

GRUNDON WASTE MANAGEMENT DRIVES AHEAD WITH NEW T&A SYSTEM



Introduction

Grundon Waste Management Ltd was using an in-house-developed time and attendance system for its growing workforce of drivers and crew. New contracts requiring varied shift patterns, and a need to comply with the Road Transport Working Time Regulations that became mandatory in 2007, forced the company to look for a more flexible, configurable and future-proof solution that could interface directly with the company's payroll system. To keep track of the hours logged by such a mobile workforce, Grundon selected Open Options time and attendance software from Crown Computing.

Background

Renowned as one of the UK's leading waste management and recycling specialists, Grundon Waste Management includes the collection and treatment of mixed recyclables, residual waste, clinical and hazardous waste, and now also Energy from Waste in its varied portfolio. A sister company operates a network of quarries for the extraction of aggregates. From seven depots (plus three more at

Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted airports) stretching from London to Birmingham, down to Gloucester, Swindon and the Thames Valley, Grundon's fleet of vehicles operates around the clock. 450 drivers, crew and recycling operatives, working a wide variety of shift patterns, ensure that the vehicles are always in the right place, at the right time and that contractual obligations to customers are fulfilled.

Problem

Grundon Waste Management has grown steadily since its foundation in 1929. Today it has an enviable reputation for effective and environmentally-responsible waste management but, perhaps inevitably with many years of organic growth behind it, the company's IT systems haven't all been able to keep pace with changes in the market and demanding new legislation. Like many companies trying to automate time and attendance (T&A) before off-the-shelf and bespoke solutions became available, Grundon had developed its own in-house solution. Spreadsheet-based, it still required considerable manual input and manipulation, however, and once the company started winning contracts that required a shift system where drivers' hours ran over midnight, it could no longer cope. In addition, the stringent legal requirements of the 2007 Road Transport Working Time Regulations for drivers made it necessary for the company to find another way of managing time and attendance if it was to comply with the law. Finally, absence management was all being done manually on paper records and there was no simple way to call up employees' files and examine their absence records or gather any reporting data from them.

Solution

Grundon had already been talking to Crown Computing while researching a supplier for an HR database. When executives from Grundon were shown Crown's expandable Open Options time and attendance system they realised that it could meet all their T&A needs, and make data transfer to payroll much slicker, while its ability to have additional modules activated made it reassuringly future-proof.

“The Crown system is powerful yet simple, and lots of the feedback we've had from our managers is that they really like the user-friendliness of it.”

Lorraine Milburn, HR Advisor

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Implementation

In order for T&A data from Open Options to feed directly into Grundon's payroll system and so minimise manual input, Crown wrote a special interface between the two systems. Once this was done, Grundon's HR Advisor, Lorraine Millburn, said: "Getting Open Options up and running was pretty straightforward. The system was piloted in July 2009 at our depot at Colnbrook, near Slough. We chose that particular depot because if the system was going to break anywhere it would be there, due to the wide variety of shifts worked at Colnbrook and the many varied start and finish times in use. But in fact it's gone quite smoothly, to be honest – the system's really straightforward and lots of the feedback we've had from our managers is that they really like the user-friendliness of it."

The pilot ran for six weeks, followed by a phased roll-out across the rest of the depots. Lorraine observed: "As a result of our experience at Colnbrook, by the time we completed taking all our depots live in November 2009 we were pretty confident our new Crown system was working properly." She added, "Open Options has taken away a lot of the manual intervention, because before everything was submitted on paper time sheets, then entered manually into a spreadsheet, then entered manually into the payroll system, so there was lots of potential for mistakes. A lot of time was therefore spent on additional checking to avoid potential errors."

Putting It All Together

With the system up and running company-wide, Lorraine says she and her colleagues are wondering how they ever managed without it: "One of the things we like about the system is it's so configurable – you can customise pretty well everything, but you do need to understand what you've done in order to be able to train the users. We have our own in-house trainer and she sat in on the consultancy days with Crown's trainer. We were then able to devise an in-house training programme, which consisted of half a day's training, so our users were fully up to speed before they were allowed onto the system. This has helped ensure a good level of 'buy-in' by those expected to use it."

Absence management through Open Options utilises Bradford Factor scoring, and other refinements include probationary period interview reminders, whereby managers are alerted to review new employees before the end of their mid and end-point probationary periods, giving plenty of time to decide whether their employment is to continue. The same facility can alert managers when employees are approaching retirement, i.e. the year before their 65th birthday.



Looking Ahead

For the future, the company will be adding their remote quarrying operations and it is expected that GPRS-based T&A terminals will be used to bring these locations into the system. Crown's expertise in interfacing with numerous brands and designs of terminal is expected to be useful during this phase. Lorraine comments, "We know the system can do a lot more than we're using it for at the moment, such as reports and the in-built email facility, so we're looking forward to getting even more out of it in the future. Further along the line perhaps we will give employees web access to their records so they can check their absences, book holiday etc."

Signing Off

It's clear from Lorraine's enthusiasm for the company's Open Options implementation that it's making a major difference to the administration of employees' hours and how they impact on the management of the payroll. When Lorraine and her colleagues run into problems she says: "Crown are really good to work with: their helpdesk is indeed helpful and responds quickly to queries." Crown's Account Manager for Grundon, Paul Atkinson, has the final word: "The manager at one of the sites told me that he doesn't know how he would do his job without Open Options now."



Workforce Management Systems

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