CASE STUDY

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REVOLUTIONIZING HR:

Olivette cuts budgeting time in half with PeopleGuru™ HCM



Case study: Olivette



Challenge: What do you do when one-size-fits-all doesn't fit *you*?

Olivette had been using the same payroll software provider — a big national name — for years. "It takes a lot to get a municipality to change software," said Olivette City Manager Jennifer Yackley, noting city governments often have an "If it ain't broke enough, don't fix it" mentality.

Switching providers means city staff must write an RFP (Request for Proposals) and spend hours evaluating candidates to comply with transparency regulations. Then there's the potentially rocky transition process, as well as resistance from longtime employees who are used to doing things the old way.

The existing solution couldn't put scheduling, evaluations, onboarding and payroll under a single umbrella without the city paying a lot more. It also had a clunky interface, and some reports that were hard to generate. But it wasn't broke. Until it was, when the city lost the functionality to do performance appraisals.

The provider migrated Olivette to its latest system, which not only did not fix the problem, but also caused previous performance appraisal data to be lost. When the city contacted customer service, they got the run-around.

"PeopleGuru™'s commitment to customizing a solution to Olivette's needs ultimately won the contract. PeopleGuru™ beat out a lot of big players."

Darren Mann
CFO of Olivette

"They [old provider] weren't very responsive," said Mann. "This was a behemoth of a company that has a one-size-fits-all approach, and our size didn't fit. That's not gonna work."

Olivette
IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL

At a glance:

Industry: Municipiality
Founded: 1930
Location: Olivette, MO
Population: 8,500
Number of Employees: 120
Customer Since: 2025
Solution: PeopleGuru™ HCM

Highlights:

- PeopleGuru™ automation cuts budgeting time in half
- Customized implementation accommodates 24-hour scheduling
- Decentralized time entry increases accountability

About Olivette, MO:

A growing city with distinct HR needs

Olivette, Missouri, is a diverse, affordable, growing community in the suburbs of St. Louis. Like other municipalities, its HR needs are distinct from a private company's.

Unlike a private company that is profit-motivated, municipalities are service-motivated. Services determine whether people want to live there, so keeping employees happy is important.

"We keep our people happy by ensuring their pay is right and that there is transparency for how they are compensated," said Mann. "And when someone leaves, we need to get a replacement in smoothly and quickly."

Olivette
IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL

"We're like four industries in one place: fire department, police, building inspection, and parks and recreation. And two of those run 24 hours a day."

Darren Mann
CFO of Olivette



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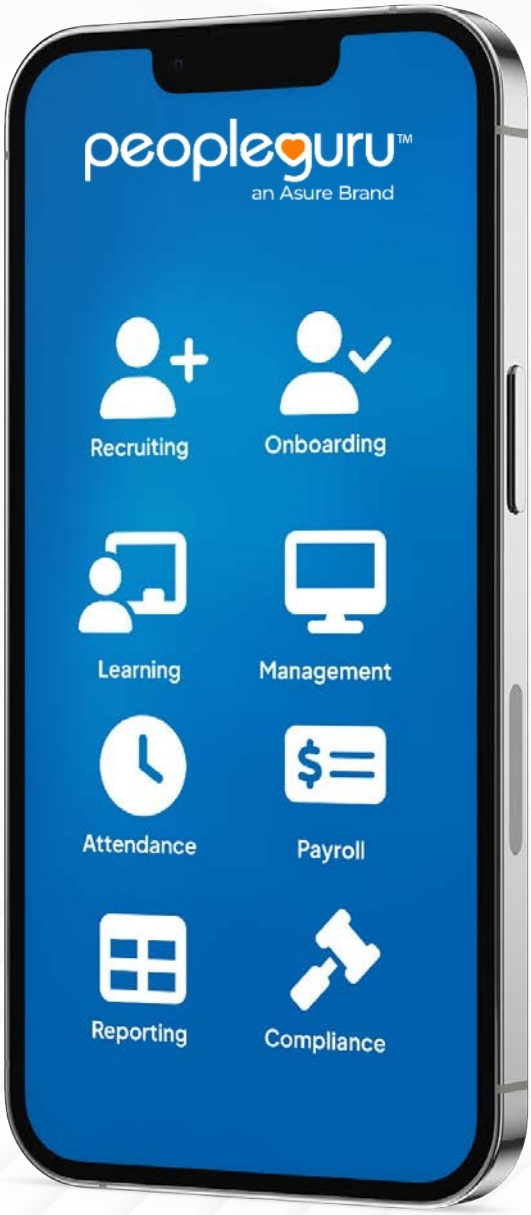
SOLUTION:

Custom built solution to meet Olivette's needs



The City of Olivette posted an RFP for new HR software, specifying requirements for payroll, performance evaluations, and onboarding. They received seven applications, ultimately narrowing down to two finalists. The city's goals were to decentralize payroll, increase automation, transition paper-based processes to paperless, and ensure scheduling worked for the city's unique needs.

"We brought Parks & Recreation in for the interviews because they have the most part-time folks. It was really important to us that they could do their scheduling in PeopleGuru™," said Yackley. Similarly, any solution also had to work for 24-hour fire and police schedules.

"We really liked PeopleGuru™'s presentation," said Mann. "It wasn't a sales pitch. They had done their homework and tailored the presentation to our needs. It was customized to what we were asking for and the people answering the questions were experts. It felt like it would bode well for the relationship going forward."

PeopleGuru™'s commitment to customizing a solution to Olivette's needs ultimately won the contract. "PeopleGuru™ beat out a lot of big players," added Mann.

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RESULTS:
PeopleGuru™ automation cuts budgeting time in half

Payroll accounts for 75 percent of the city's budget, and budgets are set months before the fiscal year end. Salaries must be predicted for employees who are due raises in the intervening time. Previously, Mann spent over a day updating a spreadsheet by hand. PeopleGuru™ automation has cut that down to a few hours.

Simplified, automated payroll shifts accountability where it belongs

Before PeopleGuru™, Olivette's senior accountant was burdened with categorizing employee hours into regular time, overtime, comp time, sick leave, vacation, and fire time — an FLSA category specific to the fire department. This required the accountant to interpret city policies, which technically was department head responsibility.

The PeopleGuru™ implementation translated those policies to a formula in an automated time sheet. Now, department heads are responsible for ensuring that hours are categorized correctly, which decentralizes payroll and puts accountability back where it belongs.

Paperless, automated processes offer ease of use and better administrative visibility

Olivette's HR manager now uses the PeopleGuru™ onboarding module to interact with candidates. "The onboarding process has definitely gotten easier," said Yackley.
The city also transitioned its last paper-based processes to paperless. Employees can request time off on their phones and have it show up automatically on their schedule.
Olivette has plans to implement the benefits module, and to use the recruiting module to track hiring metrics over time. For about the same price they were paying before, the city now has much better visibility into city operations.

Ollivette CFO Mann also praised the PeopleGuru™ implementation team. **"They made sure all the right metrics were being tracked and that we got what we wanted. We could tell PeopleGuru™ wants to keep working with cities like us. And that makes us feel valued."**

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"We can run a report and drop it straight into the existing spreadsheet," said Mann. "We can replicate it as many times as we want. And it doesn't have to be me that does it anymore," he added.

Darren Mann
CFO of Olivette

