



Pret a Manger finds the right employee self-service package with Sage

Sandwich retailer Pret a Manger has upgraded its online self-service system from Sage, to cut the time staff spend on admin in its shops, so they can focus more on customer service. The company is using the self-service module from the solutions suite SnowdropKCS.

The upgraded system is geared towards allowing line managers to take greater responsibility for updating personnel records. It also means more access to details on pay and working hours, requiring less to-ing and fro-ing with payroll.

About Pret a Manger

Pret a Manger creates natural, handmade foods. It opened its first shop in London in 1986 and has 128 shops in the UK, employing 2800 staff. It has a growing presence in New York and Hong Kong.

The aim

Pret wanted to give greater responsibility to line and regional managers and take payroll and other departments out of the loop to make HR processes more streamlined. With a steadily growing workforce, Pret needed an easy-to-use system to keep track of staff at its shops and London headquarters. Line managers especially needed access to team records to update timesheets, manage absence and input new salary details directly from the shop floor.

The system

Pret originally implemented software from Snowdrop's modular suite in 2002: personnel; training & development; recruitment and self-service. The upgrade used the latest version of self-service from the Sage suite, SnowdropKCS, to bring Pret's HR function in line with new legislation and business changes from head office.

Benefits

The updated system transmits all employee information between shops and departments, reducing the paper trail and time taken chasing information. Data is now more accurate and can be used at both shop and head office level to make informed decisions about current and future business activity.

Thanks to an enhanced timesheet module, line managers can record details of Pret's incentive schemes. When a mystery shopper awards an employee an outstanding card – a £50 retail voucher – for recognition of exceptional service, it is added to the employee's details direct from the shop floor - previously the details had to go via payroll.

Line managers can automatically adjust rates of pay if employees work bank holidays – once a manual process. With new holiday calculations from head office, managers have instant access to each employee's entitlement. They can also view their teams' holiday allowance as a whole, rather than individually, seeing an overview of who's in and who's out, so rotas and time off can be planned better. This saves an average of one hour per shop per week.

With the introduction of the Disability Act 2004, Pret needed to record and track information about staff with disabilities so the working environment could be adopted to let staff work more effectively. These details are now available to line managers on the shop floor, so changes can be made immediately. For example, Pret's coffee jugs have different coloured discs to distinguish between full fat and skimmed milk. In a shop where a colour-blind barista works, clear labels are used instead.

Pret rebranded the self-service module to Pret People, so the staff-facing software felt familiar to all employees and used Pret's distinctive brand.

Abbie Akinfenwa, business systems manager at Pret, believes the updated HR system is key to improving productivity at shop level:

"Upgrading our current system means HR administration is simpler and quicker to complete. If line managers can update employee details without having to involve payroll or head office, tasks get done in half the time, so staff can focus on customer service."