



The Ability to Attract and Retain Top Talent Is Key for this Start-Up



TOP CHALLENGES:

- The manual immigration process was too slow and inefficient.
- There was little to no transparency into the process, due dates, and timelines for their immigration cases.
- Employees had an abundance of questions and always funneled them through HR, taking up a lot of their time playing the go-between.

ABOUT THE COMPANY:

Ascend is a big data analysis company that provides clients with an automated and easy-to-understand platform to help leverage big data and have a more data-driven company. Its goal is to help its clients bypass the roadblocks of gathering, understanding, and using data in everyday business decisions. Ascend's employees have built data systems at companies including Google, Twitter, Square, and LinkedIn. Part of the reason they can create such solutions is due to the caliber of talent that Ascend is able to attract and retain, no matter where a potential employee resides.

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THE SITUATION

Megan Stern, Officer Manager at Ascend, discusses how important finding the right talent is for her company and what role the immigration process has in attracting and keeping the highest caliber employees.

"Whenever I'm on the phone with candidates, I'd say 50% to 70% of them always ask either at the very beginning or at the tail end, 'I'm not sure if you sponsor Visas or not.' Then we tell them that we do and you can almost just hear it in their voice, this sigh of relief," Megan says. "A lot of people feel stuck in their current jobs and feel like they can't grow or move because of their visa situation. It's definitely given us a leg up from a recruiting standpoint."

Because Ascend looks to acquire the right-fit employees from around the globe, understanding and going through the immigration process is sometimes a part of hiring and onboarding. And similar to other companies, especially start-ups, the role of immigration specialist often is just one part of an HR or office manager's job, and it's a part that he or she may not know anything about.



GIVING TIME BACK TO HR

When Megan started out with Ascend, she wasn't originally focused on immigration—she was originally an office manager and then took on many of the human resources responsibilities.

"I guess immigration just sort of came up as we were interviewing candidates, and deciding what our internal policy was going to be, and how far were we willing to go to get the most qualified people here?" Megan adds, "We decided that we wanted to make sure that our employees were taken care of, and that immigration wasn't something that they would have to worry about."

But Ascend first thought that taking on the role of applying for and securing visas and Green Cards for employees meant either hiring an in-house immigration lawyer or working with a law firm.

"We were referred to a law firm in the city who helped us with our first few cases, mostly H-1Bs and H-1B extensions," Megan says. "I'd constantly have employees coming to me saying, 'What's going on with my case? What's the status? How much longer? What information do you need from me?' Everything was sort of a back and forth in email between one of their lawyers and our employees, and then myself and their lawyers."

Ascend is a company that helps their clients be more data driven and have better transparency and higher productivity, yet their immigration system with a traditional law firm, gave them no visibility into the process and no platform where they could see what is due when. Until they came to Envoy for help.

Not only does Ascend now have access to Envoy's online platform with timelines and due dates, but Envoy has helped Ascend make their immigration procedures easier and faster. "Without as many resources as a lot of the larger companies, Envoy allows us to handle more cases than I think the other law firm would have been able to," Megan says. "It's saved countless dollars in time."



GIVING PEACE OF MIND THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION

Ascend's goal of making sure employees are taken care of and worry-free about immigration issues is easier to achieve with Envoy's help.

"I think our employees have a lot more peace of mind about their case," Megan says. "They know that it's being taken care of, because they can see exactly where it is." Employees can have insight into their case with Envoy's online platform where they can see exactly where in the process their case is and where they can ask questions.

Furthermore, Ascend's employees can log in to Envoy's Communication Center and post questions directly to their attorney handling the case and receive an answer back in 24 hours or less. This allows HR to not always play the middle-man between the attorneys and the employees, while also giving them the right amount of oversight to view the questions being asked. "Just having direct access to the Communication Center helps them feel not so out of control of the outcome," Megan says. "It's very important to me to be able to have as many resources as possible to make sure that we're doing things well and we're doing them right."