

## Chocolate manufacturer gets world-class support while increasing employee satisfaction with Ascentis Payroll

Ghirardelli Chocolate Company is America's longest continuously operating chocolate manufacturer, with more than 1,000 employees. About half of the employees work on the retail side of the business, with the balance of the employees working in operations, manufacturing and management. Ghirardelli has been using Ascentis Payroll (formerly EBS Online) since 1995, and purchased the Ascentis Employee Self-Service module in 2008.

Ascentis Payroll is a Web-based payroll system that supports payroll processing in real-time, ensuring accuracy, flexibility and control. Live processing and instantaneous auditing means processing time can be drastically reduced. Because of its on-demand processing capabilities, Ascentis Payroll frees clients from batch uploads and transmission windows.

Ascentis recently interviewed Renee Primer, Ghirardelli payroll manager, about her experience with Ascentis products and services.

### Ascentis provides superior, responsive customer service

**Ascentis:** How does Ascentis compare with other payroll companies you have worked with in the past?

**Primer:** I can say that the customer service experience with Ascentis has been excellent. I've worked with larger, nationally-based payroll companies in the past, but the support we get from Ascentis has been truly exceptional. Their customer service team has happily trained many employees here at Ghirardelli on how to use and navigate the system. They always "step up to the plate" when we need them to, and the fact that they're willing to come to our offices and train us onsite is an amazing contrast to other companies.

For example, when we needed to reconfigure our general ledger, the Ascentis client support representative took the time to ask us all the right questions, went back and customized our system,

and then presented a great solution to us. I found the experience phenomenal. In addition, the Ascentis support team is very responsive, and will work with us either on the phone or by e-mail.

### The power to test means never having an inaccurate payroll

**Ascentis:** How does Ascentis make your job easier?

**Primer:** Ascentis Payroll is very intuitive, which means I can get done what I need to accomplish quickly and accurately. If we're unsure about something, or have any questions, our dedicated rep is immediately responsive.

One of the most powerful capabilities we have with Ascentis Payroll is the ability to test before we launch major systemic changes. For example, we can easily set up new directories and test pay codes or integrations with other systems before we actually process payroll. Because of this thorough test capability, we know new implementations or configurations will work and as a result we push out an accurate payroll every time.

### Ascentis saves time with many aspects of payroll

**Ascentis:** Does working with Ascentis save you time?

**Primer:** Absolutely. Ascentis provides a dedicated support representative that we have worked with for years. She understands our unique system and requirements, and always responds quickly and accurately to questions or issues, which I really appreciate. In addition, the most recent enhancements in Ascentis Payroll also save us time.

For example, we can now navigate from one sub-directory to another more efficiently. The payroll processing steps are easy to see and we know exactly where we are in the payroll cycle. We are also very happy with the newly improved look and

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feel of the interface. These features combine to save us processing time on a regular basis.

### Ghirardelli expands the capability of the HR department with employee self-service

**Ascentis:** What prompted you to start thinking about an employee self-service system?

**Primer:** The payroll department was spending a lot of time with paperwork and manual processes. We were printing and mailing pay stubs, which cost us administrative time, paper and postage. If an employee needed to make a basic change to their payroll profile, such as a new address or revised direct deposit information, they had to call our department and then we'd make the change in the system for them. It took time out of their schedule, and created a lot of busy-work for the payroll department. It made sense to think about amplifying the capabilities of the department through a self-service delivery model.

### Ascentis Employee Self-Service implementation is effortless

**Ascentis:** What was the self-service module implementation experience like with Ascentis?

**Primer:** It couldn't have been easier for us. We had very little direct involvement with the implementation. Ascentis set it up, provided us a training webinar, and "turned on the switch." Really, no work was done on our end. Ascentis continues to provide us a level of customer service that keeps our minds at ease.

### With access and participation, employee satisfaction has improved

**Ascentis:** How have employees reacted to self-service?

**Primer:** We have had a very positive response to the self-service module launch. Adoption levels are

very high across the board, with a 52% participation rate to date. Employees involved on the retail side of the business don't necessarily have access to online information during working hours, so they log in to self-service from the privacy of their home and enjoy the same benefits and information access there. The distribution capabilities of the system make access easy and secure with a basic Internet connection.

**Ascentis:** Is there anything specifically about Ascentis Employee Self-Service that employees enjoy?

**Primer:** Yes! By allowing employees to bypass the payroll department, they can be proactive in ways that they couldn't experience before. For example, employees find it very convenient to be able to quickly add or change their direct deposit information online. The tax simulator has been a great tool for them to use when making decisions about withholdings. Employees now view check stubs at their convenience, and see W2 information. Overall employee satisfaction has definitely improved, and the administrative burden on the department has been significantly reduced.

### Ascentis Payroll supports a "green" company initiative

**Ascentis:** How has the payroll department benefitted from self-service?

**Primer:** We're definitely saving time and money. We no longer have to print and mail pay stubs, which saves the department several hours every week. As a company, Ghirardelli encourages all employees to behave as "green" as possible, and the ability to get information online facilitates the payroll department's commitment to that mission. Whether the issue is functionality or training, Ascentis is there for all of us when we need it. That kind of support is really what sets Ascentis apart from the other payroll companies I've worked with.

For more information about Ascentis HR and payroll solutions, call 1.800.229.2713, visit [www.Ascentis.com](http://www.Ascentis.com), or e-mail [info@ascentis.com](mailto:info@ascentis.com).