



Criterion



How Fagen Inc. Transformed Onboarding and More With Criterion HR



[Fagen Inc.](#) is a heavy-industrial contractor with deep roots in green energy. Since 1988, they've specialized in engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) **projects across the U.S.** They've built everything from ethanol and wind power plants to soy-crush and carbon-capture facilities.

Their workforce is just as dynamic as their project list. With 800 -900 employees (with continual growth as industry demands increase). Plus, their teams are always on the move. Some projects last just a few months; others can stretch for two years or more.

In 2020, Fagen Inc. hit a turning point. Field operations were running strong, but HR struggled to keep up. Paper files, outdated software, and a shifting workforce made it hard to stay organized — and even harder to [onboard new hires efficiently](#).

That all changed when Fagen went fully digital with Criterion's modern HR Platform. To learn how the update impacted their team, we spoke with three key leaders at the company:

- Human Resources Director **Chelsey Reed**
- Career Development Manager **Kathryn Travis**
- Job Site Office Manager and Recruiting Team Member **Jen Clements**



Criterion is really the home of all of our HR information."



Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.

Company

Fagen, Inc.

Location

Granite Falls, MN

Industry

Construction &
Engineering

Company Size

900

Products Used

HR, Talent
Engagement

Challenges

Before Criterion, Fagen Inc.'s HR team was juggling thousands of employee records in an outdated system. With more than 30,000 past and present employees on file (and hundreds of new hires each year) their HR was buried in paperwork and manual processes.

They stored all their employee files and documents in 75 four-drawer filing cabinets. Everything had to be entered by hand, and almost nothing was centralized. Searching for employee data meant digging through physical folders or clunky legacy software.

Recruiting and onboarding were inefficient. New hires filled out paperwork onsite, often spending the entire morning getting set up before reaching the job site. Managers spent hours chasing signatures and double-checking details — **just to get people clocked in by mid-afternoon**. With that pressure, many new employees rushed through or skipped benefits altogether.

Behind it all was a moving target: Fagen's workforce. With crews rotating from project to project, they had no efficient way to track position history, generate employee reports, or reassemble high-performing teams. Without a central system to see the big picture, career advancement and strategic workforce planning were nearly impossible.

Criterion transformed all of that with its modern HR platform.



[Our old system] was a dinosaur... you had to dig deep into every line item."

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.



The Solution

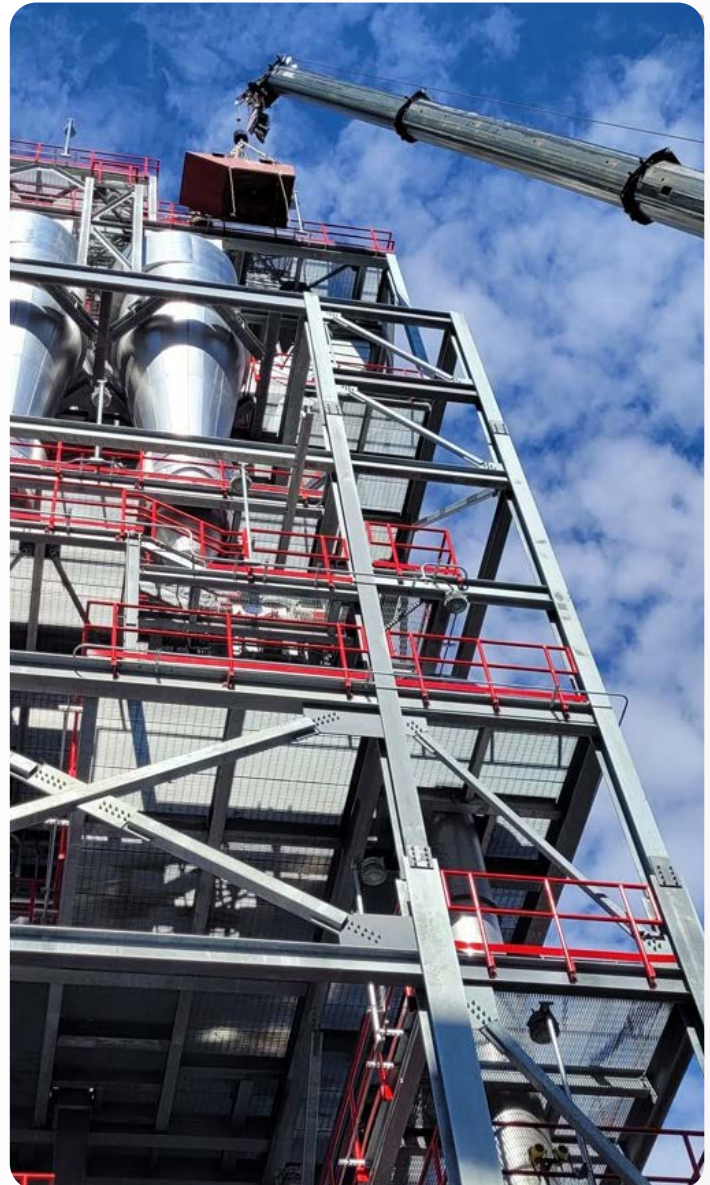
Fagen, Inc. has now been live with Criterion since Spring 2022, **successfully migrating over 34,000 employee records into the new system.**

Today, Fagen uses Criterion's HR Core and Talent Engagement modules to handle everything from employee records to recruiting. Payroll runs through ECMS, which connects easily with Criterion to process pay based on employee data.



**I don't have any complaints...
We had weekly meetings. It was
very scheduled, and I think that
very much kept us [on track] in
getting this implemented."**

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.



The biggest wins came from features that solved long-standing pain points:

Electronic Document Storage - Digitized more than three decades of employee records.

Position History & Custom Screens - Gave HR full visibility into each employee's journey.

Recruiting & Pre-boarding Workflow - Made it easy to send digital welcome packets and track form completion.

Integration with ECMS - Enabled seamless data flow for benefits deductions, wage rates, and more into payroll processing.



There was never any, 'Well, sorry but Criterion can't do that.' — That was never an issue."

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.

Looking ahead, Fagen plans to configure new functionality in Criterion to support their internal Career Advancement Program and to build stronger crews. Chelsey is confident Criterion can help make it happen.

Results

Since implementing Criterion, Fagen Inc. has completely transformed its HR processes

Thanks to the visibility, automation, and control built into Criterion's unified platform, Fagen has seen several positive results.

Hours saved during onboarding

Before Criterion, new hires spent the first half of their workday completing paperwork on-site. HR teams and job site managers had to monitor each step to make sure everything was done correctly before new hires could start work. Often, employees couldn't get to the field until 1:00 or 2:00 p.m.

Now, with Criterion's digital preboarding tools, paperwork is completed ahead of time. HR can review it in advance, and crews can get to work as early as 9:00 a.m.

Chelsey estimates this saves 2–3 hours per new employee. With hundreds of hires each year, that adds up to **thousands of hours saved** — for employees, HR, and job site managers alike.



**They're getting to work faster.
They're not sitting around doing
paperwork."**

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.





The electronic document storage is huge.”

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.

Organized, paperless HR

All 75 filing cabinets of Fagen's employee records have been converted into digital files. With Criterion, every document is securely stored and searchable from a single, centralized database. The HR team can now access any employee's records (past or present) in seconds. This makes compliance, audits, and daily operations faster and more efficient.

“The electronic document storage is huge.” – Chelsey Reed, Human Resources Director

With Criterion, Chelsey has an instant view of exactly what she needs for each employee. Her team can see:

- How much someone earned at a specific job site
- Whether they worked the night shift
- What position they held
- How long it took them to get promoted
- Much more

Full visibility across roles and projects

With Criterion's [position history](#) and custom dashboards, Fagen's HR team can now see exactly where an employee has worked and track their career progress over time. That insight helps them identify top performers, support career advancement, and even reassemble high-performing crews.

The visibility also supports smarter recruiting. Before assigning employees to new jobs, Chelsey and her team can look back at prior jobs to figure out who is best suited to work together.

Stronger recruiting and preboarding

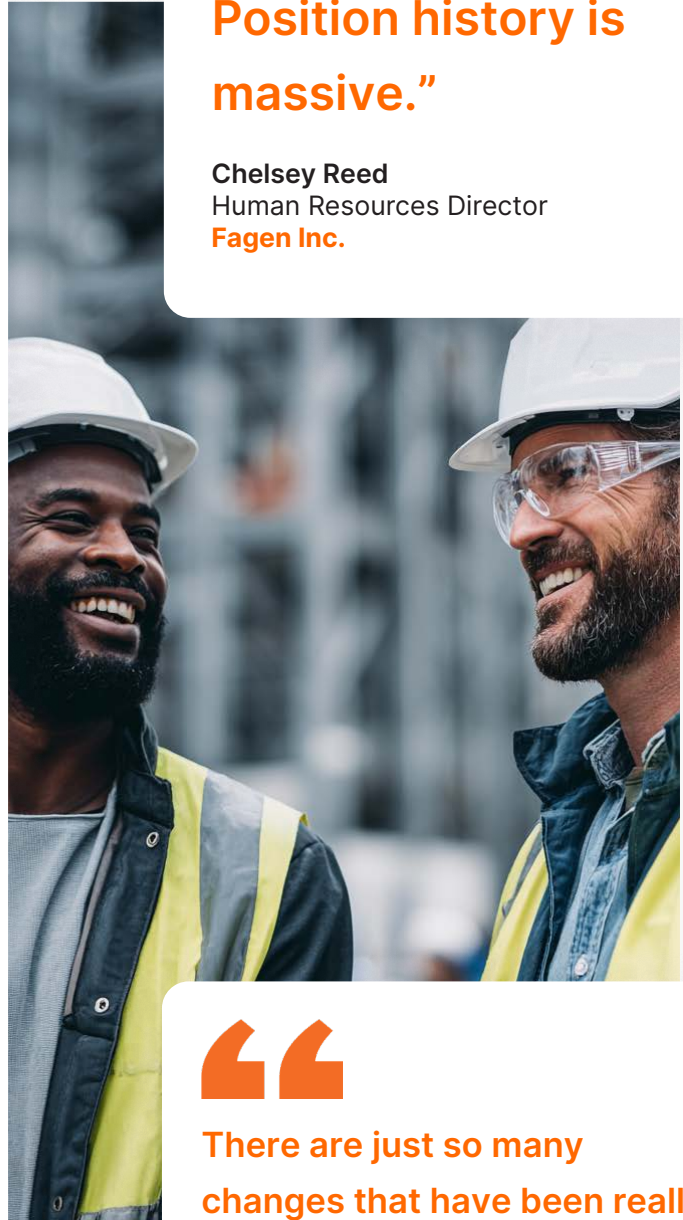
Fagen's recruiting was once managed in Excel, and [preboarding](#) meant manually sending out welcome packets (if at all). Now, the process is automated. The system now sends customized welcome emails, digital handbooks, and hire forms automatically. Notifications also let managers know when paperwork is complete, so there's no time wasted tracking it down.

Employees also have more time to review and select their benefits before they start. This reduces pressure and ensures Fagen's investment in employee compensation truly pays off.



Position history is massive."

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.



There are just so many changes that have been really positive for the recruiting side."

Kathryn Travis
Career Development Manager
Fagen Inc.

Easy integration with payroll and accounting

Criterion integrates seamlessly with ECMS, the platform Fagen uses for payroll and accounting. W4s, location, and wage data flow directly from Criterion into ECMS to produce dynamic paychecks automatically. If something changes, the HR team can adjust the rules themselves — **without submitting support tickets or waiting on IT.**



Everything transfers easily... the ability for [Criterion] to talk to another software so seamlessly is huge."

Chelsey Reed
Human Resources Director
Fagen Inc.



Built to scale

During implementation, Fagen's business structure changed dramatically. The company began managing three separate business entities with different ownership and EINs. Criterion now makes it easy to separate and report on each company's data while keeping everything accessible with single sign-on.

Whether it's generating separate 1095s or creating entity-specific reports, Criterion supports complex operations without the unnecessary admin.



**It just simplifies everything
so much.”**

Jen Clements
Job Site Office Manager and Recruiting
Team Member
Fagen Inc.

Discover a Smarter Way to Run Construction HR

Fagen has come a long way from spreadsheets and filing cabinets. Today, their HR team has the tools to keep up with the pace of the field — and the insight to plan for what's next.

If you're a construction or EPC firm juggling nationwide crews, ask yourself: **Are your people still buried in paperwork — or already on the job by 9:00 a.m.?**

Criterion helps you move faster, stay compliant, and build stronger teams from the ground up.

Book a demo to see how Criterion can transform your HR workflows.



When you can organize [the system] and pull reports and keep communication open and fluid with you and the candidate — I would definitely recommend it.”



Kathryn Travis
Career Development Manager
Fagen Inc.

BOOK A DEMO