



CASE STUDY

Helping Lyft Navigate Complexity and Change

With a small team and a broad footprint, the Lyft benefits team relies on Larkin for clarity, consistency, and real partnership in leave management.

When you're managing leave for a large, distributed workforce, it doesn't take much for complexity to pile up, especially if your HR team is small. For Danric Vargas, Senior Benefits Program Manager at Lyft, that complexity spans multiple states, Canada, and a high-volume tech environment.

“I manage all leaves globally, and our total benefits team is just three people,” he says. “I couldn't do what I do without Larkin.”

From day-to-day administration to strategic policy guidance, Larkin plays a central role in helping Lyft stay compliant, responsive, and operational, even during moments of major organizational change.

Policies Tailored To Lyft

At a fast-moving company like Lyft, employee programs rarely stay static. As business needs to evolve, and so do the policies that support them. Over the past few years, Lyft has undergone major shifts: organizational changes, evolving workforce expectations, and a growing need to put clearer structure around its generous leave offerings. That's where the real value of Larkin's adaptability shows up. “We've made multiple process and policy changes in the time I've been here,” says Danric.

One standout example was Lyft's unique leave ecosystem, which included sabbatical leave, (known as recharge leave at Lyft), pregnancy leave, medical leave, family care leave, and parental leave. Over time, it became clear that employees could combine types and be out for 30 weeks or more which Lyft learned “wasn't sustainable for the business. We needed a cap,” Danric explained. But the way our leave types are set up, that's not an out-of-the-box feature for any administrator.”

Larkin worked with Danric's team to build a custom framework—an 18-week cap across leave types within a rolling 12-month window. That meant re-configuring internal systems, coordinating with the leave administrators, updating employee-facing materials, and tracking cases manually when needed.



Lyft employees rank Larkin...



4.7_{/5}
on experience

“That's not something they had to do,” Danric says. “It's manual and messy. But they got it done, quickly, correctly and collaboratively.”

Even with that complexity, Danric describes the process as collaborative and fast. “We let Larkin know what our legal team wanted and then asked: What can we do? What would this look like? What would the process be? And provided the verbiage that the Lyft team would be putting on their benefit site. Larkin went ahead to set it up in their system, trained the leave administrators and were ready to go live with the change. It was all pretty quick.”

This type of ask wasn't a one-off. “We've done those kind of quick, customized policy changes multiple times,” he says. “I think we're the only client that does certain process or policy types with Larkin. I've asked our CSM: ‘wait is anyone doing this?’ She said ‘nope’. I'm like okay it's just us, but they always make it work.”

An Extension Of The Team—Not Just A Vendor

While Danric handles global strategy, the North American leave workload lands with Larkin. And that trust didn't come out of nowhere—it was built over time, with a consistent, highly responsive account team.

“The account team has been the constant,” he says. “Jessica, Gabe, Julie, Cal—when I need something, they're there— just awesome.”

That partnership isn't just about execution, it informs strategy. Larkin plays an advisory role, and helps Lyft during complex scenarios or moments of pressure.

“We can be quite demanding at times. Larkin has been very adaptive... getting utilization data, specialized report requests, benchmarking, context—all that good stuff. And they know our policies so well, that the insights they provide are actually useful, not generic.”

That data has been critical when Lyft's internal teams make assumptions that don't align with the bigger picture.

“You'll run into cases where management is saying, ‘Hey, their sabbatical leave is too long,’ or ‘People are leaving when they go on recharge leave,’ And we'll go to Larkin and ask ‘What's the data like?’. They've been able to show us ‘Nope, that's not the case.’ and guide us away from making some costly and reactive changes as a result.”

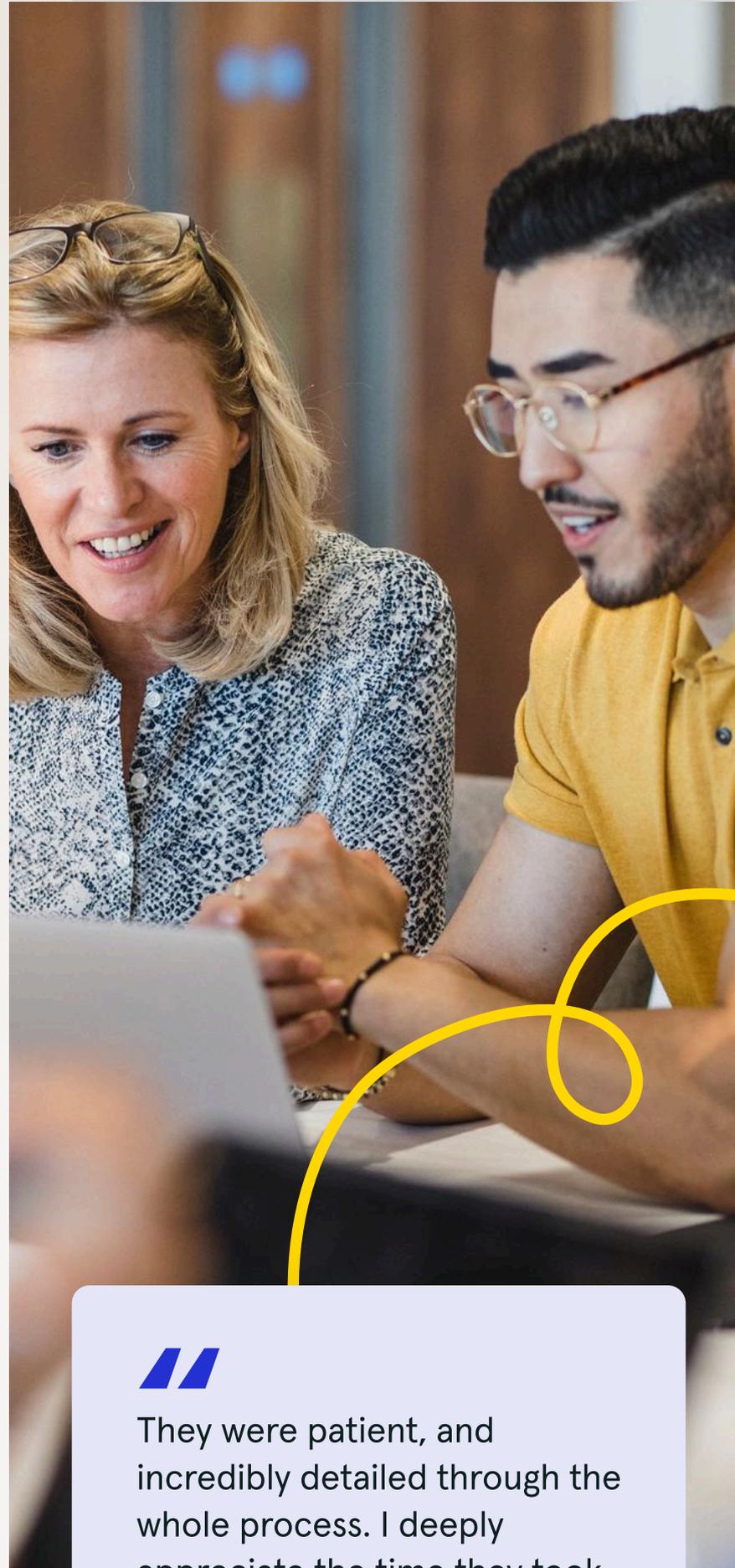
Doing More With Less, Thanks To Tech And People

As a tech company, Lyft's workforce expects a smooth, digital experience—and Larkin's evolving platform helps meet that bar.

“I think the move into investing in tech is definitely good for our population... going through their self-service platform, I was like, that's easy. That's what our population is going to want.” says Danric. “At the same time, leaves are tough. They're confusing. They can be emotional... if someone wants to talk to a real person, they can. That balance really matters.”

That human touch that Larkin provides, extends into some very specific, very human moments. Danric recalls a time a Larkin case manager tracked down a hospital to reach an employee they couldn't contact.

“They called around to multiple hospitals just to make sure we could move forward with the case. That's not in anyone's job description. But it's the kind of thing they do.”



They were patient, and incredibly detailed through the whole process. I deeply appreciate the time they took to explain every step clearly and to address all my questions with such care. It's rare to experience this level of dedication and professionalism, and it made navigating the process so much smoother.”

A Lyft employee on their experience with Larkin

Multistate And Canadian Compliance—Handled

With employees in states like California, New York, and Massachusetts—and a growing population in Canada—compliance at Lyft is never static.

“Massachusetts has this requirement where I have to go into their portal and confirm I know about a leave,” Danric says. “That’s one state. Multiply that across several states and provinces, and it gets complicated.”

Larkin’s role? Helping Lyft stay ahead. They flag policy updates through newsletters, webinars, a dedicated compliance center, and an Employer Portal where information is kept updated and available.

They also provide direct access to compliance experts, and coordinate with payroll and legal when state requirements shift.

“If I see something coming down the pipeline, I can ask the Larkin team, ‘What do we need to do to get set up here?’ And they’ll walk me through it.”

That level of guidance is what makes the partnership more than administrative. “They’re the experts. I lean on them for anything leave-state related.”

Voluntary Plans That Pay Off Big

Lyft’s California Voluntary Disability Insurance (VDI) plan is another area where Larkin adds ongoing value. While Danric didn’t manage the original setup, he’s now responsible for evaluating it year to year, and the numbers speak for themselves.

“Every year, Larkin shares an update comparing our plan to the state plan. We’ve saved money. We’ve built a surplus. And we’re able to offer better benefits. I tell people all the time—you don’t realize how good you have it until you’ve tried going through the state. We just pay you directly. It’s night and day.”

Scaling Benefits Without Scaling Headcount

For Danric, Larkin isn’t just a cost—it’s what allows his team to stay lean without sacrificing quality.

It’s not just about bandwidth. It’s about peace of mind. “If something goes wrong, it’s Larkin’s problem. And they own it. That’s worth a lot.”

When I’ve had to justify the investment, I point to the time savings. If we didn’t have Larkin, we’d need five internal people doing just leave. And even then, the compliance risk would be higher.”

Asked what he’d miss most if Larkin disappeared tomorrow, Danric doesn’t hesitate: “There’s the essentials, like the Workday integration, and of course the VDI plan. But really, it’s the account team. No question. If I had to do all this without them—especially the custom stuff we’ve built—it would be a huge step back.”

Danric sums it up simply: “I could not do what I do without them at all.”

