

Preparing for HR tech transformation: You don't know what you don't know . . .until you do



Michelle Kane
People Services
Sunshine Coast Council

Michelle Kane thought she was well prepared in her plan to bring in a new HR system at the Sunshine Coast Council - an initiative to streamline a complex tapestry of different HR solutions. She was also well aware of the challenges and dangers of not getting the plan right from the get go.

“We’d put a lot of energy, effort and thought into a comprehensive plan for HR tech in the past year - but I still didn’t know what I didn’t know!”

By the end of 2017, having taken the time to speak to others and do her homework, Kane was convinced the project would benefit from having an external advisor on their procurement strategy with expertise in the HR tech market.

A chance encounter

“Purely by coincidence, Pinpoint HRM sent me a Readiness Benchmark report I had completed at HR Tech Fest earlier that month. I’d scored highly – 88% in fact! – in terms of project readiness, but I wanted to be 100% sure that we were on the right track before we embarked on such a major project” says Kane.

A quick scan of the Pinpoint HRM website revealed that the company offered HR tech procurement advice, something she’d never seen before. So Kane engaged Pinpoint to conduct a review of their plans and procurement strategy.

“Craig Aunger and his team ran a workshop on how to prepare for and select HR tech which really helped shape our knowledge. They reviewed all our documents and made recommendations on the gaps,” she says.

What really stood out for Kane was when Pinpoint HRM shifted her thinking on their technology options and how they could go to market. It was a light-bulb moment.

The turning point

The Council had been seeking a single technology solution to support the entire employee lifecycle. But Pinpoint helped them understand that approaching the market in a way that allowed a multi-vendor solution would enable a more competitive and robust review, and ultimately yield a better outcome.

“We’d been speaking about our foundation data – the information based around a payroll and Rostering Time and Attendance (RTA) system – being the core of what we do. Whereas Pinpoint were advising us that a Human Capital Management System (HCMS) with integration to payroll, and a separate RTA system was going to be far more effective in meeting our aims.”

“We changed our procurement strategy based on that advice from Craig,” says Kane. By showing us the options and being strong enough to debate it with us, we went to market this year being really sure of what we wanted.

Lessons learnt

The Sunshine Coast Council has now gone through the vendor evaluation process and arrived at an outcome. What has Michelle Kane learnt from it all?

“You can never be prepared enough! I have learnt a lot from others and from Pinpoint – these projects always take more time and require more resources than you think! I’ve also learnt that it’s important to engage with your stakeholders in a genuine way.”

“One of my directors played back my own words in an executive meeting recently. He said ‘That’s a key readiness piece for our new HR Technology project’ in relation to our Licence and Compliance work. It made me smile.”

Where to from here

As one of the biggest employers in the area, Kane is fired with enthusiasm about how this technology initiative has set the scene for a broader HR transformation that will directly benefit Sunshine Coast Council employees. One initiative they are already working on is to redesign performance reviews for around 400 outdoor workers.

“It will no longer be around annual performance touch points that then get shelved,” says Kane. “We want this to be a more human-centred and conversational approach that is linked to things that make sense to them, such as keeping your truck clean or being congratulated in the moment when a job has been done well.”

Partnering with Pinpoint HRM

How does Kane think the partnership went? “We really benefited from them helping us to rethink our overall HR tech roadmap. We were going in one direction but they corrected our course. It certainly impacted the procurement strategy and we got better players out of the market as a result of it. Having now accessed Pinpoint’s HR tech toolkit and expert advice I’m very confident we know what we need to do to get this transformation right.”

“If I had to sum up my experience of Pinpoint HRM in three words, it would be ‘Partner with Integrity’, and you can’t ask for more than that.”

Michelle Kane
People Services
Sunshine Coast Council