

KAINOS SMART CASE STUDY

Scalable, Future-proof Test Automation Fuels Workday Expansion at SCI

Project Requirements

Increase breadth of test coverage

Adopt Workday best practice testing methods

Reduce time spent testing updates

Project Results

400

man-hours saved
during updates

85%

increase in
test coverage

1

major issue found
before production

25k

average tests
run annually



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Greg Holliday—Director of HRIS at SCI

About Service Corporation International

Service Corporation International (SCI) is North America's largest provider of funeral, cremation and cemetery services. Headquartered in Houston Texas, SCI operates a 24,000 strong work force to support efforts across 1500 funeral homes in the US, Canada and Central America. SCI has grown significantly through acquisition, with field service associates accounting for more than 80% of its workforce.

Big-bang roll-out intensifies resource pressure

In 2014, SCI implemented Workday as part of the company's strategic migration to the cloud. Their existing solution, PeopleSoft, was due for immediate upgrade—encouraging senior leadership to expedite Workday's roll-out with a 'big-bang' deployment in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Configuration stabilisation and successful Workday adoption were top priorities for HRIS, resulting in a growing gap between testing requirements and available resources.

Greg Holliday, Director of HRIS at SCI, comments, "In our line of work, field staff have the difficult job of working with bereaved families every day. Leadership's goal in moving to Workday was to streamline processes and remove the added burden of paper-based admin, so we knew our future was in the cloud. We were only using PeopleSoft for Payroll and as an employee system of record, but the business had bigger plans to add things like Compensation, Benefits and Employee Self-Serve—it made sense to move to Workday, which offered all of the above and more."

Greg adds, "My team only had bandwidth to test thoroughly during Workday update periods—we weren't achieving any weekly coverage. We tested Workday 22, 23 and 24 manually, with approximately 20 people involved in hands-on testing, including SMEs from each functional area and the entire HRIS team. They were each testing for around 80 hours during the first three weeks, leaving two weeks to apply fixes. Our teams were completely maxed."

Inadequate test coverage heightens risk

SCI had plans to grow its Workday footprint but knew these plans would be hindered with an unscalable approach to testing. Three updates deep, HRIS knew that continuing with this approach would only allow for minimal levels of coverage.

Greg explains, "Building the test data consumed the majority of my team's time. SMEs were learning Workday, testing AND doing their day jobs. All things considered, we were covering approximately 15–20% of what actually needed to be tested. Luckily for us, we didn't have any repercussions with that approach. It became obvious very quickly that there were gaps, and avoiding a major issue in production that we'd have to firefight was my main motivation for seeking an automation tool," says Greg.

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The Impact of Kainos Smart

Keen to adopt best practice, in 2015 SCI sought a test solution that would allow them to reduce manual efforts, increase test coverage and free up resources to focus on testing new Workday functionality on a weekly basis. Greg's criteria included a tool that came with pre-built APIs, required zero scripting, and could be easily managed by HRIS and SMEs.

The impact of Kainos Smart's automated HCM and security testing was instant. During SCI's first update after onboarding, Smart reduced testing time by 400 man hours and increased their test coverage by 85%. Smart has also facilitated HRIS's ability to run weekly security test packs—proving instrumental to supporting SCI's ongoing Workday enhancements.

"We're always interested in adopting best practice at SCI" says Greg, "and having worked with automation tools in a previous role, I knew it was the right next step. When I went to market, Smart was the only tool that didn't require me to hire an entire development team to maintain it—that in itself was a deal maker!"



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Scalable, repeatable testing fuels Workday expansion

Introducing Smart has permitted SCI to broaden the scope of their test coverage, extend testing capabilities beyond updates, and dramatically reduce testing effort. SCI has built more than 100 repeatable test scenarios that can be executed at the click of a button. Security tests are now carried out weekly. The time staff spend testing Workday's bi-annual updates has been reduced from three weeks to three days, allowing HRIS to focus on more strategic Workday initiatives. The addition of Smart has also transformed SCI's test preparation workload.

"My team no longer has to worry about preparing test data," explains Greg. "We use EIBs to load the synthetic data into Smart for testing. I don't need to investigate whether real workers have been terminated, promoted or transferred and, therefore, still suit the test scenarios. When I execute test runs, I know that my scripts will always work. The quality of our testing has improved radically, allowing us to achieve full coverage when testing end-to-end Business Processes."

Greg adds, "With Smart doing most of the heavy lifting and update testing pretty much covered, my team has more time to focus on strategic initiatives—for example, supporting company acquisition plans and having time to explore new areas of Workday. We're about to go live with Smart for Workday Payroll, so that's another win for my team—that definitely wouldn't have been possible under the time pressures of manual testing."

Critical issues caught before entering production

By using Smart to run full regression tests on security weekly, SCI is now able to quickly identify and correct configuration errors before they hit production and negatively impact end-users or the business.

Greg explains, "We were about to roll out a very impactful payroll report to assist our field operations. Just before it was due to hit production, Smart identified that a security domain had changed from constrained to unconstrained. Had it gone live as expected, people from different departments would have had visibility into another department's payroll. Each field location has its own operating P&L, so this would have been a huge privacy breach. Smart's ability to pinpoint this issue allowed us time to pause for a sigh of relief, re-engineer the reports with the new security structure and push to production at a later date."



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Future-ready payroll testing

With demonstrable ROI and having experienced the benefits of Smart first-hand, in 2019 SCI added Smart Payroll to its testing suite to introduce future-period testing and parallel payroll testing during update windows.

Greg remarks, "During updates, we were only able to test payroll scenarios that occurred within the five-week window. Because Smart facilitates future-period payroll testing, we'll be able to test for the full year ahead and test for any exceptions that we need to be aware of.

"Here are two examples," adds Greg. "Our associates in Puerto Rico receive bonuses at Christmas, and even though December is months ahead of the update window, Smart will allow us to run tests to make sure our staff get paid. Secondly, because we get paid every two weeks, there will be several occasions where we'll get three pay checks in one month. In these cases, some deductions should come out, others should not. With Smart allowing us to test these in advance, we'll save a lot of man hours on doing makeup payments to staff or requesting money that shouldn't have been provided. This will be a win for our back-office staff and relieve pressure on field associates.

"As we move forward, I'm eager to get started with running parallel tests—production versus new update. This will be a welcome addition to testing Workday 32. My team will be able to run the payrolls, do the comparison and ensure nothing has been missed."

Greg concludes, "There's definitely a lot more that we hope to achieve with Smart. We've barely touched the surface and already the results so far have been stellar. I'd definitely recommend Smart to anyone considering test automation. It's been a great partnership with Kainos, and the Smart tool has been a great addition to our ability to help our field associates."