

LDV Adopts Open Options



LDV is one of the most widely recognised brands in the automotive sector with over 100 years of experience designing, manufacturing and distributing what is now the widest range of light commercial vehicles in Europe. The company was formed as LDV Limited following a

management buy out of the vans division of Leyland DAF in 1993.

In 2003, the company embarked on plans to modernise its HR business processes and problems were soon identified with its Time & Attendance System, which had reached the end

of its practical working life. The company had already addressed its Payroll and HR requirements and had selected Northgate HR's Resourcelink System to perform these tasks. So any new T&A solution would need to integrate closely with these two applications. <continued on page 2>

Staff rostering at the Scottish Ambulance Service **1**

LDV adopts Open Options **1-2**

Regulate - sickness absence reduction **3**

S&A Foods introduce Open Options **4-5**

MBDA UK ensures greater accuracy with Crown **6-7**

User Group Sept.04 **8**

Stop press... **8**

Staff Rostering at the Scottish Ambulance Service

Following a detailed system selection process, the Scottish Ambulance service has selected Crown's Workforce Scheduling and Attendance Recording solution to improve the rostering of its ambulance crews. The Service is currently piloting the solution within its North & West Division but hopes to begin a roll-out programme early in 2006, which will see the solution deployed in all regions across the country.



LDV Adopts Open Options

A detailed survey of the T&A marketplace then began but with around 1200 employees operating to complex Payment Rules, the number of potential solutions began to fall. The company wanted a modern solution with 'future-proof' technology consistent with its other business applications. And with so much going on elsewhere in the business, it was important that the new T&A System should run reliably and with the minimum of technical and business intervention.

But LDV knew too that once the new solution was installed and began managing the payment process effectively, they would require many of the secondary benefits of a Time & Attendance application: an effective Absence Management process; proof of compliance with the Working Time Regulations; and more effective management & performance reporting.

Following numerous demonstrations, the LDV team eventually selected Crown's **Open Options** T&A product and following an implementation process of little more than three months, the system went live in April

2004. Joe Stone, LDV's Payroll and Treasury Manager recalled that "This was something of an achievement at the time. Our Payment Rules were very complex and our learning curve with both the product and the Windows operating environment was quite steep. But Crown's Training Programme plus the flexibility of the **Open Options** Rules Engine helped tremendously and we were able to test our rules thoroughly during the testing programme".

Following the stresses of what was a very aggressive timescale, Ian Scott, LDV's HR Services Manager now looks forward to much more success with the Time & Attendance product. "Now that we've achieved the initial object of paying people correctly, we now want to improve our management reporting and absence management processes. And we're certain that **Open Options** is the best tool for this job. As with the rest of the system, the Absence Management software is very user-friendly and provides all that we need to manage the absence process, from Absence Monitoring through to the Return-to-Work process"

The company now recognises that it's come along way over the past year or so but knows that there are many more benefits to come. Ian Scott finally commented, "We're still learning that there's a great deal more to this product and the more we look into it, the more we find. It will play a part in the company's continued success for years to come"



"It was important that the new T&A System should run reliably and with the minimum of technical and business intervention."



regulate -

sickness absence reduction - checklist



By Derek Eccleston MIPD ACII
Employment Law Training
with 'Practical Employment Law'
www.eltraining.co.uk

It has to be recognised that employees often have legitimate reasons for being absent from work. Only one of these legitimate reasons is that the individual is "sick". If employers are flexible and have policies on leave of absence, employees are less likely to report in "sick" every time there is a domestic problem. Employees also have a number of legal rights to take time off, particularly to deal with emergencies involving dependants.

In addition to the above however, employers should have policies in place to tackle the persistent absentee. The following is a brief guide to best practise in managing attendance:

1. Draft, agree and implement an attendance management policy. Set clear standards of attendance and "trigger points" for taking action. Communicate these to the workforce.
2. Introduce effective monitoring of absence levels. These days this is best collected electronically and analysed.
3. Introduce a practise of carrying out "return to work interviews" with every individual on their return from absence. Surveys into attendance management have indicated that this is the most effective policy that a company can introduce.
4. Review and monitor the company sick pay scheme, looking for abuses. An employer only has a legal duty to pay Statutory Sick Pay. Any payments made above this minimum level can be linked to the employer's terms and conditions.
5. Ensure that absence management figures are provided to line managers. Attendance management is much more effective where line managers are involved.
6. Ensure that poor attendance is raised at performance review meetings and that where appropriate, disciplinary action is taken when attendance falls below the accepted and communicated standards. It is a common misconception that an employee cannot be disciplined if their absence is "genuine" i.e. supported by a medical certificate. This is not the case and poor attendance can be tackled even where the attendance is covered by medical certificates.
7. Ensure that the attendance management policy has senior management support.
8. Be positive about introducing flexible working and also recognise employees' legal rights to time off in certain situations. Survey information has indicated that absence is lower in firms that have positive attitudes to flexible working.
9. Ensure that health and safety awareness is high amongst all staff and that risks are minimised where it is not possible to eliminate them. A pleasant and safe working environment will help to reduce absence.
10. Provide training to all staff in the safe use of equipment. Provide appropriate clothing and safety equipment wherever appropriate.

Employees are happier since S&A introduced Open Options from Crown

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



“the system paid for itself with

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

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.”

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.”

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

within the first twelve months”

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.

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”



Pan-European defence company MBDA UK ensures greater accuracy with Crown Computing

European defence contractor MBDA UK, has introduced Open Options as part of its drive to keep its UK operating systems at the leading edge and to help manage its labour costs more accurately.

MBDA, was formed by the bringing together of missile systems activities at EADS, BAE Systems and Finmeccanica, and has operations in France, Italy and the UK.

The merger has enabled MBDA to provide a comprehensive range of products, which support both the existing and future needs of the world's armed forces. MBDA offers customers high technology solutions and has unrivalled capability in key defence technologies.

For MBDA UK, with over 3000 employees located across predominantly three key sites in the UK, management of labour costs is obviously a critical part of protecting the Company's profitability. Personnel within such disciplines as research, design, manufacture, engineering and commercial management are expected to record attendance and to complete timesheet bookings to apportion their attended hours against the projects supported.



The previous time & attendance and time sheet booking systems had performed well, but were based on old technology and were becoming cumbersome to use and maintain. Newer technologies could provide greater functionality with improved data accuracy and control. A project team was set up, including representation from CSC, to look at replacement systems that would deliver four key business objectives:

- A fully integrated, cost effective application to support time and attendance administration,

timesheet booking and shop floor data collection (SFDC)

- Reduce administration costs through web-based Employee Self Service (ESS) functionality
- Provide seamless integration to SAP (PP, PS & HR modules)
- Support MBDA UK business processes

Open Options was selected by MBDA UK as the replacement system, following demonstrations and workshops that showed that Open Options offered the functionality required by MBDA UK,

as well as the capability for modification and development of bespoke software in areas that were key to the Business. The fact that Open Options was already deployed across other BAE Systems business units and the strong working relationships MBDA UK and Crown had developed over many years were also factors in the decision-making process. Significant benefits were also identified through the use of the Open Options integrated system including: greater synergy of data, efficient operation and ease of use.

Crown worked with MBDA UK to scope and develop the bespoke software necessary to deliver the ESS functionality and also the SFDC module, which allows shop floor operatives to clock on and off jobs, through use of touch screens and bar code readers, as necessary.

The deployment of **Open Options** throughout MBDA UK was a phased approach. Quarter 3 2002 saw the introduction of the SFDC element

of the product to coincide with the introduction within MBDA UK of SAP Manufacturing.

In quarter 1 2003 a pilot scheme was introduced to assess the time and attendance, including the ESS functionality, and time booking systems modules. The ESS module empowered employees to administer their own **Open Options** accounts with the need for very little management authorisation.

The pilot was successfully completed early in quarter 2 2003. The formal system deployment then commenced across the Stevenage and Lostock sites and culminated with the deployment to the Filton site early in the third quarter of 2004.

Open Options is used throughout the workforce regardless of position or grade or the particular shift pattern worked. Those employed by MBDA UK as contractors also use the system.

Open Options has provided MBDA UK with greater scope to monitor and control costs more effectively with the data provided forming a critical part of MBDA UK's reporting structure.

Unlike its antecedents, **Open Options** avoids the need to fill out forms, because employees carry out their own on-line time sheet entries, as well as time & attendance enquiries and administration, on desktop computers. Although a small number of people who provide day-to-day support have received more detailed instruction, most users have been able to use the system with a minimum of training. "Although the functionality of the system makes it straightforward to operate, **Open Options** has been designed to replicate the familiar processes from

the various predecessor systems," explains Opens Options Project Manager, Andy Bounsall. "As all these processes are now incorporated into one real-time application, data entry anomalies are immediately obvious and can swiftly be resolved."

Open Options has provided MBDA UK with greater scope to monitor and control costs more effectively with the data provided forming a critical part of MBDA UK's reporting structure.

Not surprisingly, there were a small number of minor teething problems, particularly when considering the significant culture change that was brought about by **Open Options**. However, it was possible to swiftly implement modifications to eradicate these. "At the beginning, employees had to climb the learning curve, but the more they used the system, the more the benefits became apparent to them and the feedback has, in the main, been very positive," says Andy Bounsall.

user group sept.05



Once again our User Group & Conference proved to be a huge success. This year, the event moved to the north Midlands, at the Nottingham / Derby Marriot hotel, a venue which attracted the best-ever attendance to this annual meeting with our various customer groups.

Customer Participation

The recent trend of increasing customer participation in the conference was continued with strong user experiences from two of our successful customers. Howard Dearing, Senior IS Manager at Grampian Country Food Group outlined how the Open Options roll-out programme had been achieved within his organisation of some 15,000 employees across the UK. And Brian Dalloway, Business Process Manager at Alstom Renovations described how the product was used to manage direct labour costs within Alstom's Train Renovation business. A final presentation described how Aircelle Limited had used a browser-based SFDC touch-screen application to improve shopfloor work booking functions on its well-established FM&C/400 system. All presentations were extremely well-received.

Open Options Development Programme

The Open Options Product Development plan is extremely

aggressive and is always the subject of great interest at the user conference. Another major Release will become available at the end of the year, fulfilling the development plans outlined at last year's conference. And further significant product enhancements were outlined to the user-community, describing Crown's development plans for 2006. All of these have one single objective, which is to keep the Open Options product ahead of its competitors and to deliver increasing business benefits to our customers.

Changes to Legislation

In 1998, the government introduced laws to comply with the EU Working Time Directive and the regulations have been largely unchanged since then. But in March this year, the regulations were changed to extend the legislation to include mobile workers. Nick Kay outlined the implications of this new legislation, which was relevant to all user-organisations that operate a road transport fleet.

stop press...

Oxford based **Siemens Magnet Technology** has ordered Crown's Open Options Employee Management System to help manage it's 700 strong workforce. Siemens Magnet Technology are the world leaders in the design and manufacture of superconducting magnets for MRI body scanners. Siemens plans to deploy both the Time & Attendance and Activity Management Modules, to improve control over payments and to monitor labour costs more effectively.

Lancashire Constabulary is using Crown's Open Options system to handle its Duty Planning & Rostering requirements in order to improve the planning and utilisation of its uniformed officers. The system will be deployed across all regions within the county and will eventually be extended to manage the flexible working requirements of all police staff.

Honda UK Manufacturing Ltd, the Swindon based car and engine manufacturer, has selected Crown Computing to supply a new Time & Attendance system. The system will be used to streamline attendance & absence recording (for approaching 4000 employees) and to improve reporting & analysis.



Crown Computing Limited,
Amber Close, Tamworth Business
Park, Amington, Tamworth,
Staffordshire B77 4RP
Tel: **01827 309800**
Fax: 01827 309810
sales@crowncomputing.co.uk
www.crowncomputing.co.uk

