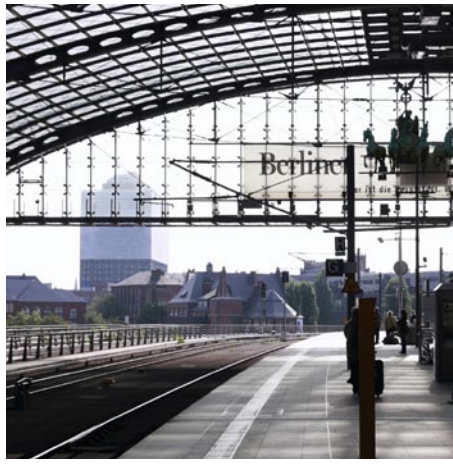


CASE STUDY

INTERFLEET'S JOURNEY TO GREATER EFFICIENCY IN HR AND PAYROLL MANAGEMENT

International railway consultancy, Interfleet Technology (Interfleet) was created from the engineering arm of British Rail and has a client base that extends throughout the railway industry worldwide. With a network of offices in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Scandinavia, Denmark and Germany and 663 employees and associate staff worldwide the company continues to grow and expand.



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Known for providing strategic technological solutions to the rail industry, Interfleet has been equally strategic with its own HR and payroll management processes, using Trent from MidlandHR for several years. More recently, Interfleet looked to the future and decided to upgrade to a web based version of Trent to enable greater functionality. It also, for the first time, implemented the payroll module and went live with a fully managed payroll service from MidlandHR on 1st April 2007.

FIRST DESTINATION: STRATEGIC HR TECHNOLOGY

Prior to Trent the company held its HR information across various disparate systems, consisting of spreadsheets and separate databases. The company was growing both in employee numbers and also in offices worldwide. Being a global organisation without one core HR system posed some challenges – the same data had to be entered multiple times into different systems, leading to inaccuracies and a significant administrative workload. Interfleet recognised the need for a solution that would bring the organisation up to speed with current developments in HR technology and brought in Trent in order to integrate all its HR processes into one unified solution.

Talking through how they have used Trent HR, Jackie Wright, Interfleet’s HR Assistant, says: “The workflow within Trent has enabled us to make many beneficial changes to our processes. One example is with the company insurance. Our consultants travel a great deal and use hire cars covered by company insurance which is renewable every 12 months, at which stage we are expected to update our insurer with any point changes on the license.

Originally this process was done by paper and was extremely time consuming. Through Trent it is automatic. A reminder email is generated a month before the insurance is due to expire, with a renewal form attached, prompting the consultant to fill in the details and also show their license to the HR department. Everything is completed in good time for the insurance renewal and the administration time for the HR team has vastly improved.”

Self-service has been another popular and empowering aspect of the system. Wright explains: “Employees update their own details, for example, address and next of kin changes. As well as this being a time saver for HR it also ensures less inaccuracies. In addition, employees are also responsible for areas such as booking their own leave. Prior to using an automated system time consuming annual leave cards were used, now it all goes through Trent, so an email request is sent to the line manager who can authorise or reject it and this information is updated in the system, producing an automatic response email for the individual.”

With the introduction of self-service comes some cultural change within an organisation. Interfleet counteracted any employee resistance by gradually rolling out the new system for annual leave. Wright comments: “We first used a group of employees that we felt would have the least resistance to change. The feedback was positive and influenced others who had more reservations. It is now successfully used globally, with the exception of one or two countries that do not currently use self service.”

The flexibility within Trent was key to enabling it to meet Interfleet’s unique business requirements. For example, Interfleet is required to screen employees for drugs and alcohol and so they have incorporated this as a new section within Trent, which now holds information about the test taken, whether it was passed or failed and when another is due.

ON ROUTE TO SUCCESS: MANAGED PAYROLL AND WEB-BASED TECHNOLOGY

Trent had quickly become one of Interfleet’s most important business systems. So when, in mid 2006, Interfleet began to look for a new payroll solution, MidlandHR was immediately included as part of the tender process.

Wright comments: “Whilst the HR team already had a strong working relationship with MidlandHR, the finance department were less familiar with the system. We therefore went out to full tender for a new payroll solution and looked at many products in order to select the one most suited to our needs. MidlandHR came out ahead of its competitors not only due to the strong functionality within Trent such as workflow and self service, but also because of the flexibility of the company and the product itself and subsequently our ability to develop it for strategic use over time.”

Interfleet went live with Trent payroll in April 2007, following an upgrade to the web-based version of Trent in March.

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Wright continues: "The requirements from our managed payroll system were threefold. Firstly we needed experts in tax and national insurance, as we didn't have the necessary payroll knowledge in-house. MidlandHR was able to provide us with that expertise through its managed service. Secondly we wanted to maintain control by hosting the software at Interfleet. With Trent, we manage all the HR information ourselves and have full access to payroll information as required, with MidlandHR dialling in to our site to use it – this flexibility coupled with MidlandHR's expertise works well for us.

"Thirdly, we wanted to cut the duplication of data entry through an integrated HR and payroll system. Previously, we were extracting information from Trent HR every four weeks in order to put it on to a separate form for our old payroll provider; taking anything up to three days of time. Now, only the new data needs to be inputted into the system and everything is done automatically which has significantly reduced the administrative work and saved us from one to two days each month."

FINAL DESTINATION: AN INTEGRATED SUCCESS

Having an integrated solution has increased efficiency at Interfleet. "Double, or triple, entry is no longer required as all information now flows through just one system," says Wright. "Workflow has been a key benefit to us; for example, standard reports amalgamate with payroll automatically and information for pay reviews is all readily accessible without the need to double check between HR and payroll. Time spent on administrative tasks has reduced quite significantly."

MidlandHR's Trent is now a key driver for various systems at Interfleet. Wright explains: "Trent links in with the finance system, Vision, as well as the contacts in outlook and our telephone book. When information is inputted into Trent, such as starters and leavers, that information automatically updates on to these other systems. It is also updated onto our intranet – a key tool for Interfleet employees. This is a massive time saver of course but it also ensures that the information is accurate, avoiding the time and energy spent sorting out inaccurate data.

"As Interfleet is a global organisation it is important for employees, especially from offices whose HR is managed from the UK, to be able to access a single, accurate information resource. Trent enables us to share information seamlessly on a global level."

Looking to the future, Interfleet plans to use Trent to develop its online recruitment capabilities. The company currently uses an online application form but wants to build it into Trent so that the information automatically populates Trent, rather than having to be manually entered into the system. Other developments include online timesheets to create a more time efficient process.

Wright concludes: "Trent continues to be one of our most important business systems. Its flexibility has and will continue to be invaluable as we mould it to suit our individual requirements. We have a good working relationship with MidlandHR and are frequently involved in their user panels, because input in the direction of the product is important."

CHALLENGE

Interfleet required an integrated system to cut out repetitive administration and enable in-house control of centralised data. The provider must produce all payroll outputs due to insufficient knowledge in-house.

SOLUTION

Upgraded from Trent HR to iTrent and included the payroll module to enable fully integrated HR and payroll across the organisation. Went live with fully managed payroll outsourcing service whilst hosting the underlying solution in-house to maintain overall control of data.

MIDLANDHR

Ruddington Hall, Ruddington, Nottinghamshire NG11 6LL

[t +44 \(0\) 115 945 6000](tel:+441159456000) [f +44 \(0\) 115 940 5286](tel:+441159405286) [e info@midlandhr.com](mailto:info@midlandhr.com) [w www.midlandhr.com](http://www.midlandhr.com)

Midland Software Limited. Registered office: Peterbridge House, 3 The Lakes, NN4 7HB. No. 1852206 England

