



CASE STUDY

MONITISE BREAKS FREE OF EXCEL LIMITATIONS WITH CLOUD HR STRATEGY

Monitise is a familiar story – a fast growing business, expanding rapidly overseas whose internal systems cannot match the same pace of change as the business. A cloud-based HR strategy is helping address those challenges.

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BRUCE KING, SVP GROUP HR AT MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FIRM MONITISE RECENTLY MADE A DISCOVERY WHEN HE LOGGED INTO HIS FIRM'S HR SYSTEM:

"I FOUND OUT IMMEDIATELY THAT THERE WAS A 75 TO 25 MALE TO FEMALE RATIO AND THAT I'M ONE OF 44 BABY BOOMERS IN THE COMPANY. THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE WITH EXCEL.

IT'S FUNDAMENTAL STUFF, BUT FOR ME IT WAS SO EXCITING TO JUST NEED TO PRESS A BUTTON. IN FACT, I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO PRESS A BUTTON ANY MORE, AT 6 O'CLOCK EVERY EVENING THIS WONDERFUL DASHBOARD COMES UP."

Bruce King,
SVP Group HR, Monitise

As reported by

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CHALLENGES

It may be basic information, but it would have involved painstaking work to pull out this kind of simple data had the firm been using its previous HR system combined with Excel.

Monitise builds technology to enable mobile banking and payments. The UK firm is growing fast as mobile banking becomes mainstream and it was recognized by Deloitte as the 11th fastest growing UK technology company – its fourth successive year in the top 15.

This growth extends beyond the UK. At the end of 2013, it bought a US company, followed a year later by a Turkish acquisition. The UK start-up had become a global player. But while the business was expanding, a very UK-specific HR system was struggling to cope. King remembers:

"We had this UK-centric system which provided us with very limited information, so Excel became our system of choice really. When I arrived 18 months ago we had these huge spreadsheets trying to count heads, trying to identify and calculate attrition rates around the world.

When we went into the US and bought our company, our system wasn't fit for purpose. All our compensation data had to be reported in UK pounds, so they couldn't really use it as they wanted to. We could count heads, but that was about it."

GOING GLOBAL

Monitise needed a solution that was multi-currency, multi-language and able to scale with the business. While there were a number of obvious suppliers to choose from, they were deemed to be:

"far too big and lumpy."

King's attention then fell on Sage People (formerly Fairsail) whose HRMS specializes in the mid-market. To make the internal sell, he brought together marketing, IT and comms into a discovery workshop, so that they could see and buy into the potential of the system.

Just as important as its scalability, Monitise needed a system that was cloud-based and, understandably given Monitise's business, the potential for it to be available for mobile platforms was also key. In terms of ease of use, King was looking for an Amazon-like solution that would be intuitive to use without raining, particularly as he admits:

"I'm definitely a dinosaur. Looking at the old system I would never get my head around it."

King was clear about what he wanted the new HR system to achieve:

“Ultimately, I had this vision of the single version of the truth and we’re heading in that direction, but not there yet. But we really have embraced finance on this journey and working with the IT team as well.

In time – and this was part of my business case when I sold this to the CFO – I see Sage People sitting at the heart with things hanging off it, so when somebody joins us and we know they are coming on board it feeds back to active directory.”

The proposed system would also automatically generate actions on security passes, technology, payroll and so on.

PROGRESS MADE

The core system went live in November 2014. From this base, it will add resource planning, performance management, talent management and the compensation management modules.

The intention is that when employees log on in the morning they will be presented with a dashboard of information. King envisages this including elements such as share price in one corner, a video from the chief exec in another, annual reports, important emails – basically displaying tailored information to each employee.

It’s a far cry from what the company has today, he says:

“Today, if we wish to communicate anything it’s by email. If you’re like me, you get hundreds and hundreds of them.”

It’s all too easy to overlook important emails, he says, but with the new system, important communication will flash up on screen.

Self-service is also a big part of the strategy. Although staff can currently do simple things such as book vacation, King wants this to extend next to online performance reviews:

“We do want managers and employees to update their own information and want them to own performance management and their own skills inventory, as opposed to the basic stuff they do now.

It’s these little simple baby steps that I want us to take that will begin to embed self-service into our way of working.”

As additional modules go live, King looks forward to HR growing in its capabilities – identifying competences and training requirements of staff more easily, for example. Above all, King sees HR being better placed to respond to the business and management requirements rather than always feeling it is playing catch up:

“Resource planning and performance management, that’s where we will see the success story. We’re not there yet – at the moment it’s still an HR and finance-friendly tool but within six months there will be other benefits.”

MY TAKE

Monitise is a familiar story – a fast growing business, expanding rapidly overseas whose internal systems cannot always match the same pace of change as the business. What was fit for purpose when Monitise was a local start-up is not up to the job on an international stage. Choosing a cloud-based, easily-scalable system should provide the security that the HR system can grow with the company.

It’s early days, but these changes will ultimately free up HR time, enabling staff to focus on more strategic business issues.

“WE’RE STARTING TO FEEL POWER AS AN HR DEPARTMENT. IT MAKES US FEEL MORE POWERFUL AND HAS PUT A SPRING IN OUR STEP.”

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SVP Group HR, Monitise