



Octopus Manages Success

Interactive Prospect Targeting



Fast growing organisation manages “astounding” success using Octopus

Objectives

To find a comprehensive HR solution to centralise and standardise people based information and to provide a mechanism for developing new best practice HR disciplines – to help the organisation manage its continuing rapid growth.

Key Results

IPT has successfully centralised its core people-based information on Octopus. Wherever they are working, employees can access their own data, managers see relevant information on the people they manage and those responsible for HR have a single view of all relevant information on screen. Octopus has acted as a catalyst and mechanism for the development of best practice HR processes including starters, probations, leave requests, leavers and appraisals, which are consistent across the business.

Story

There was no HR team in place at IPT so finance administrators had been the custodians of people-based information. Salary, leave information and people's details were recorded on spreadsheets and documents, and contracts were stored in paper files. People based information was there, but it was not complete and consistent.

Ivan Southall, Director of IPT, selected Octopus.

“We made a conscious choice to look for an HR system. We had grown over a period of time to our current level of more than 120 people. We wanted to start to formalise some of our systems and one of the first areas was to find an all-encompassing HR system.”





“Employees took to the system easily
and were soon using it”

“Octopus was very easy to use, comprehensive and probably the least complicated HR System I have seen”

Supporting the need to make advances in HR management, IPT also recruited Janet O’Hehir as HR consultant to drive forward the new HR focus, including the Octopus system. Although Octopus was selected before she came on board, Janet was very positive about the new solution. “As an experienced HR practitioner I knew that a computerised HR system would make HR delivery far more efficient. First impressions of Octopus were that it was very easy to use, user friendly, comprehensive and probably the least complicated HR system I have seen.”

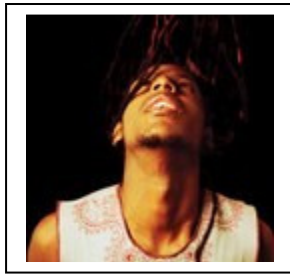
Janet managed the implementation of the solution within IPT. To achieve the first objective of organised, centralised HR information she started by bringing together the people-based information from a range of different sources and storing it in simple templates provided by Octopus. This was then automatically imported to Octopus so the information was ready to use.

An implementation day was held to learn how to use the system and start setting up users followed by a month spent getting familiar with using Octopus and filling in gaps in the information on screen. Previously access to HR information was limited to a few individuals who were custodians of the files, documents and spreadsheets that held it, who then had to field queries from employees and managers whenever they wanted to find out holiday entitlements or contract details or a range of other HR requests. IPT chose to allow all employees to see information relevant to them, supporting the open and communicative culture that had developed as the company grew.

Employees see selected details about themselves and managers can see relevant, selected information about the people they manage. After the system was tried and tested by Janet and the finance team during the first month, the company wide rollout started. The manager and employee rollout was achieved almost entirely by e-mail with no company wide training needed. Managers had a half hour meeting including an overview of the system and delivered logins to their employees. Individuals were asked to personalise their passwords and check their personal details. Janet reports “They took to the system easily and were soon using it.”

A key area where employees have benefited from direct access to their own information is for leave requests. Before Octopus, holiday entitlement and leave taken was stored on documents that a limited number of people could view. People kept their own separate records or had to make enquiries to the finance team. Now each person can see their leave entitlement on screen, including days taken and remaining. Managers can quickly see whether to approve leave including team views which indicate if other team members are away at the same time, so they can ensure adequate team cover.





“We had a single implementation day by which time the information had been loaded for us”

“.....one of the first areas was to find an all-encompassing HR system”

Selective visibility of HR information is also expected to deliver cost benefits in the area of equipment management. The IT team can use Octopus to store details of equipment allocated to employees such as mobile phones and computers. Their view is limited to just the equipment screen for everyone in the business, allowing them to track allocation to specific individuals and control costs by ensuring equipment is returned whenever someone leaves the organisation or changes roles.

In addition to the efficiency improvements of centralising and organising HR information and making it accessible, the other main objective of IPT was the standardisation of HR processes. Octopus has acted as a catalyst for developing new best practice procedures and provides a mechanism for implementing them. Job descriptions are being re-engineered into a standard company-wide format, and will then be stored in the document area for each employee along with contracts and appraisal records, providing a single point of access for all information about an individual and removing the need for paper files.

A number of best practice HR processes are being developed. Ivan Southall who selected Octopus for IPT observes “Octopus is not forceful in directing how you do things. We can still decide the specific processes to be followed, but Octopus encourages the discipline of standard procedures.”

Automation of processes is achieved by using alerts and reminders within Octopus, allowing all parties in a process to be informed of activities they are required to carry out and allowing HR or other managers to monitor whether individuals have completed their own specific tasks.

Janet has introduced best practice HR procedures and used Octopus as the mechanism for ensuring they are followed. For example when a new starter is entered on Octopus, a review date is set for three months hence ensuring emails are sent as reminders for the end of probation review process. Also reminders are set-up to inform the manager and employee shortly before an appraisal is due. In this way the myriad of key dates that HR needs to track in order to manage and develop its people effectively is automatically recognised and relevant tasks actioned.

IPT have already gained benefits from Octopus, but more is planned. They are continuing the development of HR procedures and extending their use of Octopus in the business. “Reporting on HR information is expected to become more important as historic records are built up and we expect the impact of Octopus on the business to increase”.





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The disciplines of HR may be more established and efficient but IPT fully intends to retain the personality of its business. Octopus supports its further development as a successful, dynamic organisation enjoying astounding growth, able to recruit talented, determined people and maintain their open communicative culture.

Interactive Prospect Targeting (IPT) is the UK's leading provider of digital direct marketing solutions. They have led the growth and development of opt-in, permission based marketing for over five years, delivering online direct marketing solutions to hundreds of clients across a spectrum of industries.

Founded in 1999 with just 2 employees, IPT has enjoyed astounding growth and now offers a wide range of direct marketing solutions and products spanning four integrated divisions. Our business is built on a foundation of **opt-in** and **permission based** direct marketing and we are committed to ensuring the highest possible standards are maintained across the industry.

IPT's rapid growth and success are testament to the growing importance and maturing of online communication, which now takes pride of place in the traditional direct marketing mix. They are also testament to the vision and innovation of its team, many of whom have been specialists in the field since the very conception of email direct marketing, and lifestyle databases before that. IPT now employs over 100 staff including in-house teams of designers, programmers and production consultants – all based at their Central London offices in St James's.

Interactive Prospect Targeting Holdings PLC commenced trading its shares on the Alternative Investments Market on 9th December 2004.

IPT have won a number of Important Awards:

Sunday Times Tech Track 100

(2nd fastest growing Internet business in London 09/03)

Deloitte & Touche Fast Track 50 Awards

(3rd fastest growing technology business in London & South East 09/03)

Steve Wright BBC Radio 2

(Best work site for Payfinder.com 10/03)

WebUser Magazine

(Best new website for relaunched MyOffers.co.uk 01/04)

