

CENTRALIZING HR AND Payroll at Bell Industries

Bell Industries

HIGHLIGHTS

HEADQUARTERS: Indianapolis, Indiana
EMPLOYEES: 800

PRIMARY BUSINESS: Bell Industries is comprised of three diversified operating units: Bell's Technology Solutions business, its Recreational Products Group and its SkyTel business.

HR TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE: To improve efficiency, accuracy and savings in time reporting and benefit enrollment using Web-based self-service solutions.

BELL INDUSTRIES INC., headquartered in Indianapolis, is a diversified technology and manufacturing company, with more than 800 employees in 32 locations. The company's Technology Solutions business offers a comprehensive portfolio of customizable and scalable solutions ranging from managed technology services to reverse logistics and mobile/wireless solutions. The Recreational Products Group is a wholesale distributor of aftermarket parts and accessories for the recreational vehicles and other leisure-related vehicle markets, including marine, snowmobile, cycle and ATV. The SkyTel division is a premier provider of wireless data and messaging.

THE CHALLENGE: For Bell, the management of the human resource management systems and payroll functions needed to be centralized at its corporate headquarters. During the implementation process, Bell was completing the acquisition of a 400-employee company that had to be live on the new system within three weeks. The implementation of the newly acquired company needed to be done prior to the Bell's go-live date, creating the need to work on simultaneous projects at once. In addition to the HRMS and payroll functions, Bell needed to provide multiple highly complex interfaces to medical, dental, flexible-spending accounts and 401(k) benefit providers. Bell desired to further improve the efficiency of the time-reporting process for workers, something that previously caused inefficient use of managers' time to prepare, verify and transmit employee timecards. This time-consuming process caused inaccuracy in time reporting that resulted in the need for costly supplemental payrolls. The company's desire was to have a more integrated individual Web-punch time-keeping process.

THE SOLUTION: Bell selected ECI's Empower product not only because of the extensive product features, but also because ECI offered a more customized approach to the implementation process to meet the client's needs. ECI established an individual project manager and a conversion staff early in the process, and provided a detailed implementation plan—setting expectations for both Bell and ECI stakeholders. The superior vision of the product's technology and functionality would allow Bell to continue to grow and accomplish further acquisitions, integrating seamlessly into the Empower solution. After evaluating top selling HRMS solutions in the industry, a group of senior managers determined that, with Empower, ECI provided the full suite of products backed by timely delivery. Bell went live with Empower in January, 2007, just three months after choosing ECI. After one year, a Bell management said that ECI provided an excellent value proposition for a technology company because a Bell analysis revealed that the company could expect a rapid return on investment. An expedient, cost-effective implementation was a major factor in this return, as was the elimination of payroll supplemental processes.

SAVING COST BY INCREASING EFFICIENCY: In addition to payroll and time-keeping products, Bell has empowered its employee base by implementing the Empower Employee Self Service and On-line Open Enrollment solutions. Bell employees can log into the system to update personal and contact information as well as complete year-end benefit enrollments. This saves countless hours and expense in preparing and distributing benefits-enrollment packages and reduces the error rate by eliminating the need to key benefit information into the system. Empower's integration tools made it easy and practical for Bell to provide data to third-party benefit providers. Previously, Bell's HR department had to collect and fax forms to the benefits administrators to update their systems. These updates are now sent at the click of a button and the benefit providers process an electronic file rather than hand-entering the information, reducing costs and errors.

