

Unlocking the Secrets of Successful Benefit Administration

by Jerry Rowland, Vice President, Product Development
HR Systems Strategies Inc.

One area of info:HR implementation that is not always addressed is the connection of the human resources data to your third party benefits provider(s). The connection of HR to payroll is seen as a must to reduce duplicate data entry. However, benefit carriers require much of the same information about your staff, leaving your Benefit Administrator to communicate with the benefit carrier(s) manually. They too are a source of duplicate data entry.

In HR, transactions are entered into the system to record employment activities that occur with the staff. Activities include new hires, salary changes, status changes, benefit and deduction changes, dependents and beneficiaries. Some of these changes affect payroll BUT all of these changes will affect your benefit administration, policy and procedures.

As you are aware, you can set up an unlimited number of benefit groups; each group containing their own list of benefits and associated costs. These benefit groups are then associated with an employee. Whenever the cost of the benefit changes, it is a simple matter of changing the Benefit within the Benefit Group and all employees who have this benefit associated with them will be automatically updated. Also, a 'notice' is kept to inform the benefit carrier(s) of the change.

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Welcome!

By Andy Staniewski
President,
HR Systems Strategies Inc.

Welcome to the first ever issue of *info*. I wanted to organize our ideas and plans in one place and make them available to our customers in an easy-to-read quarterly newsletter format. I trust you will find it interesting and useful. Please do send me your comments.

It's been an exciting and successful year so far. I've had the opportunity to meet many of you and look forward to meeting with all our info:HR clients. Many new clients have joined us; read about St. Johns Rehab Hospital in this issue and on our website at www.infohr.com. I have received very positive feedback on our support and many good suggestions for product enhancements for the future. It's critical in uncertain times that we continue to focus on successfully managing our most important asset, our employees. That's where info:HR comes in. Please contact me with questions and comments at andys@infohr.com.

TRAINING

An Ongoing Return on Investment

By Linda Rowland, Vice President, Customer Support, HR Systems Strategies Inc.

Sometimes when we hear the word “training” we think about it as a one-time-only requirement when implementing info:HR. We work hard to take advantage of all the functionality that info:HR provides. We see all of the system’s potential when we are in the implementation phase and know that we cannot implement all of the functionality at that time. We prioritize and put into practise those features and functions that are deemed mission-critical.

After the implementation phase, we breathe a sigh of relief. Then business requirements demand much of our time and energy. There’s never enough time in a day to get everything done. We might have some turnover and new users of info:HR get on-the-job training, if any training at all. Then HR Systems Strategies Inc. reminds us that there is a new Release with new features and functionality. We download it and promise ourselves to take a look at the new features and functions. Alas! Sometimes that doesn’t happen.

When HRSS staff speak with customers, we often get suggestions about new

functionality. Sometimes, we are puzzled because we know that the feature or functionality already exists in info:HR. So, we show-and-tell about it. “Wow!,” we often hear. You didn’t know the feature or functionality existed in info:HR.

Here are a few examples of features and functions that we often get asked about: attaching documents like resumes, job descriptions, job offers, performance appraisals, etc. to an employee’s file; setting up the facility that allows for e-mail notifications to be sent for specific events like new hires, terminations, changes in salary, etc. which assist in the workflow process; and flagging certain events that need to be attended to in, for example, the orientation of a new employee.

Why not take advantage of some training opportunities offered by HRSS? We know HR and training budgets can be tight. We know that you may not need a whole day or even a half day of training. An hour or two might be sufficient. That’s why we are offering **web-based training**. Maybe training is required because

of new info:HR users. Or you would like to take advantage of the features and functions that weren’t on the “A” list during implementation. Maybe you would like to implement the most recent Release and utilize it fully. Whatever the reason, HRSS can help you maximize your return on the investment in time and money that you have made in info:HR by conducting web-based training seminars. Let us know your requirements and we can either conduct the training for your organization or we can set up a training seminar with a number of info:HR users.

The return on investment for ongoing info:HR training is significant and includes the elimination of spreadsheets and other manual ways of tracking and reporting on functions that can be done within info:HR and reducing effort in keeping those off-line systems current. info:HR ensures that the information is secure yet accessible to those who need it.

If you have any training-related questions, please e-mail me at infohrldr@aol.com.

Visit HR Systems Strategies Inc. at the following events:

Ontario Community Support Association.....	October 21
Grand Valley HRP A	October 22
OHA Health Achieve	November 3+4
HRPA Human Resources Professionals Association	January 28-30, 2009

News Corner

An upcoming implementation will bring St. John's Rehab Hospital into the rapidly growing group of health care providers using info:HR.

"We had no HRIS," said Gabrielle Bochynek, Director of Human Resources at St. John's Rehab. "It was not productive, it was subject to human error, and it prevented us from reporting at the level we wanted to."

The hospital performed a needs analysis and embarked on an HRIS comparison process. "During the comparison we found that info:HR led in affordability and ease-of-use," said Ms. Bochynek. "The product is straightforward, with an easy-to-navigate user interface. Plus info:HR's ability to interface with so many payroll companies gave us the confidence that they would be able to develop an interface to MediPay [the hospital payroll and financial system]. And they did."

"I am pleased to welcome St. John's Rehab to our client family," said Andy Staniewski, President, HR Systems Strategies Inc. "It just makes sense to leverage our existing health care industry experience to help a new client reduce errors and streamline hospital functions with info:HR."

Previous experience using info:HR made the decision to rely on HR Systems Strategies Inc. an easy one. "I have always been given excellent customer service," said Ms. Bochynek. "Fast turnaround times. Always finding out exactly what we need and then getting it for us. Taking a leadership role in working through problems in relationships with other vendors. My trust in both the management and support team at HR Systems Strategies Inc. is key. I have a lot of confidence in and respect for them."

St. John's Rehab Hospital is the only hospital in Ontario solely dedicated to specialized rehabilitation.



Jerry Rowland presents an Apple iTouch to our lucky draw prize winner at the September Canadian Payroll Association Conference in Montreal. (See the page two for a list of upcoming conferences.)

Benefit Administration, continued

Some of the benefits are tied directly into what the employee earns. They are called 'salary-dependent benefits'. In info:HR, when an employee's salary is changed either by a mass update function or individually, the cost of these benefits will be updated and a 'notice' is kept to inform the benefit carrier(s) of the change.

Other information that needs to be added and maintained are the employee's dependents and beneficiaries. Dependent changes can be maintained either by the individual employees through our self-service web module or by HR Administrators. Our self-service web module allows individual employees to view who their beneficiaries are, but the maintenance of this information is still entered by the HR Administrators. A 'notice' is kept for all changes to both master files.

Life changes (marriages, divorces, births, etc.) and employment changes (PT to FT, transfers, work stoppage, etc) are automatically tracked by HR. For each occurrence, a 'notice' is kept of these changes.

On a weekly basis (more or less frequent based upon the employer) all of these 'notices' are sent to the benefit carrier(s) informing them of the changes that occurred. This is done automatically and the Benefit Administrators no longer have to 'remember' if something about an employee has changed. The system keeps track of all of these changes with the date the change was made and when it is effective. Whenever the employee's waiting period is completed both the benefit carrier(s) and possibly payroll is notified. One stop shopping with all the necessary reporting available!

If you would like more info or would like to speak with a client who has gone through this process, please feel free to contact me at jerryr@infohr.com.

Notes from the info:HR Support Desk

By Hemu Mistry, Manager, Application Development and Support,
HR Systems Strategies Inc.

Welcome to the Support section of HR Systems Strategies' first newsletter. I'm sure it's going to be your favorite section!

I will start by talking a little about our support line. Then I will analyze one of our most frequently asked questions and, finally, offer some tips & techniques. I'm hoping this section will bring you more insight on what info:HR can do for you!

Support Line

Our support lines are here to assist you with any kind of question you have about info:HR and its various modules. The product has a wide variety of features, and there may be times when you are not sure how to make best use of a feature or, for that matter, may not even know that it exists. Give us a call or e-mail us and we will be happy to assist you in maximizing your use of info:HR. If there is anything that cannot be easily explained over the phone/e-mail, we can recommend the appropriate training.

To better serve you, when contacting us to report an error you are experiencing with info:HR or with any of its modules, please provide us with your name and the name of your company. If it's a follow up call, please provide the ticket number given to you by one of our support staff. We may be able to resolve the problem even faster if you e-mail or fax us a screen shot of the error.

Common Questions

Check this section of the newsletter every issue; I will share one or two of the questions that seem to be quite popular on our support lines, along with the answers we would like all our clients to be well aware of.

Q: Why is one employee missing in our info:HR report? We checked all the related data entry screens and the information is already there.

A: Check this employee's Position and Salary screen and ensure at least one Position and one Salary record is marked as current i.e. the "Current Position Record" on Position screen and "Current Salary Record" on Salary screen are checked. Most of our info:HR reports are employee's Position and Salary records dependent and therefore an employee must have a current marked Position and Salary record.

Useful Tips/Techniques

Did you know that info:HR has built-in functionality that allows you to track employee's Vacation time, Sick time and Overtime Banked & Taken in any number of classifications?

Let's say an employee has taken some vacation time during the year and at the end of the year this employee still has some hours left. The company then decides to pay-out the balance hours. How would you record this in info:HR/Attendance so it categorizes differently from the hours actually taken?

Simply create another Attendance Code, e.g. VACP, and record the hours paid-out against this code. The built-in functionality is the prefix "VAC". Any code that starts with "VAC" will deduct from an employee's current vacation entitlement.

This also applies to:

- **Sick Time Prefix Attendance code** with "SIC" to deduct from Sick entitlement.
- **Overtime Earned Prefix Attendance code** with "OT" to bank overtime
- **Overtime Taken Prefix Attendance code** with "CT" to deduct from banked overtime.

There is more built-in functionality to record straight time, time & half and double time which I will talk about in our next issue.

Please call us if you need any assistance in setting up this functionality. I hope this section has been informative. See you in our next issue!

Support Line:

416.599.4747 x 2022 or
1.800.567.4254 x 2022

Support E-mail:
support@infohr.net

Fax: 416.599.5031

HR Systems Strategies Inc. (HRSS) develops, implements, and maintains info:HR, a proven high quality Human Resources Information System. info:HR provides customers at over 300 organizations in 12 countries worldwide with user-friendly, robust and adaptable software solutions for today's human capital resource management challenges.

Visit our website at www.infohr.com.

