

Case study - Commercial Waste Services

Client: One of the leading UK Commercial Waste Services Businesses

Service area: Analytics and Modelling

The Opportunity

Our client was undertaking a large-scale business transformation programme which included the replacement of its HR system with a new, cloud-based solution. Armed with new functionality and, by necessity, recently cleansed HR data, our client was keen to further develop their People Management Information suite to meet the new strategic aims of the business.

A comprehensive set of standard monthly reports already existed and could have been transferred very easily into the new HR system - in fact they were looking well past their “sell-by date” both in terms of content, delivery routes and style. The transformed business needed to have better insights into impacts that its people had on performance as well as cost. Now that better information was being processed through the system, it ought to be possible to build a new suite of HR MI that met the needs of the business well into the future. Our client started a project to introduce a new managers dashboard which was to be a part of the new manager self-service HR portal.

The HR Director was clear that the new HR MI arrangements would need to be intuitive to use and that they should be based on a single, accurate and up-to-date version of the ‘truth’. She was equally clear that each element of the HR MI suite was to be very tightly defined so that all of its users could have faith that information had a sound provenance and that there would be no “smoke and mirrors” in its compilation or distribution.

The Tricordant Approach

Working closely with the IT project team, the HR Director, HR Business Partners and business managers, we went back to first principles around the kinds of People Information that managers and HR professionals would need to allow them to focus on and meet their business objectives. Between us, we identified three distinct groups of Management Information that would be required:

- Information for people managers within the business, to support their business goals
- Information for the HR team to support the delivery of the People Strategy and to monitor effectiveness of their own strategy for HR
- Information for the Senior Leadership Team to show the impacts of people within the overall business performance

The process we used for the work was a combination of individual conversations with key stakeholders (members of the senior leadership team, business managers and HR professionals) and workshops with subject matter experts, data analysts and the members of

the Business Transformation programme. This broad approach ensured that the needs of the business were built into the new HR MI arrangements and that voices too often ignored (in similar programmes in other organisations) were not only heard but positively influenced the overall outcomes. We adopted a robust process of documenting, reviewing and signing off to ensure that the HR MI suite not only worked, but would be accepted and fully used when it had been implemented. In keeping with our principle of minimum necessary use of external support, the internal project team were then able to take the agreed recommendations through development, test and deployment. We provided a small amount of post development support to the internal HR MI team to ensure that they had a clear understanding of the design principles so that as they maintained and developed the arrangements in the future, they would remain true to the original vision of the HR Director.

The Outcomes

The key outcome of the project was a new and innovative set of HR MI, deployed as part of a much broader business transformation programme. The original vision was to provide managers, HR professionals and senior leaders with accurate, up-to-date information based on a single version of the truth, updated and delivered to users when they needed it, with minimum manual processing by data analysts or the HR team.

There are limitations of the data in the chosen system, which in an ideal world, the client would prefer not to have. Our experience of supporting similar clients with similar projects over many years is that every new IT system has its strengths and its weaknesses; there is no “perfect solution” that suits all organisations, simply because their needs are all slightly different.

The learnings we take from this and similar projects are

- The more people you involve in the process of designing Management Information, the better their (and your) understanding of the needs of the business becomes
- Start with the purpose – of the business, of the changes in strategy and of any change programmes that are under way
- Focus first on the needs of business managers and business leaders; HR priorities should always be influenced by them
- Take time to agree a small set of design principles and revisit them regularly at each stage of the work
- Base detailed data and reporting design on the needs of the business (not the other way round – we often see reports designed around what data is available)
- Keep key stakeholders informed and involved as much as possible; any design compromises – and there are always design compromises – will need their understanding and support
- Keep it human – HR MI isn’t and should never be a wholly technical or IT initiative; it needs to have meaning and credibility, to represent the truth for the business
- HR MI must work within the culture of your organisation. Many IT vendors offer “hundreds of standard reports”; if they don’t “mean” anything in your business context, they won’t have any value.