

Talking With EmployeeConnect

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Where did the vision of providing an off the shelf HR intranet come from?

EmployeeConnect was created to address the need to apply leading edge intranet technology to the operational world of HR administration. Some companies choose to develop their own internal HR intranet, but this requires significant financial investment and time.

We have tried to demystify intranet technology by providing EmployeeConnect in an off the shelf, ready to install solution. The latest technology is there waiting to be applied to reduce HR administration, EmployeeConnect fills that void.

How does the intranet technology impact the HR function and the business?

The benefit goes both ways. HR as a profession is repositioning itself as an internal value adding function as opposed to the traditional "personnel" administration model. To achieve this move the HR and Payroll function must eliminate as much low value administration in its processes to free up their time to do more meaningful analysis and consulting.

The intranet allows publication of policies and procedures, news items, benefit information thus allowing employees to access the most up to date information as opposed to calling HR & Payroll. By workflowing electronic leave forms, training & benefit enrollments forms, overtime claim forms, 401K selections and other paper based processes it decreases the manual data entry into the HRMS via direct uploads or emails to the external benefits provider. Likewise the employee and manager have reductions in paper pushing and delays in the process.

The move of HR Management to the line manager is also changing the modus operandi of the HR function and whilst we have actively advocated this move, we have not always supported the manager by providing on line and up to date information about their staff. This is still predominantly held in the HRMS with HR & Payroll as the gateway – and often the roadblock – to getting this information.

Some vendors are now providing web enabled HRMS, how is EmployeeConnect different?

We are slowly seeing HRMS providers realising the value of web technology and building in limited proprietary web capability. The major difference is that EmployeeConnect is completely vendor independent and will integrate on top of an existing HRMS, thus, leveraging off the existing investment.

It was also evident in our speaking with HR professionals that they want to be able to administer and customise their own system without having to rely on the internal IT department (who are usually busy with systems or network issues) or their HRMS provider who charge consulting rates for small changes or additions.

To respond to this requirement our administration module allows the non-technical HR professional to update policies & procedures in a click and drag manner. They are also able to build their own e-forms very quickly and create a workflow process to attach to the form. As an example, one customer was able to build a 401k selection form and workflow process within 30 minutes.

How do customers justify the investment in an HR/Payroll intranet?

The traditional HRMS cost justification model employed in the past focuses on doing time and motion studies on reduced processing and system cost/maintenance cost comparisons. These are usually helpful in justifying a large portion of the investment, however, the challenge in justifying an intranet is very different than that of an HRMS.

Whilst the process of quantifying cost savings can be very useful, the true power of the intranet is in the provision of up to date and accurate information to corporate decision makers via their web browser anytime, anywhere in the world.

One IT organisation is using the web to publish the competencies of their technical staff via EmployeeConnect so that anyone can query the technical abilities of the staff and what projects they have worked on before. They are using this to create virtual teams that have the competencies required to provide customer solutions in both pre and post sales situations. How do you quantify this capability? It is an intangible, but is readily recognised by business leaders.

EmployeeConnect was recently implemented in a large company with staff spanning 7 Asia-Pacific countries. What was the critical success factors in that implementation?

The rapid deployment across this organisation was successful due to us being able to define very clearly with our client what it was they wanted to do with the intranet. They were very precise in their requirements on what they wanted to let their employee's have access to, as well as the paper processes they wanted to eliminate in each country.

We were able to install within a matter of days, train the administrators and build their country-specific e-forms and workflow processes with them within a few weeks. Internally they conducted employee briefing sessions and regular internal marketing efforts. The major factor was their clarity and commitment to their paperless HR/Payroll office, from there on in, it was technically very easy. The result was the company realised the ROI on EmployeeConnect within a matter of months.

How can we find out more information about EmployeeConnect?

The best place to start is at our web site, www.employeeconnect.com. It has additional product and contact information.