



## Escaping Spreadsheet Hell: Integrated HR Solutions for Midsize Firms

If Dante had worked in modern business, he would have added a tenth circle to his *Inferno* — spreadsheet hell. Extracting critical data from multiple systems, and trying to manipulate that data, challenges and frustrates employees. HR professionals deal with this problem every day in an effort to meet critical compliance requirements or to generate reports for their executive team.

Many large corporations have untangled their HR data problems by adopting integrated human capital management (HCM) solutions that enable them to manage payroll, benefits and other HR functions more efficiently. But these solutions have escaped the grasp of midsize companies due to their high costs. The good news is that midsize firms don't need to abandon all hope of escaping spreadsheet hell. Advances in Cloud computing and Software-as-a-Service have brought enterprise-level HR solutions within their reach.

### **Torments and Pain Points**

Spreadsheets and point solutions may have worked well enough in the past, but they no longer deliver the goods. Many HR departments in midsize companies find themselves in a bind, buried by an avalanche of spreadsheets or hindered by information silos caused by multiple best-of-breed HR solutions they've adopted over the years.

Using spreadsheets or multiple point solutions makes it more difficult to export, import and report on critical data. In addition to time lost, this process can impact data integrity and result in errors in paychecks, tax withholdings and benefits, leading to unhappy employees. Even worse (for the company), inaccurate or late compliance reports can produce significant penalties. For example, fines for violations of the Affordable Care Act can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### **Competing for Digital Native Talent**

In addition to overcoming spreadsheet hell, today's midmarket companies have to compete with global firms for the same employees, making it more important than ever to offer a similar work environment as larger organizations. Millennials — the largest generation in the workforce — have vastly different views on technology than older employees. These digital natives expect employers to have state-of-the-art technology infrastructures.

To attract and retain the best and brightest, midsize companies need to adopt modern HR solutions that enable employees to manage their professional lives as simply as they do their personal lives. For many organizations, the best solution is an integrated HCM system.

## Benefits of Integrated HR Technology

HR professionals control a wealth of vital information. In managing this data, they face two key challenges: accessing and sharing data easily, and reducing the administrative burdens that consume so much of their time. They can overcome these hurdles by adopting an end-to-end solution that automates the flow of essential data from each employee record through all HR processes.

An on-demand, self-service solution allows HR departments to streamline administrative processes, such as talent acquisition, onboarding, payroll, benefits administration, time and attendance, and performance management. By automating HR processes and ensuring data reliability, an integrated HCM solution offers many benefits, including the ability to:

- House all data in a single database for easier reporting
- Reduce the risk of data entry and compliance errors
- Leverage HR data to drive company growth and success

## Moving Forward

To remain competitive in today's business environment, midsize companies need access to the same powerful HR technologies as global corporations. Although escaping spreadsheet hell has never been easier or more affordable, midsize companies may not have extensive experience assessing advanced technology.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when evaluating integrated HCM solutions:

- Examine your existing business processes and objectives to refine specific system requirements
- Look beyond a solution's functionality and conduct due diligence on a vendor's service reputation
- Do your homework on a solution's architecture, data capture and storage, configurability and security

Finally, as with any vendor, choose one that shares your company values with respect to communication, service and integrity. Buying an HR solution is a big investment of time, money and effort. Make sure your decision works for today and into the future.

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