

CASE STUDY

How Amris helped extend Littlewoods' human resources

NAME: _____

Littlewoods Limited

INDUSTRY SECTOR: _____

Retail

Overview

Littlewoods Limited is a privately-owned business purchased by LW Investments Limited from the Moores family in November 2002 for £750m. Today, Littlewoods Limited's businesses employ some 22,000 people across the UK.

By 2004, Littlewoods' Human Resources department was ready for a change. Remaining paper-based in the twenty-first century not only gave it an old-fashioned feel, out of keeping with the way the rest of the business was headed, but it was also impractical and inefficient. Different HR personnel were responsible for different candidate files – so if one member of staff was out of the office, the others were powerless to deal with queries. The heads of department found their solution in Amris from the Internet Corporation, which stores all job application information in one place, easily accessible by password. Littlewoods HR hasn't looked back.

Why change?

When Littlewoods was acquired by its current owners late in 2002, the new team worked with an international management consultancy to implement a new, more dynamic, contemporary culture which encompassed every area of the business. No one was left unaffected, least of all the HR department which provides the shop window for new recruits to the new-look company. It became apparent that the traditional, paper-based way of doing things was not only a handicap to efficiency, but in no way reflected the new, forward-looking style. When a candidate's application can't be processed because it's hidden in the cardboard file of a consultant who is

away on a course, time and resources are wasted and it doesn't give the best impression. So the department decided to make major changes to its day to day organisation.

"As we're such a large company, we get lots of approaches from suppliers promising to make our lives easier," says Rachel Cooke, Littlewoods HR Manager. Which means that when the HR team decided to modernise they had plenty of offers to consider. However, by the time they reached the final presentation stage, it became apparent there was only one winner.

As Ms Cooke says, when it came down to practical demonstrations: "Amris was the only product that ticked all our boxes."

Day to day improvements

Amris impressed Littlewoods HR with its versatility, its organisational capacities and the simplicity with which it can be used.

Each new vacancy now has its own file accessible by all password-privileged members of the department. Because Amris is web-based, these vacancy files can be updated in real time ensuring there is no risk of a candidate being put forward for a position that has already been filled.

All the CVs and job applications received by the department and considered of interest are stored in a dedicated online folder, again accessible by all key personnel. Amris also allows agencies to submit CVs direct online, which means there are fewer phone calls to interrupt the business of the day. This streamlining process means that vacancies and candidates can now be matched with far greater ease.

Running Amris has meant Littlewoods has been able to grow its own talent pool of potential candidates which has led to a significant reduction in the amount spent with recruitment agencies, "...and the fact that incoming CVs/applications are colour-co-ordinated so we can see who's submitting them means we can monitor the success of our advertising," says Rachel Cooke. "It's

not something we put on our original list of requirements but it's a very happy by-product of using Amris."

However, the most outstanding Amris feature, and that appreciated most by Littlewoods HR, is its simplicity of use. Asked to sum up the difference Amris has made to handling the statistics that make up her working day, Cooke says quickly: "It's all in one place, and it's easily accessible." Making life simpler in fast-moving, commercial environments where there are huge demands on everyone's time is what Amris is all about.

The implementation process

Getting Amris up and running at Littlewoods was straightforward. Once the software had been installed, the department took part in two days' onsite training to help each member get the most out of the software. The team also appreciated the straightforward User Guide which was left with them to answer questions on a daily basis, and helps induct new members of the department into the Amris system.

Amris isn't a finite piece of software. Regular updates are passed straight on to client companies and the Internet Corporation provides extra training wherever necessary. Littlewoods HR appreciates that this keeps them at the forefront of e-recruitment, which in turn ensures they are very much a 21st century British business.

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