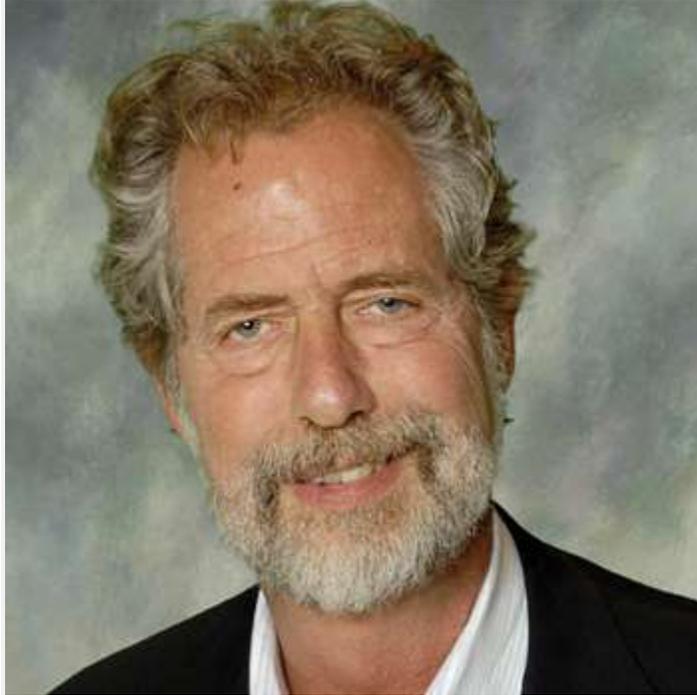


Workday Pops Its Cork!

By: **Bill Kutik** | April 24, 2018 • 7 min read



HR Technology Columnist Bill Kutik, as chairman emeritus, will be at the 21st Annual HR Technology® Conference & Expo, in Las Vegas, Sept. 11-14, 2018. Learn how Performance Management, training and learning have been transformed at Accenture by Senior Managing Director of Talent Rahul Varma on the broadcast-quality video series, Firing Line with Bill Kutik®. He can be reached at HREletters@LRP.com.

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In a single quarter, a month before its Tech Summit, Workday stock went from \$95 to nearly \$140 a share.

CEO Aneel Bhusri appropriately revealed no inside information to explain the three-month pop in Workday's stock price from \$95 to nearly \$140 per share.

"The financial analysts finally started believing our growth rates," he said in answer to my question about it at Workday's annual Tech Summit on April 12 on the shores of San Francisco Bay.

But the precise reason may be less important than the appearance that Workday has succeeded in convincing parts of the world that its systems are the greatest thing since sliced bread. Oh, let's update the cliché: "since the smartphone."

Certainly, everyone working there I talk to seems to think so. As do many clients attending the annual user conference Workday Rising. Criticize some people, and they think you're a liar. Criticize Workday and employees just find it improbable.

Certainly, it's hard to argue with Workday's HCM client list of more than 2,100: 175 of the Fortune 500, 20 of the Fortune 50 with Walmart and Dow Chemical going live this year.

SAP SuccessFactors reports more clients on Employee Central, about 2,300, but many are smaller.

Deloitte's Christa Degnan Manning actually asked Bhusri about people "drinking the Kool-Aid" about Workday's perfection. I was too stunned by her *chutzpah* to write down his response.

The summit took place just a few days after more than 100 people started criticizing Workday's recruiting applications on a LinkedIn discussion. And they are continuing to do so [here](#).

Unfortunately, very few have heeded moderator/instigator William Tincup's constant pleas throughout the thread to be specific about their complaints. The few detailed critiques are very interesting, if you can follow them. Ten-year Workday implementation consultant Matthew Heminger links to his even-handed [assessment of Workday Recruiting](#) appropriately called *The Good, Bad and the Ugly*.

Others put forward general explanations that international recruiting software is hard, pointing to Taleo's continued 50-percent market share and continual complaints from its users. And a few commenters just posit that a great HRIS cannot have a great ATS. Workday certainly has the first. Not sure why that's a barrier to the second.

Clearly, many recruiters and talent-acquisition executives on the discussion feel the module was forced upon them when more senior executives bought Workday.

Workday has been silent on the thread (except for former employee Scott Lietzke), and recruiting was never mentioned at the summit except for officials noting that more than 1,350 clients have bought it—considerably more than half of its customers.

After following ATS since it was born 30 years ago, I was disappointed to realize I had never had a deep-enough demo to follow the criticisms. But my POV was expressed by one commenter: Vendors now come out with minimal viable products as the first version. Software is organic. Those first versions of new applications are like newborn babies. They grow up fast. Getting kicked around by customers and on LinkedIn hastens the process. Remember, Taleo is 20 years old; Workday Recruiting, just three.

Without referencing the discussion, VP HCM Product Strategy Cristina Goldt told me creating candidate-marketing functionality or CRM (candidate-relationship marketing) was on her roadmap for the product. Some customers are reportedly searching for a CRM to bolt onto Workday Recruiting.

Workday is also introducing automated interview scheduling (only for those using Outlook 365), as well as candidate self-scheduling. Recruiters can differentiate prospects and candidates (presumably those who have applied) with separate tags.

The company said it would prioritize its application of Machine Learning to recruiting and onboarding, learning and development, plus search and collaboration.

Otherwise at the Summit, Cristina announced the Workday Content Cloud for bringing together all the inside and third-party content for learning. Also that individual employees could customize their home pages to surface exactly the information they want, including external data. And that mobile and web home pages have finally been made the same.

VP Payroll and Workforce Management Mariana Santiago detailed the expansion of Workday's global payroll to 18 partners covering 127 countries with the largest being ADP (for its GlobalView and Streamline products) and Northgate Arinso. Workday has only four of its own country payrolls.

She said Workday is also building out workforce-scheduling capabilities for Workday Time Tracking, with limited availability next year for the more-than 1,250 customers that already own it and general availability by the end of 2019. But there are no plans yet to tackle the hardest verticals like healthcare.

The company is getting its customers ready for the predicted rush of contingents with new functionality for creating employee agreements with them, as well as cascading goals to contingents as well as to employees. Onboarding can already be customized for contingents, as well as performance management.

Among the many analytics announcements at the summit was a function called Livepages, which allows the creations of presentations and narratives about the data, not just documents. While Visier has had that capability for a long time, Livepages will keep the data updated as it changes for each recipient.

Also, Workday Benchmarking, now owned by more than 280 clients, is expanding to allow filters by country and the creation of time series.

The chatbots are finally coming this year with a focus first on accessing them through Slack, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts Chat and then Gmail, Microsoft Outlook and Calendars.

For two years at these summits, Bhusri has hinted at Workday expanding its functional footprint. Workday Student is the company's first vertical application designed specifically for higher education with 35 customers and the first one going live this year.

Bhusri told the summit audience that financial services could be its next vertical.

He also said the company's mindset was changing about acquisitions, which in the past had been small companies with unique technologies that Workday could use within its system.

"The Power of One [one technical platform for all applications] was for HR and Finance," he said. "Now the Workday Cloud [the platform for customers writing new applications] makes it possible to buy companies not just for technology."

In other words, software that does something else!

Workday battled for years to get the financial community to accept its progress in selling Financials as similar to its success with HCM, and saw its stock pop when it did. A third software pillar would clearly be a long-term play.