

Customer case studies

RAND Europe

RAND Europe is an independent not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to help improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis. The organisation has been active for nearly two decades, and is part of the US-based RAND Corporation. RAND Europe adds international expertise and makes valuable contributions to traditional RAND research.

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Lindsey Gawthrop
Senior HR Administrator



Industry Not-for-profit - research institute

Geographic Cambridge

Employees 100+

Solution SelectHR

The journey

When RAND Europe developed a rapid growth plan, the organisation knew it needed an HR system. Until that point, the institute relied on spreadsheets for reporting and storing information, and used paperwork for holiday requests, annual reviews and more.

“Rather than growing to be a 100+ people organisation and reacting to the growth, we knew it was worth investing in an HR solution now,” says Lindsey Gawthrop, senior HR administrator. “Our goal was future-proofing: growing and moving forward without necessarily having to employ extra heads in HR.”

The discovery

After considering competitor solutions and reviewing references, the decision team realised Access Select was the right answer.

SelectHR is fully configurable and offers self-service functionality, a key factor for RAND Europe.

“SelectHR looks user friendly, and it was far more customisable than the other systems,” says Lindsey. “I’ve used many systems in the past, and they were quite rigid. We were keen to be able to develop things in house, and we could see SelectHR would allow us to do that.”

The implementation

SelectHR was implemented as planned without any downtime. “We did minimal training with our staff. We showed them the system, and they’d only come to us if they needed help,” says Lindsey. “With the appraisals, we did some online how to’s, but most people were able to work on their own.”



After the go-live, RAND Europe required some modifications to its system, which created a few issues. However, Lindsey worked with her Access account manager, and was happy with the end result.

The results

Because SelectHR is so flexible, RAND Europe is still seeing the benefits of its solution. "It's such a customisable tool, and it can be used for more than just HR," says Lindsey. "We can already see areas where we can develop the system; it's made things more exciting."

Improved access to information

RAND Europe customised its employee screen in SelectHR so researchers could add degrees held and languages spoken to their personnel pages. Employees can now quickly search for specific skills within the organisation; these include Disciplines, Areas of Interest, Areas of Experience/Expertise, Methods and Computing/Project Skills.

"We didn't have the search capability before SelectHR," says Lindsey. "Accessing the information from one system and running reports within it really helps our researchers. Also, the data is displayed in a far better way than the spreadsheets."

Replaced paper-based appraisals

Using the appraisals functionality in SelectHR, RAND Europe was able to revamp its review process – and eliminate paperwork.

"We've run all our appraisals through SelectHR this year, and we've halved the time our employees spend completing their reviews," says Lindsey. "Without a doubt we've saved the organisation time."

RAND Europe conducts a 360-degree appraisal of its employees. Individuals have their own online forms to complete, and they can ask observers to add their input too.

"The forms are sent to a central place where they're collated and approved. Individuals can then see their final review online," says Lindsey. "In the past, it was all in paperwork; every process was just more pieces of paper."

Empowered staff

From the word go, RAND Europe's employees were on board with SelectHR. The organisation presented it primarily as a non-HR solution – and even held a naming competition for the system. Staff refer to it as PANDA, which stands for people and analysis. The system and its capabilities were then promoted throughout the organisation in staff presentations.

"Our people embrace technology. Ninety per cent of our employees have taken ownership of SelectHR," says Lindsey. "They think of ways the system can help them do their jobs. Our department works with SelectHR and finds it useful, plus it's helping our researchers."

Streamlined holiday requests

Besides improving the review process, SelectHR has made it easier to book and track holidays.

"Before, employees would write out their requests or come to me to see how much holiday they had left," she said. "Now I don't have all those pieces of paper. When I'm doing reconciliations, it's a lot easier. I can download a report and clearly see who has carry-over."

Easy to customise

In addition to its Cambridge location, RAND Europe has offices in Brussels, which creates complex payroll issues. "In Belgium, employees receive 13.92 payments, whereas in the UK, it's 12 equal payments," says Lindsey. "Most of the solutions we looked at couldn't cope with that, but because SelectHR can be customised, it supports these differences."

Future

RAND Europe has plans to create a CV generator, and is also looking into SelectHR's recruitment functionality. Following the success of this year's appraisals, the organisation is already evolving its review process. The organisation is making the forms live documents so people can see their objectives and input the information as they complete it. "It's now a live process all year, not just a once a year thing," she said.

Conclusion

RAND Europe now has a customisable solution to support its rapid growth plan. "We're a small organisation, but we know that if we were to grow to 150-200 employees tomorrow, SelectHR would deal with it well," says Lindsey.

Who we are

Access UK is a specialist software developer and consultancy business. Developed here in the UK and supported locally, our aim is to cut through complexity and increase efficiency for your business.

Multi-award-winning, Access offers solutions for accounting and finance, manufacturing and distribution, professional services automation, HR, payroll, service management and CRM.

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