

People focused organisation with 800 employees successfully manages large volumes of HR administration using Octopus.



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Objectives

To implement a solution in this busy call centre environment that would remove the bottleneck caused by funnelling high volumes of information and transactions for the 800 employees through a small HR team.

To enable individuals and managers to get faster information and improved control over relevant people-based data and processes. Put a system in place quickly at a time that the business was particularly busy and limited resource was available for the rollout.

Results

Individuals and managers efficiently manage people management processes directly without relying on the HR team. HR information is available to managers and individuals across BCW's business using Octopus. This results in time and cost savings across the business and for HR. People in HR are freed from administration to work on people management strategy and proactive people management, helping the organisation maintain its reputation as a great place to work.

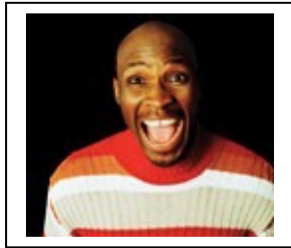
Implementing Octopus was so straightforward that the existing HR team could get Octopus up and running at a particularly busy time for the business. The people at Octopus provided excellent levels of service and made the whole process manageable for BCW allowing them to achieve the benefits quickly producing a very fast return on investment.

Story

BCW is a highly successful outsourcing and credit management company founded in 1983 that has grown in recent years to its current headcount of 800 employees. Based in Glasgow it operates in 50 countries and has five major operational centres across the UK and Ireland. In this business, managing, motivating and developing people is key to the organisation's success and central to the way the business is run, leading to recognition through awards and accreditations of its people management excellence. Amongst other accolades, BCW has become a regular in...

“The Sunday Times Best Companies to Work For” and Insider Magazine’s “Top 25 Companies”. It is Investors in People accredited and recently came in at number five in the “New Year Top Ten Scotland-based Businesses”.





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Prior to Octopus, information was centred in paper files and on areas of the network that only HR people could access and an antiquated HR solution with limited functionality was in place. A new system was needed to help reduce the weight of the administrative workload that fell on the small HR team as it processed information and provided it to managers. The solution would automatically involve managers and individuals throughout the business in people-management activities. The new system also should provide more sophisticated information and reports to assist with business improvement.

Areas where HR workload was high and where the business would especially benefit from involving managers directly included:

- absence and holiday management. In BCW as in most call centre environments, managing absence and holiday for its large numbers of employees is a huge task.
- providing information to managers about the people in their teams, including sickness and timekeeping information so they could directly manage disciplinary procedures and appraisals
- reminding people to take part in routine processes such as appraisals that involve individuals, managers and HR.

Gillian Irvine of BCW's HR team was introduced to Octopus soon after the team had started looking for a new system. “From the moment I saw Octopus it was obviously the right system for us. It was exactly what we were looking for and more. It was simple to use, and team leaders and managers could manage the information for their own teams, so it did not always fall on HR to provide it. Reports are also simple to use and run compared to the old system.”

Gillian has led the efforts to roll out Octopus in BCW. “We implemented Octopus at a particularly busy time for our business. Two of us were involved in it and were able to fit it in with our workload. Although it was very busy we were soon seeing the benefit of the reduction in time spent on mundane administration tasks, so we managed it just fine.”

The service received from Octopus is rated highly by BCW and has been a key element in the system's success to date. “The people at Octopus are just brilliant. The consultant we dealt with helped us all through the implementation, trained us and was very responsive to our needs”. The process involved in getting Octopus up and running was straightforward with this assistance. BCW pulled together people-based information from paper files and the old HR system. It was passed to the Octopus helpdesk who automatically uploaded the information. Gillian and her colleague had a day's training and then trained the two other HR team members. “It all happened very quickly”.



“Employees can request leave by using Octopus this is all done automatically without paper”

“Octopus allows managers to manage employees more effectively and automates processes to save time and Increase efficiencies”

We made some calls for general help using the system and the helpdesk has always come back very quickly. They are always available on the phone and email. We have not needed to make many calls but when we do they are very supportive.”

The simplicity of implementing Octopus is carried forward to the company-wide rollout. “We gave managers a login to have a look at the system then went through with them the main areas they would use. We had no resistance from managers. Different levels of access are given to different types of managers, team leaders and supervisors.”

Employee rollout started with asking people to update their address and basic information. The holiday request process was identified by Gillian as an area that is easy to use and yet providing enormous benefits. “Employees can request leave by using Octopus to send emails to their managers who are provided with information to help them choose whether to approve or decline the request. This is all done automatically without paper. With our old system we could not even imagine this was possible. It is a huge time saving.”

As is typical in most call centres, absence management has been a big headache. Using Octopus BCW find it a lot easier to see what is happening. Tracking trends or time taken off by a specific individual is very straightforward as is running of reports on absence issues. This can feed into investigations and if necessary into well-informed disciplinary processes that can be run by managers without having to continually consult HR for information. It is another area where BCW benefits from time savings that translate also into cost savings for the business.

“In HR we used to have to manage holiday and sickness for the whole company, and now the teams can manage it themselves. It is very time effective for us and simpler for everybody.”

BCW’s HR function already has ISO9000 accreditation so there are well-established processes including induction, disciplinary, grievance and appraisal. Gillian sees Octopus helping with the consistent implementation of these processes. “Team leaders and managers run appraisals twice yearly and HR’s role is to ensure that they are done. With so many staff it has been hard to ensure they are all carried out and to track the results. Octopus allows us to keep a much better handle on it.” The system can remind managers, individuals and HR that appraisals are due, enable HR to track that it is done, and the results can be stored in the document area for each individual which is simpler than relying on paper files or tracking documents down on the network.



“Reports are so simple to run and take seconds”

“The benefits are in time savings – making information available to anyone who needs it”

Providing information to HR service providers is an area where there have been unexpected benefits. HR provides information to an outsourced payroll provider and Octopus helps this run much more smoothly. New joiner and salary information is exported and Octopus is used to verify that payroll information is up to date. Likewise starter and leaver information is exported to the employee benefit provider for pension and healthcare policies. “Before we took ages to get the information together. Now we can just run an export or produce a report.”

Gillian summarises the benefits of Octopus. “To me personally and the rest of the HR team the benefits are in time savings – making information available to anyone who needs it and running reports in seconds when it used to take hours to get the same information together. It means we can redirect our time to work on HR processes or staff issues. Before we had to do all that and the administration and there was just not enough time”.

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Some of BCW's Awards / Accreditations



The research conducted annually by Best Companies Limited found us to be a Top 100 company in 2004 and in Scotland's Top 20 in 2005.



We are a fully participating member of the CCA and have in the past supplied conference speakers and awards judges.



We became in 2002 the first business process outsourcing and credit management organisation to become fully ISO9001:2000 accredited.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Originally qualifying for IIP status in 2000, we successfully passed a review and became re-accredited in 2003.

HOT 100

In 2003, one of the UK's leading business titles published research showing us to be one of the UK's Top 50 growth companies.

ENTERPRISE250

In 2004, we were recognised as one of Scotland's Top 10 companies for business success.


Octopus
people managing brilliantly, online