Cloud B2B solutions

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Low cost, customised, UK cloud based business software solutions

The Issues

Having been, for so long, the poor relations when it comes to departmental spend, the current pandemic, ethnic and diversity issues, have placed the HR function at the heart of all management decisions, resulting in a more sympathetic 'ear' to HR departmental needs.

Whether it's addressing wellbeing issues for staff working from home, handling furlough and even redundancy, the HR team has probably never been so busy. And the issues related to the 'new' way of working for staff will also likely increase that load.

A survey in the USA of some 3k employees found that 60% were working longer hours in a home environment and 49% said that their management did not understand the ongoing mental health needs, leading to increasing levels of employee 'burn out' of up to 90%*

And handling office or branch closures, resulting in having to make staff redundant, adds strain to everyone involved. Announcing such key information in multi- user Zoom sessions is certainly **not** the way to handle people on a personal level, adversely affecting those leaving as well as the morale of those remaining.

Communication and trust are the key elements, handled on as personal a level as possible, and not just one way. Staff need to feel that they are involved in decisions that affect them, with the ability to comment / react as part of a process, as well as getting practical help with the range of issues that can result, from financial advice to finding new employment. They may also provide their own ideas to help develop overall strategies.

Whilst remote or home working has become the 'norm' for employees in many organisations, we are still at an evolvement stage in terms of what effects this revised way of working will have on the way the business is run, and on the employees. Some will find that centralised offices where large volumes of people work, are no longer viable and a more flexible approach to working has to be adopted, which may also have an effect on the way staff are paid and rewarded. This may well encompass a mixture of mostly home working with visits to the office on a rotational basis with other staff, to retain a sense of camaraderie and a change from working 'alone'.

And HR will also be a focus in relation to the communication of any new 'culture' that evolves from a new strategy for working for the organisation, as well as ensuring all 'workspaces' account for individual and group abilities, social skills, personalities, and safety. A quote from Maya Angelou "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" is particularly relevant in today's changing world, and the need to nurture inclusion.

Managing the transition

With increased strain on HR staff, the time is right to put in place such systems and controls that meet the evolving demands of new working environment and to make HR as effective as possible in terms of communication and inclusion.

Not being in the office makes this trickier, but a [self-service HR platform](#) will be a key element in supporting both the HR function and staff in this way.

Such systems should also allow the HR team to publish and update a whole range of advice and help documents and links as part of a Wellbeing section on the system.

And in line with a more personal approach, and to help build trust, a What's App style communication function should allow individuals to fully interact and engage, confidentially with HR, as a 'conversation', including documents exchanged, that can also be retained as part of the users HR file.

The following are just a few of what could be seen as other key factors when selecting the platform to take HR into a digital transition.

1. System hosting:

With concerns about the hacking of open cloud systems, a private UK Cloud system with data hosted in a UK data centre would be a safer bet on security. You could of course choose to host a system yourself in your own DMZ, but expect to pay higher support and installation costs, and you will need to get your internal IT to provide server storage, operating systems, security and support.

2. Putting key tasks online:

It could be argued that the 'bread and butter' of HR is the management of staff, their information and getting them paid correctly!
Especially with remote working, keeping track of people's time usage is key to all these. Employees should be able to fill in time sheets, online, and submit them for line manager (or other) approval. Add to this the ability to request leave, and to change their personal details as and when required is also key. A time log system for site or factory staff will also be a useful tool. A self-service platform should provide all this functionality and more.

3. Well Being

This covers an ever increasing list of considerations, as the pandemic and changes in working practices brings new challenges to us all. HR should have the ability to publish and update advice as part of the HRM system, with links to relevant internal and external

authorities. This will range from medical, to finance to mental health management and more, that all employees can benefit from.

4. Training

When bringing 'on board' new systems, training is key to inclusion. With remote working gathering teams for lengthy training sessions will be difficult. Look for your supplier to provide video training that is based on your own specific system. design, and in manageable sections, that staff can refer to, any time, as part of the overall system functionality.

5. Recruitment facility

Obviously, there is now a larger pool of talent out there, for when you do look to recruit, and endless recruitment companies / job boards. However, having your own in house function, in the HRMS system, where you can control and publish positions on your own web site, with applicants able to upload CV's, videos in response, and have dashboards that alert to their status for HR staff, would be ideal.

6. Document Retention and deletion warnings

A key GDPR feature. Look to see that you can set retention / deletion or reviews documents by type, and that these can be altered as policies change. A dashboard facility to flag up forthcoming reviews or deletions would be ideal.

7. Company values and policies

Again a key element as circumstances evolve in the company ethos. The ability to publish new standards and policies e.g. company support for home working equipment or office working rotation rules etc. is important in terms of communication. The system should also confirm that the employee has read the new or updated policies to avoid misunderstanding or conflict in the future.

8. Customisation

This is key. There are a lot of 'package' systems that may on the face of it offer lots of what you need. However, the HR needs can be particular to every business, and you should look to the vendor to be able to offer customisation now, and in the future, as business evolves and changes. You shouldn't have to compromise your processes because of a 'one size fits all' approach.

9. User Licencing

Most HR systems out there will licence their system use on a per seat basis i.e. every user of the system must have an individual licence to use the system, whether they are frequent or infrequent users**.**

This on a per seat basis may seem a small cost per individual at first glance, but depending on who and how may users you have, a concurrency licence will, certainly in the long run, suit most organisations better. And will work our cheaper.

Concurrency means you can have as many people registered to use a system as you like and access is only limited by the number of licences accessing the data base at *any one instant.* For example you may have 30 people who could use the system, but only have 10 concurrent users licensed and purchased.

* source: Team Blind Oct 2020

Cloud B2B solutions offer a range of custom fit business HR software solutions to all sizes of organisations.
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Alternatively call us free on **0800 840 3336** to discuss your requirements with a system specialist

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