

Content Services for HR

One Smart Solution to Help HR Transform from
Administrator to Strategic Partner

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As digital-based technology adoption continues to grow, some HR processes, unfortunately, still get lost in the shuffle. How staff members manage, store and process employee files and HR documents is one such area that is often—but should not be—overlooked. While on the surface not as buzzworthy as recruiting, employee benefits or performance management, effectively managing employee files and other HR content truly can make a difference, delivering a positive impact on both the bottom line and employee engagement.

Implementing an enterprise-wide content services solution, in fact, that integrates with emerging and existing HR systems will help propel HR forward, rendering antiquated paper processes obsolete, among other benefits. Bottom line, as HR professionals continue to move away from being administrators to strategic business partners, they are not likely to grab that coveted golden ring without an effective digital content services platform.

Today, HR is entering a “technology typhoon,” a term industry thought leader Josh Bersin coined. It seems every week someone creates or enhances technology that directly impacts the HR profession—from products and services for improving employee engagement and learning/development to those that track productivity. Technology is everywhere. Consumers and businesses alike are drawn to the newest, shiniest platforms and hardware.

According to research by Sierra-Cedar, HR-technology spending increased by 10% in 2018. Bersin suggests this is a significant increase, especially “considering that, globally, HR-tech spending is well over \$40 billion.”

Additional research from Sierra-Cedar finds that 31% of respondents to its *2018/2019 HR Systems Survey* and 41% of its top-performing organizations plan on investing time and resources in a major HR initiative to create or improve enterprise HR-systems strategy. Having a strategy in place helps companies to align software purchases with business needs when making a tech purchase. In the report, organizations with an enterprise HR-systems strategy “achieved higher ratings on talent, HR and business outcomes when compared with organizations lacking an HR-systems strategy.”

It may seem any new technology solution has to be disruptive or cumbersome, while also somehow wrapping up everything HR needs in a single, tidy package. But today’s new platforms, while comprehensive, still need help to work on all cylinders. With that, HR professionals

would be smart to take stock of their current HRIS or HCM system while searching for missing pieces and missed opportunities.

Then, then there is the cost of trying to do it all while using a paper-based HR function. U.S. businesses spend \$8 billion annually managing paper, according to Forrester Research, and manual HR administration processes cost up to \$2,000 per employee per year for midsize organizations, according to PwC. Finally, HR professionals report spending 14% of their time maintaining employee records, and 51 minutes a day looking for paper documents, files and emails.



According to Danielle Simer, solution marketing manager at Hyland, creator of the OnBase content services platform, many technologies have what it takes to help HR succeed in making the move from administrators to strategic partners. But what HR lacks is a key variable to close the loop: robust HR document management strategy. While HR document management may not sound flashy, documents—whether on paper or in digital formats—are the lifeblood of every HR department.

“To meet both employment regulations and drive internal processes, HR departments manage thousands of employee files and supporting documents, including resumes, tax forms and employee contracts,” Simer explains, adding that large HCM solutions typically weren’t designed to properly manage this volume. Even worse, many HR departments still rely on paper processes, which presents a host of security risks and accessibility hurdles.

“To really succeed, HR needs a content services platform to digitize employee files and automate paper-based processes. These systems complement and enhance an existing HRIS in a way that helps HR become truly strategic,” she says.

ELIMINATING PAPER MEANS MODERNIZING HR

Washington-based Kristina Podnar, author of *The Power of Digital Policy*, a guide to implementing smart digital policies and practices, says most HR-systems were not designed for the robust needs of today's HR professional; they simply looked to digitize and automate legacy systems and processes without addressing the issue of originating hard copy HR files that contain the data fed into those systems and processes in the first place.

"The reality is that HR has been disrupted by digital just as much as other traditional aspects of the business and continues to be shaped by modern realities such as accessibility [ADA], records management [eDiscovery], privacy [GDPR, CCPA, LGPD] and capabilities [LMS, UGC-platforms and even social media]," she says.

Technology solutions that can effectively digitize and manage employee files and HR documents can be a major help, Podnar adds, but it's also important that such a system be implemented on a foundation of sound digital policy, one that is often ignored as the business pays full attention to marketing, communications and IT.

"With a clear set of guidance and procedures for the digital age—not just today, but what is coming in the next four to seven years—most document management solutions can be adjusted to meet the dynamic HR needs," she says. More importantly, though, she adds that the underlying data and procedures can be normalized, so that, as the HRIS field matures and catches up to reality, migration to new platforms will be a minimally disruptive effort and one that fully avails the business of HR capabilities, increasing opportunities for competitive advantage.

"That means hitting objectives such as being a best place to work, faster recruiting times, increased retention, better regulatory compliance, etc.," Podnar explains.

For most organizations, Podnar says, the single biggest asset—yet, the most significant expense—is its workforce. When you add contractors and vendor agencies to the mix, the issue is compounded. Recruiting, interviewing and hiring people, followed by onboarding, training, managing and advancing them, while handling every aspect associated with an employee or contractor, can be a tedious and time-consuming job—and generate an avalanche of documents.

"In 2019, most of us would think that organizations have a digital system to manage content and information



associated with candidates and employees, but that is far from reality," Podnar says. "Fragmented legacy systems and arcane manual processes are what days are made up of for most human resource professionals. And in my experience, it is also the most significant reason why HR fails at advancing human capital management initiatives."

ENTER CONTENT SERVICES

It's at this critical juncture that content services offers that "connective tissue" in a much broader way than document management alone. According to Maria Swerchowsky, sales engineer, HR solutions at Hyland, maybe employers are starting to recognize that going digital requires a content services mindset.

Swerchowsky notes, in fact, that content services solutions for HR departments are growing in popularity. She adds that whether prepping for an upcoming audit or conducting an investigation into an employee issue, challenges involving security, compliance and cost are becoming more complex and harder to manage—especially when processes are manual, paper-based and inconsistent.

"Many in HR have realized content management isn't just a nice-to-have," she says. "With social movements shining a spotlight on workplace misconduct and data-privacy regulations that can impose major fines [for example, up to \$2 million for non-compliance with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation], a solid content services platform is now a necessity."

Swerchowsky explains that content services platforms are not meant to replace an HRIS/HCM, but rather complement these vital technology systems by optimizing the functions they weren't designed to handle.

"Adding content services extends the value of your HR system by supporting the employee data with a powerful

combination of document management and process automation,” Swerchowsky says.

With a good content services platform, employers can digitize the entire library of employee files, allowing HR to become truly paperless. Leveraging a clear and simple electronic folder structure, HR staff can view all of the files in an employee’s folder as well as identify missing documents. Also, turning a paper file into an electronic one, utilizing the same tabbed colors or folder covers, makes many HR employees more comfortable with the new solution structure.



The ideal solution can keep employee documents separate from the employee file for compliance purposes, according to Swerchowsky. It also helps HR identify missing documents, a huge benefit because, in a paper-based world, employees can see the documents in a folder, but can’t see if there are documents missing. A content services system gives users visibility into what documents are missing for an individual or group of employees.

On the critical compliance front, an effective content services system will automatically identify and assign a record type, apply the appropriate retention policies, and purge the documents when required.

“Digitizing HR files can also reduce the stress and chaos many HR organizations experience in the event of an audit,” Swerchowsky says. “You can easily surface all the required documentation for an auditor from one content repository, even on short notice.”

A CHAIN REACTION

At Heinen’s, a Hyland client with 23 grocery stores in Northeast Ohio and Illinois and more than 3,300 employees, HR leaders realized that continuing the company’s growth

objectives meant eliminating as many manual HR processes as possible.

For one, Heinen’s previous manual HR processes created serious paper waste and required employees to spend hours filing papers and tracking down information. The company also faced problems that included duplicate processing and disparate spreadsheets, as well as stores using outdated forms for associate employment-status changes.

“We just had to get out from underneath all the paper,” says Jennifer Artino, manager of health and safety at Heinen’s. “Prior to 2012, we had a smaller organization. Over the next few years, there would be significant growth, and we realized the current processes were going to be counterproductive to that growth.”

With that, Heinen’s simplified employee-information management using the OnBase content services platform. Housing more than 90 types of digital HR documents for each employee, it now enjoys a faster, more secure way to store, access and share employee files. Sharing documents is now enabled by Outlook integration. Staff can securely send files from OnBase, as well as upload files to the system—all without leaving the email client. They also benefit from remote access to employee documents, enabling HR staff to work from various store locations, instead of being tied to a filing cabinet in one location.

And, with the addition of workflow automation, Heinen’s has accelerated vital HR processes, such as PTO requests and tracking acknowledgement of policies and procedures. HR staff also utilize a feature called WorkView | Case Manager to manage FMLA and short-term disability. From one screen, the solution provides a 360-degree view of all the information and paperwork surrounding each request.

Bob Walters, business analyst and OnBase system administrator for Heinen’s, says the company opted for a cloud deployment because they felt that hosting information on-premises was inefficient and risky.

“We’ve hosted solutions before, and we knew we didn’t want to be in the data-center business. It’s expensive and difficult,” Walters explains. “Managing a server is a job in and of itself. What if something happens and the server gets destroyed? We wanted to know with certainty that the data was being cared for outside of our building.”

The efficiency resulting from their OnBase solution helped Heinen’s keep up with growth during its

expansion into the Chicago market without adding staff at its main office.

“From 2011 to 2012, the company grew by 20% to 25%, opening four new stores. But the number of bodies doing the work stayed the same in HR,” Walters says.

Today the HR documents and processes for Heinen’s workforce—who are located in the grocery stores as well as the corporate office, two warehouses and a recently opened manufacturing facility—all flow seamlessly through the company’s centralized HR department. Walters mentions improved customer service as one of the most influential benefits of this streamlined processing.

“Having a content services solution in place gives us the ability to serve customers better,” says Walters. “We’re a grocery store and now we get to focus on our strengths.”

MAKING HR PROCESSES “KWIK” AND PAINLESS

Also in the Midwest, Kwik Trip has more than 21,000 employees spread across 640 retail locations. That means the convenience-store chain has an extremely busy HR department.

Before getting into digital document management, the department struggled with paper files, which are, by nature, difficult to track and office-space hogs. Cumbersome processes and an underperforming document-retention system combined to make employee-file management labor-intensive and inefficient.

The Kwik Trip HR department looked to streamline its operations. Having already implemented OnBase in its accounts-payable department, the company knew that deploying the solution in HR would not only improve file management but create greater transparency. With the change, each individual HR employee can now access and view the same information.

“OnBase is the central unit for all sub-functions in HR to have a single view of employee information,” says Sarah Jilk, Kwik Trip’s OnBase administrator. “Previously, these sub-functions were very siloed. Documents could be sitting on somebody’s desk for four days before anyone even knew about it. [OnBase has] given them a lot of visibility into the documents in a better timeframe.”

And, Jilk says, each unit within HR has its own custom search built into OnBase that provides instant access to the specific files it needs.

With 98 different document types, HR is the company’s largest document repository. After converting every document over to the new solution, the company was able to make “a few roomfuls of file cabinets” disappear, with the rooms they used to inhabit being converted into additional workspaces for employees.



Another issue with the company’s previously all-paper HR processes was that new-employee documents were sent by truck mail from different locations, which meant receiving the documents took longer than necessary, and deliveries could be thwarted by adverse weather conditions. Kwik Trip decided to roll out a store-scanning system.

“All of the stores have a scanner now and we use a sweep process from FTP to bring in documents from the stores into OnBase within five minutes,” Jilk says. “We have a lot of systems in play but keeping all of our documents in OnBase gives us an easier way to move forward.”

Before the change, employee-initiated requests and processes such as mileage reimbursement and status changes were cumbersome and slow. Leveraging the new solution, employees now submit these requests using simple, standardized online forms. This not only accelerated processing, but has allowed Kwik Trip’s HR department to eliminate five Microsoft Access databases. Document retention and file management are two other highly important functions that have improved since Kwik Trip’s implementation of OnBase.

“When we updated our system, we were finally able to do purging effectively,” Jilk explains. “Now we can create rules for document retention that allow us to automatically purge documents after their termination date.”

With all of the new functionality within the HR department, adequate training for new users is key. Hyland's Global Services eLearning and Premium training subscription gets IT employees up to speed very quickly. Supplied with highly effective training videos, Jilk says, new users "are able to spin up forms and modify processes with no help at all. It's a very powerful tool."

Kwik Trip's on-premises OnBase solution houses an impressive two million HR documents containing sensitive employee information. With role-based security built into OnBase, different users can have different access to documentation based on their HR function. For example, role-based security is used for garnishment and I-9 documents, allowing access to only four people in the company. "I have 100% more confidence in the security of information," Jilk says.

Those two cases illustrate why HR's move to a digital landscape is critical for bottom-line success.

"While it is easy for HR teams to get excited about the benefits of HR digitization, the reality is that value will be realized organization-wide," says Podnar. She adds

that employers that implement digital practices, in both document-services and HR systems, will be able to more effectively plan, control and manage people-related costs; achieve improved efficiency and quality in HR-related decision-making.

"Most of all, moving away from paper-based processes to a digital platform will increase efficiencies when it comes to making critical HR decisions, enabling the organization to maximize its single biggest asset—people!" Podnar says.

THE STRATEGIC SECRET SAUCE

From ridding your HR department of paper files to ensuring the compliance and security of information and processes, a content services platform can be an invaluable technological resource to any organization.

But ultimately, and most importantly, it's one that lets employers focus on the humans that are an organization's most valuable resources. Digitizing HR document management builds confidence in compliance, security and efficiency, and it lets people, not problems, take center stage. When people are empowered, only then can HR claim its place as a dynamic, strategic business partner.

Hyland at a Glance

Hyland is a leading content services provider that enables thousands of organizations to deliver better experiences to the people they serve. For over 25 years, Hyland has enabled more than 20,000 organizations to digitalize their workplaces and fundamentally transform their operations. Named one of Fortune's Best Companies to Work For® since 2014 and a leader in eight consecutive Gartner® Magic Quadrants, Hyland is widely known as a great company to both work for and do business with.

Hyland enables human resource departments to serve and empower the people who make businesses and organizations successful. Offering an industry-leading content services platform, Hyland helps HR departments gain instant access to employee information; faster, more efficient processes; and build confidence in the security of sensitive employee issues and documentation. Hyland offers workflow automation, case management and integration with any HRIS/HCM system, putting HR departments on the leading edge of employee recruitment, onboarding, records management and much more.