



Octopus is successfully implemented at



Octopus helps everyone at CragRats deliver an award winning HR Performance

CragRats is a unique organisation based in Holmfirth, West Yorkshire that delivers learning solutions to business professionals, organisations, young people and educational institutions using a variety of media, including “Theatres in Education”. As HR Manager of CragRats, Jill Martin is responsible for recruitment, training and development of people, employment law, employee records and strategic deployment of staff. When not wearing her HR Manager hat she is also responsible for the casting department at CragRats, as a number of actors are used in innovative training initiatives.

In 2005 CragRats won a Sunday Times award as one of the “UK’s Top 100 Best SME Companies to Work For”.

Objective

To find an HR solution that fits the culture of this creative organisation where people are empowered and self managing, often work away from the office base, and where the workload is unpredictable and fast paced. The solution should enable people to communicate and collaborate and provide sophisticated management information whilst keeping administration time to a minimum.

Results

Octopus is used by CragRats’ employees across the organisation to manage their own information, apply for and approve holidays, be alerted to appraisals and other procedures, and keep track of important information about people they manage. Structured HR processes can be followed amidst a hectic workload and administration is handled day to day wherever people are. As a result of using Octopus to store people based records and carry out everyday management, it has a wealth of business intelligence that enables sophisticated business and HR analyses and reports to be produced instantly.

Story

The catalyst for searching for a new solution came when the organisation’s commercial success led to new demands to supply sophisticated people-based information. Formed in 1989, CragRats was using an HR solution that met its needs when the business had 30 people. As it grew to around 100 the old system was creaking and the HR administration workload becoming unmanageable.





“There big time savings from people being able to use Octopus themselves”

CragRats

“Octopus was the best system we could find allowed for multiple access and within our cost parameters”

As CragRats’ people are often away from the office training on client sites, they need to see relevant information and carry out day to day administration wherever they are, avoiding the creation of an administration backlog to be dealt with when they return to base. Everyone wants to take responsibility for their own information and managers keep track of the people they manage. With only one person in HR – and even her time is shared with other responsibilities - it’s essential that people management is shared across the business.

Underpinning this dynamic environment and often hectic workload are structured procedures for people management and development that keep everyone moving in the right direction, supporting the business objectives. The HR system needs to support these HR processes - including induction and appraisals - and make them easy to implement, prompt people who need to take part, and give overall control to HR to ensure that procedures have been followed.

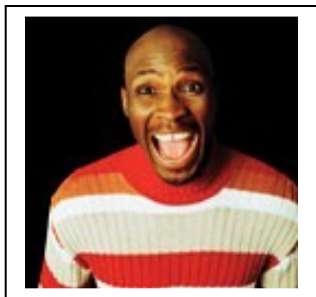
Sophisticated management information was needed. Bidding for new business in the public sector required completion of tender documents that asked for detailed statistical people based information. CragRats was also nominated for industry awards, including the Sunday Times “UK Top 100 SME Companies to Work For”, requiring them to supply breakdowns and analyses of information about the workforce.

With Jill Martin as HR Manager being the sole person in HR, a solution that required her to enter all employee information, keep it up to date and provide it to anyone else who needed it was simply too time consuming. Jill reports “It became obvious that a ‘self service’ solution was needed to make the routine administration manageable and we set out to look for a system that also had good reporting capabilities.” Allowing people to see and selectively update their own information and that of the people they manage suited the open company culture. We looked at several other solutions. Octopus was the best system we could find that allowed for multiple access and within our cost parameters.”

CragRats put Octopus to use company-wide within a week of it being installed. “Individuals update their own personal details, which creates a huge time saving. They also put in their own holidays and things like dentist appointments. Managers look up information for themselves meaning they get immediate answers without having to wait for me. It has been very easy for people to pick up – I can train them in 20 minutes.”



Octopus 
people managing brilliantly, online



“Jill is full of praise for the service and responsiveness she has received from Octopus”



“People like being able to access their own personal records and reporting is instant”

After rapidly implementing Octopus for the everyday administration, Jill is looking at more areas to use. “With managers often out in the field, the last thing they want is to come back to mountains of paperwork. Next I would like individuals to be entering their own training data, again relieving a workload from HR or the managers. People putting their own information in is ideal for the way we work.”

Octopus has advantages for other areas of the business. For example it includes an equipment log used by IT to track allocation of equipment and mobile phones. The accounts department sees salary changes at a glance so HR and payroll are singing from the same hymn-sheet. “Octopus is generally making our business more efficient.”

Further benefits are gained by CragRats from Octopus in the areas of co working and communication. People out in the field can stay in contact with the organisation by using Octopus. When arranging meetings they can use Octopus to check who is out on holiday so they can propose a suitable time, without having to be in the office or make rounds of phone calls. The activities and reminders can invite or remind everyone of a meeting or of their part in an induction or appraisal process or anything else they need to get done.

Octopus has also met the need for sophisticated people based information, and the commercial imperative to produce this information rapidly for tenders and other purposes. Jill says “When we were nominated for the Sunday Times award the supporting information we were asked for was very laborious to produce – including labour turnover figures, absence breakdowns, hours of training, numbers of people in each age category and percentages working part time. With all the information stored in Octopus, and kept up to date and accurate by individuals and managers, retrieving people based information for external and internal sources is easy and we can export it for further analysis using spreadsheet or other tools”.

Jill is full of praise for the service and responsiveness she has received from the Octopus team. “We are very satisfied with the customer service from Octopus. They have bent over backwards for us”.

“I didn’t have a project team to get Octopus up and running – I managed it myself alongside everything else. The same consultant worked with me all through, understanding what we wanted to achieve and helping us to get there. When I’ve needed to ask for assistance I usually email the helpdesk and get a response within the hour.”




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