



# ADP® Case Study — Amazon

## How ADP is supporting Amazon in paying over 1.6 million employees worldwide

Famously started by Jeff Bezos from his garage in Washington, Amazon has grown to become one of the most influential economic and cultural forces in the world today. The multibillion-dollar technology company focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming and artificial intelligence.

Amazon prides itself on being guided by customer obsession, invention, earning trust with customers and thinking big. It strives to be “Earth’s most customer-centric company” and “Earth’s best employer”.

ADP already had a strong relationship with Amazon, having supported the business across a wide number of regions with at least eight different ADP solutions. With the advent of rapid business expansion into new regions and the pandemic, the relationship only strengthened.

## Take a new look at pay


For Amazon, payroll was front and centre when the pandemic hit, particularly with so many of its staff deemed essential workers. In 2021, the expectations of what payroll and HR can do on the fly have completely changed.

As Greg points out, “When the pandemic happened, we needed to compensate employees in ways we hadn’t done before. Suddenly, coming into work was an act of heroism and many people had to take on some level of personal risk to do so. We implemented special incentives in very little time, and it proved successful. A new response standard has been set for rapid business change, and payroll and HR teams are at the forefront of that.”


## Quick facts



 **Company:** Amazon

 **Headquarters:** Seattle, Washington, United States

 **Industry:** Retail

 **Employees:** 1.6m

 **Product:** ADP Global Payroll

Learn more about Amazon at  
[amazon.com](https://amazon.com)



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Partnering with the market leader in payroll innovation has given us confidence. We've challenged ADP with some crazy, unprecedented things over the years, and ADP has delivered for us."

**Greg Harmer,**  
Global Head of Payroll, Amazon

## The challenges

Amazon needed a payroll system that could keep pace with its explosive growth. In recent times, employee growth has hit between 20-40 percent per year and shows no sign of slowing up. The pandemic took that expansion to new heights and has now led to the company having 1.6 million employees worldwide who need to be paid in a variety of time intervals: monthly, biweekly, and weekly.

In fact, the organisation's scale is what makes Amazon so unique and interesting, notes Greg. "We're the world's second-largest non-government employer, and at our scale, it's a technical challenge to ensure your technology can keep up with such rapid growth."

Not only is Amazon a large and complex business with a constantly evolving workforce, but it remains active in acquiring like-minded businesses. When the company acquired Souq.com in 2017, it suddenly needed to support employees at scale in countries where it had very little history — Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Integrating a new country quickly and effectively is always challenging for payroll, so the firm needed help to ensure it got each step right.

Amazon was looking for a long-term payroll partner who could provide not only industry-leading technology but a team of legislative experts to help the company comply with global compliance regulations and stringent security requirements on the ground.

## The solution

"We use Wisely® by ADP as the engine to pay those employees who sign up for our bespoke free, on-demand Anytime Pay payment app," said Harmer. "This ensures we can attract, engage and retain top talent through the convenience and flexibility of an employee-focused payment offering. Plus, it helps us reduce costs and ease administration."

The company also relies upon ADP Streamline Payroll, the single-solution, multi-country payroll platform. As an international provider, ADP's wealth of experience in multi-country payroll was invaluable in aiding Amazon to be a successful employer in the Middle East. Whether it's taxation rules, labour reporting, or region-specific benefits, "Having an in-country partner who can give you expertise and guidance as well as good technology, you can't put a price on that" notes Greg.

ADP has helped Amazon provide its employees with an intuitive user experience, greater pay flexibility, and — through Wisely — financial wellness tools. "ADP's new mobile and web-based user experience is excellent. It's user-friendly, simple and straightforward. The company truly understands our employees' needs, providing transparency and functionality to help our workforce focus on what's most important," said Greg.

## The results

"On short notice and with ADP's help, we moved half a million employees to weekly pay, the largest pay cycle acceleration in history. There was no room for error and no time to waste. All of this was done on ADP technology. The team at ADP had our back — and they nailed it," he added. "Despite the massive increase in scale, I was pleasantly surprised at how our payroll processing times have not changed at all, and if anything, have only gotten faster."

In today's fight for talent, payroll is a strategic business function for Amazon. Using ADP's technology enabled Amazon to remain highly competitive in retaining talent, where the frequency and ease of payment is a critical selling point. In the US specifically, ADP's Wisely solution holds real appeal for potential employees, where the ability to be paid instantly and in a convenient manner has transformed Amazon's offering.

Greg continues, "The nature of payroll is that there will be many things that you can't plan for. Great partners will obsess on delivering for your customers the same way we obsess over delivering for our customers. Great partners will help us save the day, which ADP did recently after an internal error was spotted on a weekend and ADP went above and beyond to remedy the situation within an hour."

One of the things Greg appreciates most is ADP's responsibility to protect the privacy of Amazon's employees. Maintaining compliance is central to everything Amazon does, as it understands how detrimental it would be if its payroll data got into the wrong hands. "ADP's global expertise and decades of experience mean we know our employee data is safe," said Greg.

For Greg, it has been a real team effort. "When we are selecting a partner in any country, above all else we are looking for a team that's capable, knowledgeable, responsive and great to work with. In my experience, a great team can make up for sub-standard tech, but not the other way round. Luckily with ADP you get both. The team at ADP are true experts in their field and always there to advise us and answer our questions. That, combined with ADP's robust and adaptable global technology portfolio means we can feel confident that our employees are taken care of," he added.



ADP's systems have been excellent at evolving with us. In 2020, when Amazon became a lifeline to so many during the pandemic, we expanded from 800,000 to 1.3 million employees in a matter of months. On top of the additional headcount, we also decided to convert our US hourly employees from being paid bi-weekly to weekly.

**Greg Harmer,**  
Global Head of Payroll, Amazon



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