

How Pikeville Medical Center reduced turnover by 2% with Simpplr



THE CHALLENGE

Early-tenure staff were leaving while four siloed platforms hindered leadership communication

THE SOLUTION

One intranet replaced the other tools and gave the team a platform for culture-building initiatives

THE RESULT

Employee morale and engagement improved, intranet adoption increased, and turnover dropped

2%

reduction in employee turnover, FY24–FY25

94%

of employees logged in to the Pulse in the past year

4 → 1

platforms consolidated into a single employee experience

Organization:

Pikeville Medical Center

Location:

Pikeville, Kentucky

Industry:

Healthcare

Employees:

3,500

Pikeville Medical Center (PMC) is a regional health system in Appalachian Kentucky, where workforce participation is low and holding on to good people has always required more than a competitive offer. When PMC replaced four disconnected tools with a single platform, it did more than simplify its technology. It gave the organization a reliable way to reach every employee and gave employees a reason to feel connected to the work.

By the close of FY2025, turnover had fallen 2%. Engagement scores had improved across trust, transparency, and organizational pride. And a grassroots video series had grown into a CEO-endorsed culture movement.

THE CHALLENGE

A retention challenge the region made harder

PMC's most vulnerable groups were entry-level frontline staff and early-tenure nurses. In Appalachian Kentucky, hourly wage competition resulted in frequent attrition. A dollar more per hour at a nearby retailer was enough to lure someone away.

Nurses in their first three years were most at risk. Replacing a single staff nurse costs hospitals an average of more than \$60,000. Travel staff, brought in to cover gaps, added to this cost and disrupted continuity of care.

PMC formed a retention committee, bringing together communications, clinical, and HR leadership. Beyond compensation, a sense of belonging and purpose was emerging as the harder gap to close, and they were working out how to address it.

Four tools, no home base

At the same time, PMC's internal communications infrastructure had fallen behind. Four separate platforms each served a different purpose with a different login:

- **Meta Workplace:** Not only had engagement declined but also Meta had announced it was shutting the product down.
- **Homegrown static intranet:** The Hub was mostly a column of text links, with no search logic and no self-service updates, so any change required routing requests to IT.
- **Achievers:** Their employee recognition platform had its own separate URL, creating fragmentation in engagement.
- **TeamPMC.org:** The standalone benefits site generated low traffic because employees had to remember where to navigate.

Staff didn't know which of the four to check for the most relevant and recent information. Leadership had messages it wanted to deliver — cultural, operational, organizational — but no reliable channel to carry them to the people who needed them most.

THE SOLUTION

A replacement that became something more

The trigger was practical: PMC needed to replace Workplace by Meta. But what they found in Simpplr was a platform that could replace all four platforms at once.

“Consolidation in this context is usually a good thing,” said Erich Blackburn, PMC’s chief legal officer. “You have the ability to give employees a one-stop shop instead of a disjointed combination of multiple places they have to go, and now we can do that.”

PMC branded their Simpplr intranet “The Pulse” and gave employees a stake in the launch. An internal contest produced both the name and the logo. Employees now had one app to download instead of six, with a name and look tied directly to PMC. Visual app tiles replaced the old hub’s wall of text links, making it possible to find critical tools — from payroll to the on-call physician directory — at a glance.



I have been an employee at PMC for 35 years. I have seen many communication tools implemented. I have never seen such a smooth implementation of a communication system. The Pulse has all the tools and apps at your fingertips, while providing meaningful information to help us all stay updated and on the same page.

Pam Vanhooze

VP, Risk Management and Special Projects,
Pikeville Medical Center

What consolidation meant for IT

For PMC's IT team, two time-consuming manual processes were eliminated immediately. Content updates on the old hub had required routing requests through a programmer. Now department administrators manage their own content. The employee directory, previously maintained by hand, runs off Active Directory integration with automatic updates.

Single sign-on (SSO) with Active Directory was a priority. It enabled secure access from outside the network, something the old hub couldn't provide without a VPN. Security review cleared via SOC 2 certification.

"It has saved a significant amount of time on our resources," said Tony Damron, CIO. "And that's really not what we should have them doing anyway. We need them keeping systems up and working, not going out and updating links and documents."

A channel for culture

With a single high-adoption platform in place, the retention committee's emerging ideas had somewhere to come to life. The committee had developed a messaging framework they wanted every employee to internalize: You are valued. Your voice matters. Management is here to help. What you do is important.

A video series called What's Your Why became the vehicle. Once a month, the internal comms team films two employees in their own department — a phone camera, clip-on microphones, and questions shared in advance. They deliberately pair a frontline staff member with a leader. People tell their stories about why they got into healthcare, what keeps them going on the hardest days, and what they're most passionate about. The final statement the employee makes is "My why is ____." Each video runs about two minutes and is published on the Pulse.

A tactic that became a cultural shift

Early in the year, PMC's CEO asked his senior leadership team to discover and articulate their own why. That conversation spread to department directors, who began asking their teams the same question. Nominations for the video series started coming from those conversations. Leaders recommended colleagues whose stories deserved to be heard, without being prompted by a communications team.



The video series becoming more organic, and that's a hallmark of staying power. If it's forced, it's not going to last. But when people are into it and it evolves that way, that's when you know you've found something that's going to last and actually be impactful.



Erich Blackburn

Chief Legal Officer and EVP,
Pikeville Medical Center

The Pulse also gave PMC's communications team targeting capabilities it hadn't had before. Relevant training notifications could go to the specific departments that needed them. Benefits content that had previously lived behind a separate URL was now surfaced where employees already were. Survey feedback that once trickled in through scattered tools now came back at volume and gave the retention committee actionable signals about what was stressing employees, what resources were missing, and what was making it hard to finish a shift.



When it really comes down to it, most people's why is the people. It's the people they work with. It's the patients. When you watch those videos, you can't help but think about what your own why is. And sometimes, when you're a little frustrated, it just grounds you and brings you back to earth.



Tony Damron
CIO, EVP,
Pikeville Medical Center

THE RESULT

Higher retention
and engagement

2%

reduction in employee turnover from the last quarter of FY24 to the last quarter of FY25

94%

of employees logged in to the Pulse during 2025; 88% in the last 30 days

26%

of employees were active contributors or participants in 2025

40%

mobile adoption over the past year, meaningful for a workforce with significant clinical and frontline staff

Survey response rates improved substantially compared to prior tools. And engagement scores improved across trust, transparency, and organizational pride in quarterly pulse surveys.

Streamlined
operations

- Four platforms — Workplace, the homegrown intranet, Achievers, and TeamPMC.org — consolidated into one
- IT freed from manual content update and directory maintenance tasks
- New employee onboarding simplified from six apps to one branded platform



The Pulse is a powerful catalyst. You can take all your content and get it out to your people quickly and efficiently but also strategically. You can push what you want to be top of mind out to your employees, as well as understand what is already top of mind so you can connect with them best and give them what they need to be successful.



Stacie Taylor

VP, Communications,
Pikeville Medical Center

About Pikeville Medical Center

Pikeville Medical Center is a 348-licensed-bed regional referral center and Kentucky's only level II trauma center. PMC offers over 400 services, including most major specialties and many subspecialties and features the region's most advanced medical technology. PMC employs over 3,700 people and has over 600 credentialed healthcare providers. For more information, visit www.pmcky.org.

About Simplr

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