



ING realise enormous benefits using....

Octopus

Case Study

Objective

To introduce an HR solution that provides a databank of accurate, high quality people-based information to support the company in managing its people effectively. In contrast to the HR record keeping system already in place which was both difficult and under-used, it must be easy to use and to retrieve information from, both on screen and in reports.

Throughout the ING group there were plans to implement a large scale, high cost HR software application. The cost and timescales involved seemed out of proportion to the requirements of ING Leasing and they looked for a more affordable solution where the benefits could be realised in a much shorter timescale.

Having experienced the considerable benefits of a self-service HR software solution in her previous role with a large company, Jeanne had assumed that self-service was only available on a big company budget. She was surprised to find that self-service was available in the affordable solution from Octopus and welcomed the opportunity to add the benefits of self-service to the list of objectives she expected the new solution to achieve.

Results

ING now has a centralised HR information bank that is easy to use, accessible by Jeanne in HR and managers and employees across the business, and that allows them to easily view and report on HR information.

The leadership team can see reports on key issues such as cost of absence; managers and employees can directly view information about themselves and people they manage, and the HR Manager's time that was previously spent on answering routine queries is freed up for more proactive HR tasks such as improving processes and working towards more efficient and cost saving people management.





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Key business benefits achieved are:

- enabling managers throughout the business to take responsibility for HR management and individuals to take responsibility for their own information
- providing leadership, HR and managers with actionable information about their people to support people and business management
- helping everyone to follow sound HR management processes
- improved attendance management, with related cost savings
- efficiency improvements, for HR, managers and employees
- well managed disciplinary processes supported by all relevant information and documentation
- informative reports and analyses including statistical information, absence cost and trend analyses, and people based information for tenders for new business

Work is now underway on adding employee benefits information into Octopus, to enable individuals to see a clear view of the total value of their rewards.

Story

When Jeanne Brown joined ING leasing as HR Manager in November 2004 the traditional on premise HR record keeping solution that was in place had not been kept up-to-date and was neither easy to use nor robust. Rather than update the information stored in an inadequate system, she decided to start with a new solution that would better meet their needs.

“People did not regularly update the system because it was not easy to use and even when information was entered it was hard to retrieve it in any useful format. Also it could only be updated by HR, not by individuals and managers themselves, so there was no general ownership”.

A replacement was needed that would justify the investment made by being widely used and providing relevant information to the business. Jeanne led the instigation of alternative solutions, supported by the IT Manager.





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Company-wide management of HR

ING Leasing's MD was keen to ensure that HR was not seen as solely the responsibility of an HR Manager or team, but that responsibility for the effective management of people was owned by everyone in the business.

Having access to relevant up-to-date information about people, including their attendance records, appraisals, training and contracts was a key element to achieving this vision of company-wide HR.

"We set out to look for an easier to use solution that provided information about all aspects of HR for the people in our business. We soon decided that the large scale group-wide HR software application being implemented in other areas of the group business was too big and expensive for the 90 employee leasing division and we needed to gain benefits quickly, much earlier than that solution would deliver."

When Octopus was demonstrated to them, it was clear that it could provide all the record keeping functionality they were looking for, but also offered additional benefits beyond their initial objectives.

"Octopus has a self service capability that allowed everyone in the business, managers and employees to have access to information that is relevant to them. Their own details, or those of people they manage, can be seen on screen or reported on. I knew of the advantages of HR self-service having used a much more expensive solution in my previous larger organisation. I was amazed to find I could achieve these benefits from such an affordable application."

Individuals update their own information on Octopus, such as address changes and bank details, and they appreciate the time it saves them by allowing them to provide the information just once, rather than to several different areas of the business as they did before. They can check their holidays booked and managers can look up details of the people they manage quickly and easily, without waiting for HR to respond to their enquiries.

"We wanted to give managers the tools to manage with, and the base information to allow them to manage their people. We achieved this by giving them access to Octopus and it does help them manage their people better."

Case Study





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Attendance Management and Cost Control

In any organisation there is a significant cost associated with sickness absence, including the cost of temporary personnel to cover the work of absent employees. With the old system it was difficult to check whether our absence track record was good or bad, as the information was not kept up to date and managers did not always report incidents of absence to HR.

“Management of absence is a significant benefit of using Octopus. As it’s easier to use and accessible to the managers, it’s much more likely that the information will be collected. Through reports on absence and calendar views, it’s much easier to spot trends and issues. The export facility allows me to move absence information into Excel for further manipulation. As we have built up the data over the last year, we are developing a useable knowledge bank that enables us to take the right action on attendance.”

At the touch of a button Jeanne can provide information to the leadership team to enable them to make business management decisions, or indeed business leaders can directly access the relevant automatic reports. Attendance information can also easily be communicated to payroll.

In the related issue of holidays, individuals can book leave automatically through the system, ensuring approvals are gained and recorded and there is a clear record of time taken and allocation remaining. Managers can use a calendar view of their whole team to check holidays booked by the rest of the team, in order to ensure they maintain adequate cover to keep their service levels on target.

Best practice HR processes

ING had HR processes in place, including procedures for probations, appraisals, inductions and disciplinaries. Over time Jeanne has been reviewing and updating the processes.

“The company handbook facility within Octopus provides the ideal repository for this company wide information, making the latest version of the company handbook available to everyone. It all helps create this centralised resource where anything related to HR can easily be found.”

Case Study





“We wanted to give managers the tools to manage with....”

As each process is reviewed and updated, the documents are stored on Octopus and relevant forms such as blank appraisals can also be downloaded and printed by anyone, making the process visible and giving everyone direct access to the information they need.

The date reminders are another very useful feature that helps HR processes run effectively.

“The Activity Reminder feature is enormously valuable in ensuring HR processes are followed and key events happen on time. I can make managers and employees aware of important dates, such as the end of probation period and provide myself with an automated reminder of key events due, to ensure the processes are followed.”

Reports and Analyses

Octopus has a range of reports and analyses available automatically. This achieves one of the main objectives of implementing a new HR solution in improving the quality of people based information available to HR and business managers.

Attendance reports and listings of employees by various criteria are used regularly. The Octopus system also provides a return on investment in other business management areas:

“Octopus also helps us with tenders for new business. We often need to include in responses to tenders breakdowns of employee numbers for instance by job function, or proportions of full or part time employees. We can easily pull off these statistics from Octopus.”

Jeanne regularly exports information to Microsoft Excel to provide additional analyses and breakdowns, such as cost of absence by job types or departments. An easy to use export creator allows her to compose the export by clicking on checkboxes and drop down menus. In addition to spreadsheets the information can be exported to other reporting tools or transferred to other applications such as payroll.

Case Study





“People did not update the old system as it was not easy to use.”

Additional Benefits

After using Octopus for more than a year and achieving benefits from an early stage, ING continue to develop their use of Octopus in new areas.

Currently they are adding information on the employee benefits provided to each individual, collating the information in conjunction with their Financial Services provider.

“We are looking forward to being able to give each individual direct access to information about the benefits they are entitled to. It will help them see the value of what we provide beyond the salary.”

ING have also reaped the financial benefits of using the system to log equipment allocated to each individual which helps ensure it is tracked and returned when people leave. Updates to the functionality of Octopus are available at no extra cost, and a recent release extending company car information will be used to help compile P11Ds.

The two people responsible for Health and Safety recording have access to the Accident register for all employees in the business. The security set up allows them to look at just this one screen for each employee, without having access to other areas. “Octopus is very flexible in ensuring people see all the information relevant to them, and only the information relevant to them”.

Technical Support

ING have a small internal IT function which already has a number of systems to support. Octopus was a good choice for them too.

“Our technical people are very happy with the decision to use Octopus for HR. They do not need to provide any support for Octopus or even have it installed on their servers, which provides another element of cost saving.”

The IT Manager played a part in selecting Octopus including looking at other available HR software solutions. “In IT they were very satisfied with the physical security of Octopus and the in built security features that limit access to relevant areas”. Octopus’s rigid security controls ensure people have access only to information that is appropriate for them.

Case Study





“Octopus is very flexible....”

When it comes to having queries answered or getting help with using new areas, the support team at Octopus have been invaluable.

“Octopus support is fantastic. Their people are very knowledgeable and always provide a fast response to any queries. The service all the way through from implementation has been excellent.”

Efficiency

Highlighting the benefits of Octopus to the ING Leasing business, Jeanne quotes efficiency as an essential element across the board.

Centralising all HR information on the solution means Octopus is the first point of reference for anyone across the business for any HR information, whether company-wide or employee specific.

“My time is used more efficiently because I don’t lose hours out of each day in answering routine queries. People can generally find the answers themselves and only refer to me occasionally when they need more help. I can use my time more productively on a range of tasks from improving processes to analysing information that helps manage the business effectively.”

Managers also work more efficiently in managing their teams.

“With all the information to hand about the people they manage, they can be more efficient managers, which benefits them and the business as a whole.”

Employees appreciate the availability of information about themselves and about the company in general. New starters get up and running quickly as a result of Octopus too.

Case Study





“Octopus support has been fantastic.”

Case Study

“They can get information that they need to understand the business and contact people. It makes for an easier and more efficient start when they can look at the organisation chart within Octopus to figure out who people are and where they fit in, and use the directory to find contact details for people they need to speak to and even see the photo of someone they need to make contact with”.

Jeanne has the final word with her feedback on Octopus:

“Octopus is the most user friendly system I have used and benefits our business enormously. I have nothing but praise for Octopus. From our experience at ING I can whole-heartedly recommend it”.

