

Simplify how you manage your global workforce

As an international organisation supporting customers worldwide, we know just how challenging managing human resources on a global scale can be. That's why we've put this guide together. It won't simplify HR for you overnight, but it will show you how you can work smarter, and achieve more for less.



Introduction

Managing business globally is no longer restricted to just the largest corporations. Today, even the smallest companies can – and increasingly are – operating on an international basis.

This shift has led to huge challenges – and opportunities – for HR professionals. HR has had to develop new strategies for managing the complexities of an international and more connected workforce. And, often they have had to do this against the backdrop of a rapidly changing environment.

This is a significant challenge, especially for smaller companies. Without the luxury of the extra resources available to larger companies with overseas operations, how can HR professionals in mid-sized and growing companies deliver what the business needs?

Technological advances provide the answer. The latest generation software can help organisations manage their people effectively, move to more collaborative ways of working and achieve the best possible performance.

Backed by the right technologies, a global HR function can make an enormous contribution to the success of an international business.



How you win from a global HR system



1. It frees HR up to spend time on the right things

The day-to-day HR-related processes and information can take up an inordinate amount of time. HR managers waste precious hours answering basic questions, filling in redundant forms, coordinating and accepting employee holiday monitoring sickness absences, making sure performance reviews get completed and acted upon... and much more.

With HR software, not only can employees help themselves to the information they need, but tedious and time-consuming processes can be automated too. For example, holiday requests are automatically sent to an employee's managers for approval; performance reviews routed through a customized cycle and reminders sent so that key dates - like the renewal of a mandatory training certificate - aren't overlooked.

That means that HR can be released of much of the transactional activity it has traditionally dealt with, and be freed to focus on the capability and business development roles that add value to the business.

2. It improves productivity for everyone

The admin problems are multiplied when you're dealing with people who you rarely see in person and who may be operating in different time zones and across a variety of flexible working arrangements. It's hardly surprising that we are seeing the rise of what Deloitte calls the 'overwhelmed employee' - managers who are so overloaded with information and bogged down with admin that they struggle to get the real work done.

Company-wide HR solutions provide an easy way out of the admin fog that descends on so many. They take the struggle out of bringing together and making sense of HR-related data by providing graphical dashboards that enable managers to see at a glance the information that's relevant to them: whether that's who is off that day, absence and performance trends or skills and qualifications in their team so they can make sure they are properly resourced.

Alerts and notifications automatically route tasks to the right people at the right time, ensuring that key activities aren't overlooked; and easy-to-use employee self-service means that employees can help themselves to the information they need, check how much paid time off they have and log sickness absence and more online - or on their mobile devices.

"More highly automated processes put the business processes closer to the users, increasing the effectiveness of the organisation"

- Jeitosa Group International

3. It fosters a shared view

“66% of emails are opened on a smartphone or tablet”

-Movable Ink

An HR system gives the organisation the ability to extract and interpret data about everything from absences to performance reviews across the whole business in a simple, consistent way. This not only gives the board the real-time information it needs to make critical decisions, but also gives managers access to the operational details they need to manage their teams.

Having your HR system accessible via mobile app makes this even easier. With people now looking at their phones 150 times a day and reading 66% of their emails on smartphones and tablets, employees want to be able to access everyday tasks while they're on the go.

4. It helps organisations effectively manage talent



As the world's economies emerge from recession, talent is once again in high demand. Organisations are facing critical skills shortages and are battling to hold onto their best people. HR software can do quite a bit to help companies get a clear picture of the skills they have available across their global operations so they can tap into talent where ever it is in the organisation.

They can also significantly raise both the profile and practice of performance management. Automated systems can be scheduled to “nudge” managers, for example, when appraisals are due and make all the necessary forms available online. This helps to ensure the important conversations take place on a regular basis, so that managers are clear about the aspirations of their top talent and employees with high-potential can see that the business is serious about investing in their future development.

5. It helps managers get the best out of millennials

“By 2025, 75% of the global workforce will be from the Generation Y

- Deloitte

Millennials are projected to make up 75 percent of the global workforce by 2025 – but research has shown that the Gen Y employees entering the workforce now expect to change jobs frequently, are hungry for rapid progression and demand regular recognition of their achievements.

One of the key characteristics of this generation is also that they are digital natives. They have grown up in a connected, wired world and expect to find the same when they enter the workforce. They are surprised when they come into organisations and find that basic information about them or their colleagues is hard to access and manual processes are still alive and well, particularly in many core areas of HR.

Companies are increasingly recognizing that if they want to get the best out of millennial employees they need to meet them on their virtual turf. They are using HR software solutions not just to automate key processes, but to enable Gen Y employees to ask questions, showcase their achievements, take advantage of just-in-time learning and connect with people across the business in a way that feels natural to them.

6. It improves collaboration



One of the key impacts of globalisation has been a rise in collaborative working. Forward-thinking organisations have realized that in a fast-moving, competitive environment, they need to encourage input and ideas from people across the business and to exploit the full range of skills and talents they have in house. As a result, we are seeing a move towards more fluid teams, brought together for specific projects and then disbanded when their work is done.

There has also been a rise in remote teams who are conducting their business via virtual meetings. LBS professor Lynda Gratton describes how she is working with organisations to create ‘jams’ – online events which help companies “tap into the collective wisdom of their crowds and encourage conversations between employees in different locations.”

The latest HR technology can support these emerging ways of working. Some come with integral social portals, for example, which allow employees to collaborate on projects, access key documents easily and find quick answers to important questions.

7. It helps to build engagement

“60% of Cezanne’s customers are using the system in more than two countries”

Making people feel part of the same corporate ‘family’ can be difficult in a growing, global business. It’s easy for people working in smaller remote locations to feel divorced from what’s happening at the centre and distant from overall business objectives.

Once again, social portals have a key role to play. They allow the business to share goals for future direction, reinforce key messages about priorities and get input from employees. They spell the end of the static annual employee survey and pave the way for a more vibrant community of employees who can give feedback on a continuous basis, allowing the business to get regular insight into how people are thinking and feeling.

If employees feel they have a voice they are much more likely to feel engaged with their role and their employer and will ultimately be more loyal, productive and effective.

8. It reduces costs



Managing a global workforce using contrasting and disconnected systems takes time and costs money. HR software “in the Cloud” (or Software as a Service) vendors like Cezanne are able to offer sophisticated international HR solutions that are quick to deploy and much more affordable than older-style – or even some of the more modern – enterprise HR applications.

What to look for in global HR software?

Is your data safe?

Managing HR data in a reputable HR system is likely to be considerably more secure than using spreadsheets. However, data protection legislation means that you do need to consider where your data is hosted, and how secure it is. Look for a vendor that's using one of the leading hosting providers. They'll have had their systems checked and double-checked to be sure they're providing you with the best possible security.

Does it make the right information available to the right people?

Make sure your system lets people in different locations see the screens that are appropriate to their own situation. You don't want employees in Sweden, for example, getting confused by the maternity leave in the UK. Equally, you want to make sure that people see locally adapted versions of key documents - like your disciplinary process or performance review guidelines. The latest generation of solutions have integral HR portals where you can house these important documents, but you need a system with rich functionality, which will allow you to present the right information to the right people at the right time.

Can it cope with complexity?

One of the big advantages of today's HR systems is that they take the grunt work out of routine tasks, like time-off requests and sick days, by getting information to the right people. But approval processes and authorization hierarchies can differ based on country- one region might delegate this task to someone in human resources, while elsewhere a manager might look after that task.

Will it do the calculations for you?

For many companies with international operations, staying on top of holiday entitlements is a significant challenge. Entitlements and the way they are accrued, carried over or calculated may vary from country to country. Public holidays are different too, even within countries, so make sure the system you choose allows you to set up calendars that reflect public holidays in each of the countries and regions that you cover. It's also important that the system recognizes the time-zones that employees are in, so that partial days off are calculated the right way. Even simple things, like being able to report on salaries using a base currency so you can do comparisons, can make a huge difference to how effective your reporting is. The last thing you want to do is have to make manual adjustments - a good system will do the hard work for you.

Does it speak your language?

Make sure it feels natural. There is nothing more confusing for an employee than having to cope with terminology that feels alien. Even within the English language, HR lingo differs completely. As Oscar Wilde said, "we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, or course, the language." Slight changes in vocabulary to words like holiday (vacation) and appraisal (review) can be helpful when integrating yourself into an HR system. And the way dates are written in the US (month/day/year) can often be easily confused with the way Europe and others write them (day/month/year). So, it's important to be sure that the solution you choose can be viewed in the right terminology and format for each country it is being used for.

Is it easy to use?

Of course any global e-HR system will only be as good as the information the organisation puts into it – and how useful it is to everyone in the business. That’s why it’s important to be clear from the start about what you want the system to achieve – and how easy it is to use.

If it’s not intuitive, you’ll see resistance from both employees and managers. In an ideal world, employees and managers should want to make sure the system is as up to date as possible.

A global HR system that brings everything together and provides people information in real-time can have a real impact on the bottom line.

“A lot of good HR practice comes out of having accurate information,” says Paul Turner, Professor of Management at Ashcroft International Business School. “Technology is the bedrock on which a global HR program can work or flounder – and you need to get as many processes enabled as possible so there is less to do in the center.”

About Cezanne HR

We've built something special at Cezanne HR; a powerful configurable HR software solution that is simple to deploy, easy to manage and remarkably cost-effective- whatever the size of your business.

Our focus is to provide online HR software that helps our customers lower costs, raise productivity and better manage people.

We do that by offering fast-to-implement, easy-to-manage and cost-effective HR solutions that go beyond simple HR databases; providing our customer with all the features needed to manage people smarter, faster and more effectively.

We're a team led by HR industry experts with many years of experience. We have a long track record of delivering successful HR solutions to businesses worldwide- with companies of every size, and in every business sector. That's why we have been dedicated from the very start to build an exceptionally robust and scalable SaaS platform for human resources management which, like our customer community, is growing all the time.

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