our founders brought into the organization.”

Since its implementation, Dayforce has enabled Longo's to save money and time without sacrificing quality of product or service. Consistently, there are additional initiatives in the offing, aimed at further improving staffers' satisfaction and, by extension, the customer experience.

For example, the company is hoping to introduce, in the near future, shift-swapping through the platform. This would lighten the burden on department managers and ensure that a task that used to take hours or days can be accomplished in a matter of minutes. And if any problems arise, the TAM is available to tackle new challenges and work through the hiccups.



“Without them, we wouldn’t be able to do half the things we do on a daily basis, to be honest,” says Joann Bokanovic. “Having one central point of contact definitely makes our life better. It’s very valuable to have a consistent person on your account.”

For her part, Angela wouldn’t hesitate to recommend the TAM program, as well as Dayforce, to others. “I picture us continuing to climb the ladder of success together. I cannot wait to see what Dayforce and Longo’s do next.”