

CROWN DEALS CONFIDENTLY WITH 15 T&A OBJECTIVES



Introduction

As part of a major cost saving exercise, Hashimoto committed to replacing its Time and Attendance system with a business management solution that went further than recording basic clockings.

Background

Automotive parts manufacturer Hashimoto is a first tier supplier of both interior and exterior plastic mouldings to car makers Nissan, Rover, Jaguar and Honda. The company employs around 500 people at its two factories in Boldon, Tyne & Wear.

In November 1999 the company established a team of IT and Finance personnel, headed by Fred Godwin, IT Senior Supervisor, to research the Time and Attendance market. The objective was to replace the company's outdated T&A system, which was originally purchased as an 'add-on' to the Payroll application of the ERP strategy.

Hashimoto's '15 Point' Selection Process

IT Senior Supervisor, Fred Godwin's primary objective was to rebuild the company's confidence in computer systems. Reliability was therefore the first criteria. "We wanted to implement secure systems that we could build-on to meet our future objectives," stresses Fred Godwin. "Our aim was to 'add value' to our overall ERP portfolio rather than invest in 'add-on' applications that would become obsolete within a few years."

Hashimoto drew up a T&A application profile outlining 15 'must have' features, which had to be satisfied before suppliers got to first base.

"In a competitive tender against the major T&A players, Open Options from Crown was the only software package which complied with all 15 of our points," he continues. "In addition, it was the most user-friendly solution, offering the greatest scope for future savings, when all of its functions were fully utilised.

"The integrity of how the data was held was crucial, as was the system's ability to interface with our existing ERP strategies. This presented no problem as Open Options interfaces with our System/21 payroll package as standard, while other suppliers only appeared to be offering a bespoke option."

The next hurdle to overcome was dealing with Hashimoto's multifarious and unique shift patterns, including Continental Patterns, Alternative and Closely Linked shifts.

Open Options took all the complexities in its stride, including the flexibility to programme in specific payment rules for Hashimoto's 'call-out' facility. Fred Godwin's final objective was to invest confidently in a management tool, which was very user-friendly and could be deployed onto the shop floor for team leaders and supervisors to use. "This is possibly where Open Options stood head and shoulders above the rest making good use of graphics, colours and proper windows with little help screens," he comments.

The Benefits Are Clear

"Prior to Open Options, we were working a phenomenal amount of overtime to deal with all the exceptions raised," recalls Ann Johnson, Finance Clerk. This situation could not continue and was another major factor in dispensing with the old system.

"The accuracy of Open Options has freed our time to work on more productive management reporting and analysis, rather than be bogged down with repetitive inputting of data on shift patterns. We are now able to plan our day better and share the workload. The more detail Supervisors notify us of, in advance, regarding shift changes, such as business travelling time, holidays, authorised absences etc., the less exceptions and paperwork will be generated."



"As a result of the dramatic drop in number of exceptions raised by incorrect clockings the time we now spend on administration has fallen from four to one day per week"

Activity Management

According to Michael Lynch, "Supervisors can't wait to take ownership of the system and get their hands on inputting data themselves. We wanted to get a full year's data on the system and be totally proficient with the system, so any queries could be handled by us before it was rolled out to the shop floor." This is due to start early in 2002 when supervisors will be entering shift changes and pre-booked absences. Then gradually building up to using the Resource Planner features.

Resource Planning

Michael Lynch is impressed with Open Options ability to manipulate personnel on screen. "At the moment we have no really effective pro-active resource planning, which is why we are particularly keen to make full use of Open Options' excellent Resource Planner application."

"All staff are graphically represented by job classification on a master structure tree. You can go into the system, by individuals, departments or expertise, and by keying in dates see a spreadsheet of who is available and what shift they will be working. It is amazing how quickly we can change a number of people from one shift to another. More importantly it flags up any shortfall of essential personnel so you can juggle shift patterns to ensure maximum cover."

Reporting

The wealth of data held in the system enables comprehensive management reporting ie. resource planning, overtime analysis, absence analysis etc. To further enhance Hashimoto's reporting activities, Crown suggested an

investment in a Crystal Report Writing package. This standard report package taps into the Open Options database and drags information out into other reports and spreadsheets.

Staff Buy-Into System

A large part of the project's success is due to the initial implementation programme devised by Fred Godwin. It was important that all levels of personnel, especially production supervisors, bought into the system and took ownership of the T&A ethos. A number of sessions were organised with team leaders upward to familiarise them with capabilities of the system. To dispel previous reliability concerns it was vital to explain the integrity factor and how accidental loss of clockings was no longer possible.

Training and Support

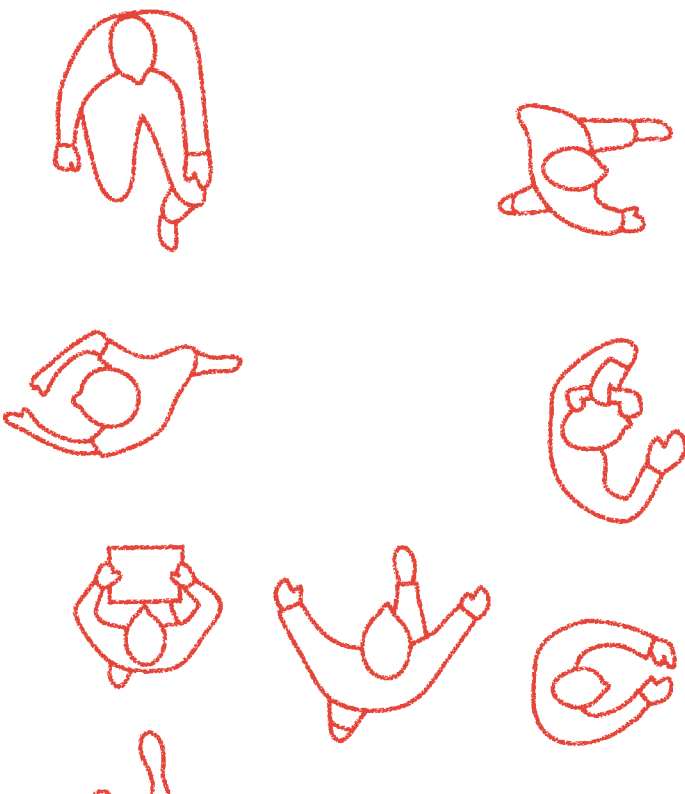
"Training was excellent and enjoyable," recalls Fred. "Crown had the right people with a good knowledge of their product. The pace, supportive materials and follow-up instruction were also good. Because Open Options is such an easy product to use, it doesn't need much internal support."

The Future

Michael Lynch summarises his views, "Before Open Options, time was at a premium, it has freed up our time immensely and we are still not exploiting all the system's functions. When we are up and running on the shopfloor we will see another huge leap in efficiency."

"It is still too early to comment on long term management planning benefits. For example we haven't implemented many of the Resource Planning aspects, which we believe will offer the greatest efficiency improvement company-wide. However, it is already abundantly clear that in administration time alone in Finance and Production areas, the Crown products are well on the way to paying for themselves since we went live in July 2000!"

"Confidence is my one word to sum up the benefits we have gained from Crown's involvement," says Fred. "In the future we will be working with Crown Computing as a partner, rather than a company we buy a bit of software from. From this point onwards, Crown will be an integral part of any project we embark on involving a SQL server or Shop Floor Data Collection."



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