

HAPPIER EMPLOYEES SINCE OPEN OPTIONS INTRODUCED



Introduction

Employees are happier since S&A Foods introduced Open Options from Crown. The software which was introduced in 2001 replaced a previous system, which had resulted in a number of employees being paid incorrectly, creating obvious workload issues for the payroll team as the errors were corrected.

“With Open Options employee relations have improved significantly” commented Shane Sweeney, HR Contoller
“Our employees now receive a much improved service, and have a greater confidence in the system”

Background

Derby based S&A Foods has gone from strength to strength since the founder, Perween Warsi, set up the Company 18 years ago in her kitchen. She identified a gap in the market for supermarket ready made meals that would match the taste and quality of those served in Indian homes. Her vision paid off with contracts to manufacture ethnic meals for a number of supermarket chains and caterers throughout the UK and Europe,

The business, with a current turnover in excess of 75m, employs more than 800 people at it's Derby Headquarters. All product development, a staggering 250 new products a year, is conducted at the site under the watchful eye of Perween who is passionate about food quality in her drive to ensure 'Sensationally Better Eating'

The phenomenal growth of S&A was not, however, without problems. As the Company grew, the original systems needed to be replaced to streamline business processes.

IT Manager, John Cutts remarked “It was obvious that we needed to replace the existing T&A and Payroll systems with best of breed products that would help us run the business more efficiently.”

The selection Process

A project was set up to review a number of Workforce Management Systems that could replace the previous Time and Attendance System and integrate with the payroll system. Critical to selection was the assurance that the new system would improve the speed and accuracy of the provision of attendance information to help S&A Foods better manage absence and hence reduce cost. Additionally the system needed to improve the flow of payable hours information to reduce the incidence and cost of overpayments. With a large workforce working variable shifts, the new system had to be able to deal with the existing work patterns and be sufficiently flexible to accommodate any new working patterns that they may wish to introduce in the future. Finally S&A needed to be assured that Working Time Regulations could be monitored more accurately.

“Open Options Time and Attendance from Crown was chosen as it matched all our requirements and as an added bonus could utilise our existing Feedback time clocks” commented John Cutts.
“We were impressed by the flexibility and power of the system and felt that Crown's professional approach would offer the best solution to help us move forward. This was backed up by the excellent references we received from their customer base which gave us the confidence to proceed.”



The Benefits

Open Options has certainly proved to be a winner for S&A Foods. Although the previous system collected clocking details through the timeclocks, the information had to be re-keyed into the payroll system. "Once we introduced Open Options there was an immediate clerical saving and a massive decline in pay queries as data accuracy was improved through the direct interface from Open Options to our payroll system" said Mike Gyles, Payroll Manager. "As a result we have a much happier workforce."

Open Options has also improved S&A's labour management and hence increased the effectiveness of the workforce. With the system, line managers can monitor their teams more effectively and can enforce HR rules and processes such as lateness, absence and other disciplinary procedures. It has also enabled managers to have greater control of breaks and the allocation of overtime to prevent unauthorised activities. As a result paperwork has been drastically reduced.

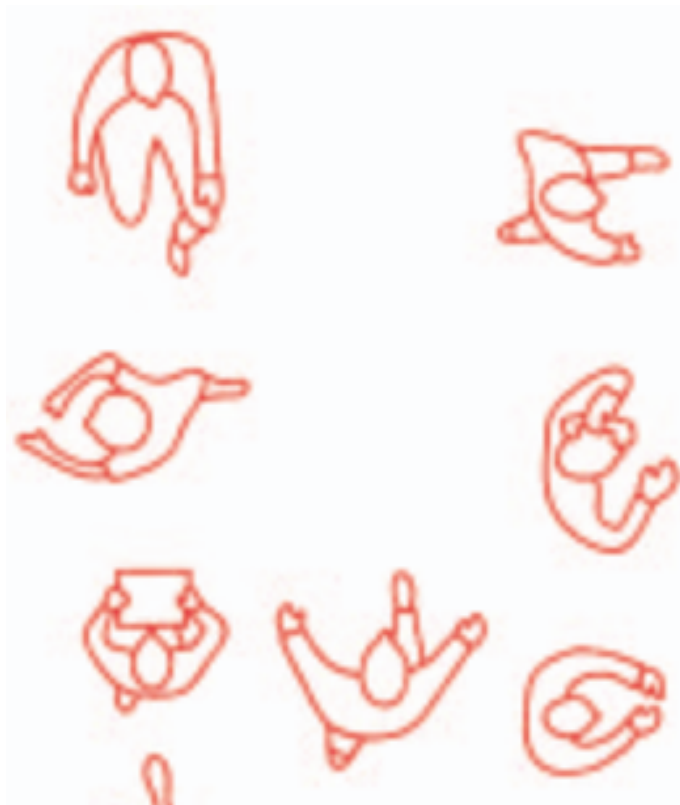
The management of agency staff has also significantly improved as invoices are now checked against attended hours to ensure accurate payments. Mike Gyles added, " Our agency costs have been cut beyond belief. With the system we are now in total control and have reduced costs considerably."

Recently S&A Foods have introduced My-Options web kiosks for employees to check their own information such as clock card and holidays so reducing the administrative burden yet further:

"We are very pleased with the benefits that Open Options has given us and we see that it will provide more as we grow. Best of all the system paid for itself within the first twelve months" commented John Cutts.

The Future

S&A Foods plan to extend the use of Open Options in the future by implementing the Access Control module for greater site security. John added " We see Open Options as a strategic part of our ongoing development"



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