



University of Lincoln

Improving Efficiency with NGA ResourceLink



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Situation

The University's Human Resources department wanted to replace several systems which were supporting its payroll and HR services to reflect changing customer needs, an improved employee experience and reduce the risk of non-compliance with ever evolving legislation changes.

The HR team found that it was increasingly being asked to adapt to new demands, such as auto-enrolment and RTI compliance legislation. However, the systems it had supporting these operations had been developed in house over a number of years but were not designed to flex to the scale of change needed against resource restrictions. This inflexibility meant that any adaptations were both expensive and time consuming to implement.

The HR team also wanted to make major changes to these systems to help it operate more efficiently and behave more strategically.

About UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

The University of Lincoln, is a modern university which promotes a unique staff and student experience and has more than 13,000 undergraduates and postgraduates from over 100 countries. These students are supported by more than 1,700 staff and 2,000 casual employees. The University has had a rapid rise through the league table in recent years and is now firmly established as a Top 60 institution.

To achieve this it wanted to create:

- One integrated system with accurate and accessible data
- Self-service functionality for employees, that could also capture data
- Reporting tools to empower proactive decision making

Ian Hodson, Rewards and Benefits Manager, said: "The lack of integration was incredibly inefficient. If we had a new starter, for example, we would have to update several different databases for pay, absences, training, etc.

"There was also a lack of self-service which meant employees couldn't update or view their own details. One of the university's main marketing campaigns promotes the idea that we are a 'third generation university'. We wanted a system that showed employees that the Payroll Department was fully aligned to the main university strategy."

Why did the university choose NGA Human Resources?

The university wanted to work with a solution provider with whom they could have a 'real relationship'. The HR team believed the success of the project would hinge on the ability of the supplier to impart knowledge and form a long lasting partnership.

Ian said: "We did not want an off-the-shelf solution. We needed a partner who could fit into our delivery schedule, as we also had day jobs to do and also look at how the system could be built around and improve our operations rather than having to compromise them. Having looked at several options we felt NGA, which also has a sector customer support group, was best placed to provide that level of support."

“To say that ResourceLink has changed everything seems like an understatement. Internal turnarounds are quicker, while customer service is timely and accessible. The university has moved from systems that were holding everybody back to a system that is driving everybody forward.”

Ian Hodson
Reward Manager, University of Lincoln

Solution

Integration: NGA worked with the HR team to deploy its payroll and HR platform ResourceLink. This solution brought together the existing HR, payroll, sickness, and training systems – along with other data stored within spreadsheets such as performance reviews into the platform. Reporting tools within ResourceLink would allow the HR team to compare the different data sets and analyse the results to produce more powerful and informed data sets that could be accessed by managers and the operational team.

Self-service: Two layers of self-service access have been provided for employees and managers. Employees are able to access the system in order to change personal details, view payslips, request annual leave, report absences and much more. Managers are also able to monitor, and approve, these requests and also access reports showing important workforce metrics and performance indicators.

Implementation: NGA's consultants worked closely with the university over a period of 18 months to implement a system that fully met the university's requirements. The university's HR team was able to decide how the application looked and operated. Ian said: "It felt like we built the system together with NGA and that helped us maintain ownership of the project the whole way through and build internal knowledge to get more from the system going forward."

Benefit

The deployment of ResourceLink has delivered considerable financial savings to the University of Lincoln. At the same time, the system has helped the HR team operate more efficiently and provided the metrics needed to become more strategic. Furthermore, it has encouraged the HR team to push for, and find, new ways to improve daily operations.

Cost savings

The University of Lincoln estimates that ResourceLink will save the institution £500,000 over the first five years of use, as other service contracts are switched off. Ian said: "We developed a business case which projected that we would save half a million pounds and, with the project being delivered on time without any significant hitches, we are on track to reach this goal."

Efficient HR operations

With the HR team no longer having to spend time creating workarounds for its ageing systems, huge time savings have been realised. Payroll processing times have been reduced, the integration of systems means duplication of work is no longer happening, the manual support provided to employees has been reduced and time spent printing and distributing payslips and other materials has been cut.

Ian added: "To say that ResourceLink has changed everything seems like an understatement. Internal turnarounds are quicker, while customer service is timely and accessible. The university has moved from systems that were holding everybody back to a system that is driving everybody forward."

Added intelligence

According to Ian, the system has enabled the HR team to become 'strategic, not just operational', as managers can now review metrics that influence decision making.

Ian explained: "We are now able to see quickly if someone is being rewarded appropriately as we can compare performance and pay records on one screen. We can review whether our wellbeing programmes are having a positive impact on absence rates. Being able to compare and contrast different data sets is helping to support our strategic ambitions."

Continuous improvement

ResourceLink has also enabled the university to realise unforeseen benefits through its flexibility. For instance allowing the team to build bespoke screens for gathering and storing data on immigration, student work and associate lecturing hours. The system is also being used widely across the University by areas of Finance and IT to enter data at source by being able to customise use to their requirements whilst maintaining security access restrictions.

Ian said: "The positive impact of the system has already had has been widely acknowledged within the university. But we will never draw a line under the platform. We don't want it to be static; we want it to evolve. By working with NGA we are confident we will be able to make this happen and realise even more planned and unforeseen benefits."

NGA Human Resources is a global leader in helping organisations transform their business-critical HR operations to deliver more effective and efficient people-critical services.

We help our clients become better employers through smarter, more streamlined business processes - to save money, manage employee life cycles and support globally connected, agile organisations. This is how NGA makes HR work.

What sets us apart is The NGA Advantage. It's a combination of deep HR expertise and insight, advanced technology platforms and applications and a global portfolio of flexible service delivery options.

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