

Yorke Peninsula Council takes payroll online with elementTIME

Learn how Yorke Peninsula Council got everyone online and streamlined their entire payroll process.

The complexities of multiple awards and entitlements make council payroll especially challenging. Like many councils, Yorke Peninsula Council (Yorke) used a paper manual system for timesheets and leave. This meant there was no visibility of actual time worked and risk of human error in filling out the timesheets and the data entry. The manual system also struggled to maintain controls over the complex entitlements, allowances and leave for employees, creating a significant risk for Council.

INTRODUCTION

The beautiful Yorke Peninsula in South Australia is blessed with a pristine coastline stretching for over 700 kilometres that is a top destination for outdoor enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike. The good people at Yorke are responsible for managing and caring for this large area which is home to over 11,000 residents.

Council's Payroll Officer, Anne-Marie Scaife was responsible for ensuring all of the hardworking council team got paid on time. But with paper and spreadsheet timesheets and leave requests, along with old school internal systems to deal with, keeping on top of everything was a big challenge. Anne-Marie, with the support of Carina Congdon, HR Advisor, was very keen to find a system that allowed Council to automate and streamline their timesheet and leave processes.

BACKGROUND

Yorke Peninsula Council has a workforce distributed across 8 fixed sites over a geographically large area, meaning staff are not necessarily located at the same site as their supervisor. When it came to the end of the pay cycle, getting an accurate timesheet from staff that their managers were happy with was challenging. On top of that, extra physical documentation was required to support the process, including separate leave forms.

All of this meant that Payroll was wearing a huge admin burden each payrun and often struggled to keep up with the volume of manual tasks and conversations. However, the biggest impact to the organisation was that Payroll had little time to ensure that staff time and leave was in line with the correct award interpretations and entitlements.

The key challenges slowing them down:



Lack of accountability for supervisors and managers to ensure timesheets were correct, creating errors and rework



High volume of requests for information such as staff wanting to know their leave balance



Payroll ended up as the problem solver, checker and headmaster – managers were not accountable for their staff as they didn't have the information they needed



The payroll process was slow, with lots of back and forth between staff, managers and Payroll

APPROACH

Yorke began the search for a solution to their payroll challenges, researching the experiences of other councils and the software options that were currently available. Yorke were surprised by the lack of success stories from other councils.

“No one seemed to have had a good experience and achieved the outcomes we were looking for. When we discovered elementTIME, it immediately appealed as it was designed specifically for Local Government challenges and complexities”

Carina Congdon



Yorke chose elementTIME:

- Single online system that removes all paper and double handling
- Tightly integrated into existing systems:
 - i. Authority ERP for time and leave data
 - ii. CM9 EDRMS for profiling timesheets, leave requests and supporting document
 - iii. Single Sign on via Active Directory
 - iv. Outlook calendar syncing
- Staff fill out timesheets, request leave and access reporting and related information from anywhere, anytime from any device
- Supervisors to be able to view and approve timesheets and leave requests, and report easily no matter where they are
- Payroll officers access a single, easy to use platform for administration and reporting, with a system sophisticated enough to handle challenging edge cases (such as a staff member working multiple roles at multiple pay rates)

“elementTIME is easy to use and our staff were up and running quickly”

OUTCOMES

Well for a start, the stacks of paper are gone and manual data entry is but a distant memory. With all information and workflows online, automated and visible, the collaboration between staff and managers has improved greatly. Managers are empowered with the information they need to identify and deal with issues up front so that everyone is on the same page. For the Payroll team, the smooth and automated process means less time on administration and more time ensuring compliance with awards and entitlements.

The benefits that had the most impact on Yorke are:

-  Huge reduction in data entry – information is entered once and flows through the workflows giving each user what they need when they need it
-  Supervisors are now accountable for their staff's timesheets with better visibility of time worked and leave
-  Better information – staff and managers have access to accurate, real time information (e.g. leave balances) so that don't have to make time consuming requests to Payroll
-  Integrated tightly – the right information flows through into the right systems when it needs to
-  Smoother, faster payroll – most of the queries and issues are resolved up front by the managers, meaning much less back and forth resulting in fast and smooth payroll
-  Better visibility of the way staff are working

ADVICE

For Yorke Peninsula Council, great change management was an important factor for their success. According to Carina, there are a few important things to consider when embarking on an implementation:

-  Get your Directors and Senior Staff on board early – their visible involvement will make the change management journey much smoother
-  Be conscious of the cultural change that will happen – elementTIME increases visibility of how people are working and some staff may push back in response
-  Allocate time to deal with what you uncover – it is common to find unexpected ways of working and arrangements that don't align with Council rules.

“elementTIME has really driven accountability with our managers to understand and address the way their staff are working”