



Payroll for champions at Decathlon.



Client journey



Background

Decathlon is a French sports chain, created in 1976 near Lille and part of Oxylane, a network of companies dedicated to people who love sport. The brand now has nine UK stores in Belfast, Giltbrook, Glasgow, Lakeside, Reading, Sheffield, Stockport, Wednesbury and Surrey Quays, with 650 employees across the UK business.

At the beginning of 2010, Decathlon decided to upgrade its payroll and time and labour management systems with the aim of improving payroll efficiency and accuracy while supporting expansion plans, which involved a new Decathlon store in Belfast and smaller-store format, Koodza.

Lisa Dunstan, Payroll Manager, Decathlon UK, explains the need for change: “Our manual process for collating staff pay data was cumbersome and prone to errors. With

expansion planned in the UK, we needed a system that was more efficient, secure and that would give us access to payroll and HR data at short notice.”



Choosing a supplier

The company considered a number of suppliers but chose ADP because it was the only one able to supply a combined payroll and time and labour management solution, through its ADP freedom and ezLaborManager services. This would remove any need to transfer time and attendance data from one system to another. The company also had a successful existing relationship with ADP through Decathlon Brazil and its operations in the Netherlands and Belgium.

An added attraction was the Manager Self Service functionality, which enables department managers within stores to input their own payroll information, with HR and senior staff able to check and approve data at any time through automation of tasks, email alerts and validation reports. With the workload spread across the company in this way, Decathlon chose to

opt for a payroll processing service, whereas previously it relied on a managed service, and in doing so it was hoped that this would significantly increase efficiency and help cut costs too.

Decathlon was also impressed with ADP freedom’s reporting capability, which would enable it to access pay and HR information instantly and at any time during the pay cycle.

“We approached a number of suppliers but ADP was the only one to offer time and labour management and payroll as a combined solution,” said Lisa. “Plus the self service and reporting give us added value, ensuring everything is as streamlined as possible.”

Implementation

Before getting started, ADP's implementation team held a handover meeting with the original sales team to run through what had been agreed and required timescales. Following this, ADP held a kick off meeting with Decathlon in January to discuss the project plan and agree the responsibilities of each party. While the kick off meeting would usually happen 16 weeks before the go live date, which was planned for July, in this case Lisa and her team wanted extra time for the first phase of implementation.

With the project plan agreed, Decathlon set about deciding how it wanted the system to be set up and providing ADP with details such as earnings and deductions, pension schemes and bank accounts. ADP then spent the next two to three weeks building these requirements into the system and testing the configuration.

The data migration phase took place at the end of May, with the payroll data being transferred from the old system into ADP freedom and ezLaborManager. To make this happen, Decathlon populated Excel workbooks with all the necessary information and provided this to ADP to enter into the new system. This needed to happen within quite a tight timescale, both after the May pay run but also in time for the parallel run to take place in June.

Once the new system was populated, the parallel run was ready to take place, allowing a comparison of the results and payslips from the old and new systems. Once complete, the teams reconciled the data to make sure all the details matched, investigating any inconsistencies and rectifying the data or system configuration where necessary.

The parallel run went without a hitch and the system was then ready to go live across Decathlon's nine UK stores in July. Lisa Dunstan explains how she and the ADP team kept the project on track:

"The implementation process was project managed extremely efficiently and

everything was kept on course with weekly telephone meetings. The ADP Project Manager was particularly helpful and the transfer to the new system was smooth and hassle free."

The implementation of ezLaborManager was slightly more complicated, particularly at the Glasgow and Belfast stores, due to the internal systems and operating structure that was already in place. As a result, a phased approach has been taken, with the Stockport, Giltbrook and Lakeside stores already live. Hand punch units are installed at the Wednesbury, and Reading stores, and Sheffield and Surrey Quays stores are planned to have hand punch units installed in April.



Benefits

With ADP freedom up and running, Decathlon has been impressed with the solutions and is already seeing significant business improvements:

“ADP freedom is really easy to use and our payroll is now far more efficient,” says Lisa Dunstan. “With our previous supplier any mistakes would be hidden within the system but now we can run reports quickly and easily giving us greater visibility of what is going on. I feel that I have a lot more control over the data, which means fewer errors plus we can analyse and interrogate the data in a lot more detail.”

Lisa has been particularly impressed with the Payroll Journal output from ADP freedom, which she can produce and have ready within an hour, following a few minor tweaks. The Journal previously took a day to create so the new system has freed up a great deal of her time.

Another benefit of the system is that the payroll is now committed five days before pay day, giving Lisa and her team time to collate all employee information and costs, as well as send information out to the stores before employees are paid. The Regional Managers are then armed with all the information they need for the coming month.

The team has also found ADP freedom useful for forecasting costs and hours worked on a monthly basis. With a pay period that runs from the 21st to the 20th of the month, Decathlon requires a forecast report from the 21st to the end of the month. While previously these figures were estimated, they can now be based on actual data provided by the new system. Lisa explains why this is important:

“At Decathlon, we have very high standards and all figures are checked with a fine tooth comb. Having the ability to base our forecasts on actual figures rather than what is effectively guesswork is invaluable.”

At Giltbrook, Lakeside and Stockport where ezLaborManager has gone live, Decathlon has seen huge process improvements, particularly for the store Customer Service Managers.

“Each Customer Service Manager used to spend at least a week every month collecting and collating hours worked and this took them away from their core role working with staff and customers,” explains Lisa. “Now store managers can input the data into ezLaborManager as the month progresses, saving a huge amount of time and allowing Customer Service Managers to focus on their commercial duties. This was one of the big drivers for getting the system and we’re glad to see it come to fruition.”



Meeting objectives

Despite only being six months into the roll out of ADP freedom and ezLaborManager, Lisa believes the system has met all their expectations:

“We wanted a system that would support Decathlon in its expansion and it has definitely done this through improving efficiency, giving staff the time to focus on adding value to the business and reducing unnecessary administration. There is now hardly any manual input or transfer of hours from spreadsheets, plus data from all over the country is now all in one place. This gives us the ability to interrogate it far more effectively so we know where each store is at any one time. This is crucial for a growing business.”

The team has also been impressed with the customer service provided by ADP:

“The implementation consultants were top notch and I feel confident that there will be somebody at the end of the phone if ever I need to discuss anything. They are also very accommodating if we need to change anything, which is a huge help when working with so many different stores and stakeholders across the company.”

Long term goals

While Decathlon has seen some fantastic short term benefits after working with ADP for only six months, Lisa and her team have some more long term targets which they are confident of hitting:

The aim is to see 2.5% cost savings through accuracy and efficiency in three and a half years,” she says. “This would amount to a total saving of £250,000 and a huge return on investment. Our dream target is to save 5% in three and a half years, amounting to a £500,000 saving. Unsurprisingly this is one of the big selling tools for the stores.”

