

How the Right HR Software Can Help Achieve Strategic Organisational Success

...Hanover Housing discuss choosing the right HR software and how they implemented the Select HR self-service solution, achieving real benefits for their organisation

As delivered by Bobby Davis, Group People Director of Hanover Housing at the CIPD HR Software Show, London Olympia, June 2007

The Hanover Group is a not-for-profit organisation providing housing and related services. Hanover currently employs 1000 staff and manages over 18000 properties across the UK.

Bobby Davis joined Hanover in 2000 as Training Manager, which at the time was separate to the 'personnel' function. "In 2004 I became department head and we set about combating lack of integration and constant fire fighting. We started planning how to provide a function that added value to the business and one that the business actually wanted (rather than being perceived as the people who stuck a sticking plaster policy on anything that became an issue)", comments Bobby.

Bobby felt that strategic direction required a pro-active people function and in order to achieve this they had to move from a reactive approach to a pro-active one.

"We wanted to provide management information that helped run the business and give line managers information at their fingertips in order for them to manage their staff effectively. We also wanted to give staff the tools to be more self sufficient. In both instances the need to be able to find information for oneself is even more important when managing or being managed remotely".

Added to the fact that Hanover felt their progress was being hindered by their existing HR provider and that considerable financial savings could be made by bringing payroll in-house, they decided to commence a review. "If we were going to change we had to decide what we wanted the new system to do for us NOT just what it could do and concentrate on strategic priorities.

Selecting the right 'business partner'

Hanover began the project by visiting the HR Software Show to compile a 'long list' of

suppliers that they were interested in.

"I gained initial project sponsorship and buy in from my organisation and then set to work with my HR Systems Manager, Sarah Paget, to prioritise our requirements. We then moved on to select three suppliers to provide demonstrations based around practical scenarios".

"We tried to assess the suppliers against key concepts and our strategic goals rather than feature by feature. We wanted to reconsider our business processes from a strategic standpoint and were prepared to consider compromise".

Strategic Priorities

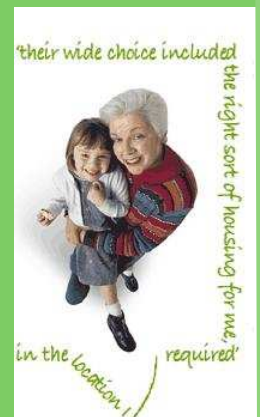
Hanover had a number of strategic priorities including a need for a 'post based' system, the capacity to bring payroll in-house, provide self-service and find a supplier that could work with them and encourage a business relationship. "I also wanted to have the capabilities to allow top level business information as well as much more detailed reports at a team level", comments Bobby.

Technical compatibility was also important and the team had to ensure that the chosen solution would be compatible with other Hanover key business systems. "Cost was of course also a consideration, interestingly the organisation has had a culture in the past of 'keeping things cheap' and I was concerned that they would just ..



"Hanover had a need for new forward thinking HRIS provider to support long term demands of HR and the business as whole", Bobby Davis, Group People Director, Hanover Housing Association

"I wanted to find a supplier who was going to be able to move with us, who wanted to engage fully with us and were willing to listen to our ideas as the customer"



decide that we should stay with our current provider since their upgrade would not cost anything. We therefore decided to ensure that we had strong proposals and were fully clear with our facts etc before we looked for sponsorship at the top team level".

"But one of our key criteria was 'knowing your supplier', ensuring that we really did have a mindset fit, and confirming that the system really did do what they said it did on the packet! Select HR were very open in letting us speak to other companies they were working with and we had access to the MD to talk vision and strategy with him".

"We needed a provider who understood people, the speed of legislative changes and had a system and infrastructure that was capable of keeping up with them. We had found them and were able to present a strong business case to the then top team for final sign off".

Implementing Select HR

"We created module teams for different parts of the system; recruitment, learning and development, ER, management information, payroll and set them actions to develop their areas of the system".

"Behind the scenes we had also been working with marketing to advertise the new self service area. We had already had some success with giving our Employee Assistance Programme its own Hanover identity so we decided to do the same here. So our Select HR Clearvision is actually known to our staff as 'Itzme'".

Clearvision a key to our Strategy

"Self Service was one of our key goals; we wanted to engage with our people and give

responsibility back to employees".

"We started the roll out by getting people to check their personal details, in one fell swoop we had rid ourselves of the annual nightmare of checking Next Of Kin etc and people had their first taste of looking after themselves again".

Next we added internal recruitment advertising. As a result we have increased the number of internal applications therefore increasing opportunities for internal promotion/development ..'growing our own', which heralds a much greater return on investment".

"Then we integrated a benefits platform to work alongside Select HR. Benefits information still sits in Select for P11D purposes but we have an additional interactive area for staff to look at total reward statements etc (what this says about Select is they know what they are good at but are also flexible enough to work with other providers to fully support their customers requirements)".

Benefits of Select HR at Hanover

"The system is an effective tool that we are using to support the service that we set out to deliver. This has enabled us to change from policy police to an advisory service". "This has been most supported by the system in the fact that the information we now have readily available helps us in our quest to be proactive rather than constantly reactive".

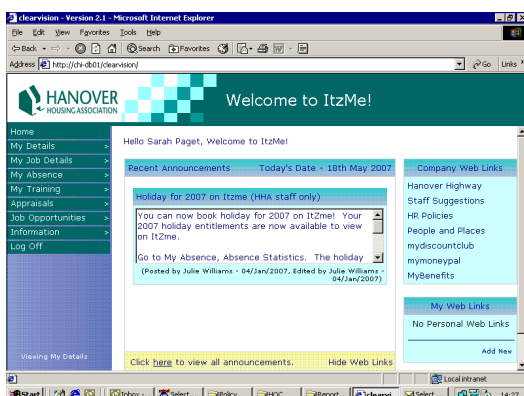
"As a result we can commit to continuous improvement as we find the 'air time'" to evaluate the processes we use on a frequent basis in conjunction with the business".



"Select Software understood our people, HR and legislation needs – and we wanted a provider who was developing their products as fast as we were having the ideas"

"Self-service is the ideal way of keeping everyone connected", Bruce Moore, Group Chief Executive, Hanover Housing.

"Now Departments can't wait to get online to make further use of Clearvision 'Itzme'".



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