



Bridging the Gap Between Hair-on-Fire, Explosive Growth and Steady Scaling

CASE STUDY

"I'm a strong believer in clients come first, and that's what ESG believes as well."

- Seth Turner, Chief Strategy Officer, AbsenceSoft

Every HR professional knows what a headache it is to track employee leave for hundreds or even thousands of employees. When navigating a labyrinth of spreadsheets and sticky notes just won't cut it, experienced HR professionals trust AbsenceSoft for managing employee leave and tracking compliance.

In April of 2018, demand for absence tracking software skyrocketed, and AbsenceSoft's SaaS platform held the key to streamlined control of all things leave management. As more and more businesses signed up for their trailblazing solution, their onboarding team floundered. In this specialized sphere, HR professionals need customizable systems to adjust for their company's specific benefits and rules. AbsenceSoft's onboarding team had to handle these adjustments before each client could go live, creating a bottleneck they couldn't bust through.

They needed experienced Customer Success professionals to fill in the gaps on their team – immediately. Fortunately, ESG had the right people in place to hit the ground running. A group of dedicated ESG virtual Customer Success Managers (vCSMs) joined forces with AbsenceSoft's existing team to focus on onboarding their SMB clients, allowing AbsenceSoft's team the space to focus on their Enterprise clients. Along the way, ESG shaped Customer Success best practices and methodologies for AbsenceSoft to build upon as they continued to grow. These efforts resulted in reducing the average time to onboard a new client from 90-180 days to 30-60 days. Along with that two-thirds reduction in Time to Onboard, revenue generation from clients going live hit an all-time high, and client satisfaction rose dramatically.

HIGHLIGHTS

Business Challenge:

Breaking through delays in onboarding new customers amidst a period of booming expansion.

Objective:

Stabilize the onboarding experience to provide quick time to value for new clients while initiating CS strategies for the long run.

Results:

- ▼ Two-thirds reduction in average time to onboard
- ▲ All-time high revenue generation
- ▲ All-time high client satisfaction

"It was incredibly important and rewarding to have a partner that was willing to work with us while we were going through such crazy growth. They were able to respond and help us onboard clients more efficiently, faster, and maintain those relationships so we had referenceable clients at the end of it. That's where I find tremendous value in the relationship we have with ESG."

- Seth Turner
Chief Strategy Officer
AbsenceSoft

Growing Pains and Gridlock

AbsenceSoft's leave management platform saves HR managers hours of time that would otherwise be spent manually navigating all of the regulations surrounding FMLA, disability, worker's comp, ADA compliance, and more. Their SaaS solution reduces the risk of non-compliance and makes it easy to track employee leave. But before it can really begin to make an impact, AbsenceSoft needs to upload each company's specific benefits and policy information and documentation into their system.

"An out-of-the-box software solution doesn't work for every client," Seth Turner, one of the founders of AbsenceSoft and Chief Strategy Officer, explains. "Our customers need to be able to tailor communications they send to their employees, and they have different workflows they want to follow. We have clients that have pet care leave, for example. It's all very personal. They all have different rules and benefits, even different ways to refer to their employees. There is a lot in HR to customize. We're there to fit their needs and provide configuration tools to support each client's complexities." Once word of mouth about AbsenceSoft spread, their team simply could no longer keep up with the number of new customers signing up for their solution.

Customer satisfaction wasn't the only element in jeopardy. Onboarding delays were interfering with revenue as well. Though the sales team was signing on new clients, clients weren't being charged until they were live in the system. The longer onboarding took, the more it impacted revenue. "It was definitely something we needed to address," Turner remembers.

Staffing Up to Break the Bottleneck

In the early stages of such dynamic expansion, funding isn't always available to quickly hire a large number of full-time employees to meet spikes in demand. Startups need to stay flexible as they develop and evolve. In AbsenceSoft's case, this meant that they needed to bring on seasoned Customer Success experts to bolster their onboarding team during this transitional period of growth. Enter ESG's vCSMs to the rescue, badged as AbsenceSoft employees to maintain a consistent customer experience.

Turner compares ESG's vCSMs to a SWAT team – able to move in and assess the situation quickly, make tactical decisions, and adjust in real time to changing situations. There were three key areas the vCSMs focused on to tackle AbsenceSoft's onboarding congestion.

Filling In the Gaps

While the AbsenceSoft team attended their Enterprise clients, ESG vCSMs connected with their high-volume SMB customers. The team began implementing proactive plays to this vital customer segment, discovering what each needed to get into the system, and vastly decreasing the time it took for customers to go live.

Forging Strategies for the Future

Understanding your customer segments and lifecycle stages is fundamental to Customer Success. As a startup, AbsenceSoft was still in the early stages of Customer Success Maturity. ESG's vCSMs were well positioned to offer expert advice and feedback as AbsenceSoft assembled their customer journey maps, communication processes, and key KPIs.

Turner recalls, "ESG helped us a lot with evaluating how to segment out our different types of clients, creating outreach processes through our customer relationships, and making sure we were able to understand customer health. We started looking at the clients that were at risk for not renewing. ESG came in and helped us pinpoint how to measure our success."

Building a Foundation of Customer Trust

In the tight-knit HR space, your business depends on your reputation. Most of AbsenceSoft's prospective customers rely on word of mouth to learn about their solution. The business requires strong client relationships to grow. Perhaps the most important role of ESG's vCSMs was in providing the best possible customer experience throughout the onboarding process.

"Their vCSMs came in, got up to speed quickly, and they were able to build great relationships with our clients. Nobody knew they were contractors; they were like part of the family. They were very much part of our team. They developed strong relationships with our clients, and they helped us scale and grow at a pace we didn't expect we'd be able to do."

- Seth Turner, Chief Strategy Officer, AbsenceSoft

Navigating a Brighter Future with Customer Success

Secure in the knowledge that their SMB customers were being supported, AbsenceSoft's team had the room to deliver top-notch service to their Enterprise segment, all while making important progress in cementing the bedrock of their own Customer Success program.

As Turner puts it, "We've learned a lot from what our vCSMs were able to do. Today, we are building on those lessons. We've invested in our ability to scale. In the past, we had a reactionary type of model because we were just growing so quickly. We didn't have enough people, and we didn't have enough time. We couldn't take a breath. ESG allowed us to take a step back and look at how to put the right pieces in place, both from a personnel standpoint as well as a process standpoint. Today, we're growing in the right way, building on the lessons we learned from ESG."

In the SaaS world, Annual Recurring Revenue (ARR) is king. By rapidly launching more live customers and reducing the time to onboard by nearly 70%, ESG's vCSMs pulled ARR forward in a way AbsenceSoft hadn't been able to do in the past. "They were able to bring the right resources at the right time to help us with these critical business needs. That's what the value in working with ESG was, and that's what has made it such a successful partnership," Turner says.

"We just had our biggest quarter ever in Q1 and we're on track to double that in Q2. The changes have been dramatic in the type of people we have and the strategy that we're pursuing."

When an ESG vCSM steps in, not only are your customers covered, but you now have a resource for proactive scalability. Bringing all the collective wisdom of Customer Success best practices with them, their goal is to help you cultivate the right lessons for your team and your business.