

Ending Spreadsheet Chaos

How an HRIS will Save Money and Transform
HR into a Strategic Powerhouse

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Executive Summary

The challenges of today's volatile business world leave HR professionals scrambling to find enough time in their days to respond to the needs of employees, managers and the ever-growing HR workload. Then there's the issue of taking a seat at the strategic table. That demands accurate data at your fingertips and the ability to demonstrate how talent-related information translates into business results. Innovative web-based HR information systems make it both possible and affordable for even small and mid-sized HR functions to eliminate the chaos of paper or spreadsheets and flex their strategic-partner muscles.

In the aftermath of the recession, few would argue that we're facing a new business world. One that demands new and more efficient ways of working. And who is more about efficiency than the HR professional working in a small or medium-sized business? You have to be if you're going to juggle all the duties and challenges that come your way every day. Fact is, when the economy tanked it signaled the beginning of a whole new era for HR.

The recession claimed millions of jobs, forcing companies to do more with less – fewer people and fewer financial resources. Pick up a business magazine today and you'll read that organizations are declaring their employees to be the new foundation of competitive advantage. You're an HR professional – you've always known that talent drives a company's ability to differentiate itself and compete effectively. Now the whole business world's jumped onboard. That new spotlight on workers means greater emphasis on HR and its talent management capabilities.

A recent survey by *Human Resource Executive* found a whopping 80% of HR leaders reporting “dramatically” higher levels of stress. Whether you're leading HR in a large company or a small one, it's much the same.

Downsizing – company-wide and in HR itself – forces HR to do even more with less. Especially because companies increasingly look to HR not only for the people-related processes and transactions they've always handled, but also to step up to the table and contribute on a strategic level. How do you find the time?!

Are You Tired of Spreadsheet Chaos?

Think about what your job requires in a day's time. A new hire starts work; there's orientation to do. If you're using a paper-based system – and many companies still do – that means forms to fill out, and information to be logged and filed (often in multiple places). Payroll records to create, documentation for compliance ... the list can be endless. Even if you've progressed to a spreadsheet program, data entry is awkward and time-consuming. It isn't easy to share, or to update quickly and accurately. Indeed, researchers report errors in as many as 91% of spreadsheets (Panko, 2006). No wonder there's spreadsheet chaos!

Along with new hires in your workday, you have existing employees to serve. Brian in production wants to know how much vacation time he has. Julie in marketing has a change of address. The head of accounting needs an update on training completed by his reports. Then there's the yearly budget meeting – you've been asked to provide figures on turnover. And the CEO wants to know about performance ratings for line supervisors.

If it seems you spend your days putting out fires and handling transactions instead of contributing strategically, you're not alone. Survey results tell us that “few HR leaders spend more than 10 percent of their time at the strategic level,” and that some invest nearly two-thirds of their time on transactional work (Gartside & Cutshall, 2010). How frustrating is it when you can't get around to the work you really want to do?

There's an Answer for HR

If you're among those eight out of 10 HR professionals who are feeling the pressure, you need to know there's an answer to help you juggle your growing responsibilities. That answer is an HR information system, or HRIS. In fact, few actions you could take today hold the promise of freeing you faster from the tedium and error potential of handling routine transactions, slogging through spreadsheets, responding to employees' and managers' requests, and the myriad other duties you handle. HRIS can be your ticket out of HR chaos.

Imagine how differently you could manage those same daily demands if you had an HRIS system in place. The new employee's information is entered one place, one time. Often, the employee can enter much of it, so your time can be better used. When you need to access data about a worker, you can do so instantly and without leaving your desk to search through cluttered file cabinets.

Managers and employees can enjoy the convenience of self-service access to online records. Information is protected and secure, preventing unauthorized

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intrusion, but readily available to appropriate users. That means Brian in production can log in and check his accrued time off. With a few keystrokes, Julie can report her new address. And the accounting director can see for himself which reports have completed training.

What about the CEO's request? An HRIS can store information about employee performance, making advancement decisions easier and more objective. When you choose a system that's easy to use, managers (even the CEO!) can generate reports themselves, viewing results by the variables they specify.

HRIS Is A Nice Idea, But ...

Oh, sure, you may be thinking. Automated HR is fine for big companies with the financial resources and IT departments that make it possible. I'm a one-person HR function (or two or three) in a small operation. No big budget or IT geniuses to buy and maintain expensive hardware and software. And I certainly don't have time to learn some complicated application – that'll slow me down even more. Then I really WILL be stressed!

Couldn't we just outsource some HR functions? Many companies do, but a leading study (i4cp, 2010) reported that only 57% are satisfied with that solution – and that was only for administration of 401(k) programs. Satisfaction with other outsourced HR functions was significantly lower. Also, outsourcing can be costly ... and poses questions about flexibility, customization, branding, and security.

If those concerns and the idea of a hard-to-learn-and-afford HR information system are keeping you chained to an outdated paper or spreadsheet approach, you're ready for the new generation of HRIS. No expensive hardware or software to buy. No need for in-house IT to set up equipment, load applications and battle the software goblins that inevitably crop up. Best of all, no lengthy, complicated and mind-numbing training needed. The new easy-to-use and readily affordable online HR management systems can move even the most skeptical HR pro from "HRIS is a nice idea, but ..." to "Finally ... the practical product I've been waiting for!"

Making HRIS An Easy Choice

Unlike a traditional software-based, in-house HRIS, the new web-based systems enable HR professionals to enjoy the benefits of a robust online management system with no costly investments in hardware, software, IT support and training. The system resides online, combining the convenience and versatility of an employee-data tool with file storage, documentation management, report

What Can HRIS Do for You?

Top reasons why companies choose the power and convenience of HRIS:

- Frees HR's time for more valuable use
- Enables greater accuracy in capturing and using talent-related data
- Makes HR transactions faster and easier to manage
- Generates reports quickly
- Supports compliance
- Provides tracking for training, retention, and other functions
- Enables data-sharing and collaboration across organizational functions
- Fuels company growth by providing accurate information on workforce utilization
- Offers secure document and data storage and access

capabilities and more. You access the secure system from your computer – PC or Mac – anytime and anywhere. All you need is an Internet connection. There's nothing to install, and your data is protected and backed up automatically.

A functional and effective HRIS should make life easier, not harder, for HR professionals. Freedom from an avalanche of paperwork and the error-prone tedium of spreadsheets means HR can focus on the kinds of activities and contributions that bring real bottom-line value to their organizations.

A key factor in HR's taking its well-deserved seat at the strategic table lies in the function's ability to speak the same language as business leaders. An online HRIS enables HR professionals to instantly access data and cut it by a variety of factors. Reports can be custom-designed and generated at the push of a button. Those capabilities enable an HR professional to speak to company leaders in the language of the C-suite – numbers. The result? Perceptions of HR can change because you're able to demonstrate its real value.

Innovative web-based HRIS packs many capabilities into one easily-implemented system: creation/maintenance/storage of employee records; tracking of paid time off, benefits and training; document storage; report-generating capabilities; data export; self-service access for employees and managers; and more. To make the approach even more practical for smaller companies, some providers require no long-term contract – organizations pay monthly and choose plans tailored to the size of their workforces.

When you're ready to handle HR data more efficiently, ensure greater accuracy and become the strategic partner your organization needs, the time is right for the convenience of web-based HRIS.

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Our mission is to help small- and medium-sized businesses make the transition from paper or spreadsheets to automated HR data management, BambooHR offers new users a no-risk free trial. To take your HR function from spreadsheet chaos to the new era of HRIS efficiency, call BambooHR toll-free at 866-387-9595.



3210 North Canyon Road Suite 204
Provo, UT 84604

USA Call us at 801-724-6600
Toll Free: 1-866-387-9595

www.bamboohr.com