52 FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR NEXT HRMS

A comprehensive overview of core HRMS features to help you identify requirements for your selection project

GUIDE HIGHLIGHTS

Core features including recruitment and payroll

Emerging disciplines such as analytics, social and mobile

50+ features covered across learning, compliance and more

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GENERAL HR

1. BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Managing employee benefits and ensuring that they are factored into your payroll calculations can be a massive headache. The benefits administration module in your HRMS ensures that your HR team can factor in medical insurance, pension plans, vacation, sick leave, maternity leave and any other benefits offered to your staff quickly and accurately.

2. MOBILE COMPATIBILITY

Mobile access to your HRMS allows employees to keep in touch and access important information on the move. Cloud-based systems can be accessed on any mobile device with an internet connection, whilst both on-premise and cloud HRMS vendors increasingly offer native mobile apps for iOS and Android devices. Some HRMS are now exclusively app-based, and are designed specifically for use on a tablet or cellphone.

3. SELF SERVICE (EMPLOYEE)

This saves your HR department from many tedious hours of data input, and engages your employees with your HRMS. Employee self-service allows your employees to input personal data themselves, ensuring that it is up-to-date and accurate.

4. SELF SERVICE (MANAGER)

The manager self service functionality in your HRMS speeds up your HR processes by allowing managers to carry out a number of tasks, such as entering data on performance reviews, approving expenses claims and reviewing candidate applications. Managers can also access useful employee information immediately, rather than having to go through HR.

5. CLOCKING IN AND OUT

To start with the most obvious feature, the basic function of a time and attendance module is to allow employees to clock in and out - i.e. keep a record of their hours. The punch clock might be a manual piece of technology, or it might be linked to staff logging in to the office IT systems. Options include magnetic card readers, PIN numbers or even biometric scanners that identify employees by fingerprint or facial recognition.

6. EMPLOYEE SCHEDULING

These systems are about more than just monitoring the presence (or otherwise) of staff. Most time and attendance modules or apps will allow you to create and manage schedules and rotas, and such functionality usually comes equipped with alerts and notifications relating to overtime, poor attendance, etc.

7. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

As well as monitoring presence, such software can be expected to help you manage absence. Whether it's unexpected due to sickness, holidays or vacation days, or paid time off – it should be easy for managers to see at a glance who's in, who isn't, and what each person's remaining 'allowances' are.

8. PAYROLL INTEGRATION

Assuming you manage your payroll using software, your time and attendance module should be easily integrated with your payroll functionality; providing accurate attendance data for the payroll cycle that can be used to rapidly and accurately calculate salary and other benefits.

9. COMPLIANCE

Whatever territory or country you're in, labor legislation and regulations probably lay down minimum rest breaks and/or limits to the hours people can work in a shift. HRMS can monitor breaks on your behalf, using that data for reporting and compliance purposes, and providing automatic notifications if break patterns are not meeting the legislative norms.

10. COST ESTIMATES

To get a little more advanced, some software offers an estimate feature, using historical data to provide time estimates for defined projects, allowing better forecasting of the likely resources needed.

ANALYTICS

11. CUSTOMIZABLE DASHBOARDS

As each department, and arguably each employee, will be looking to get something different from your HRMS, it is important that the software allows users to customize it to their own needs. This encompasses everything from allowing users to create their own dashboards to offering a selection of color schemes, and will significantly increase employee engagement with your HRMS.

12. REAL-TIME REPORTING

Data (especially Big Data) is the new rock 'n' roll and HRMS often provide tailored (ideally customizable) reports and analytics using the system's data. Expect your management dashboard to include various attendance-related reports, offering insights into hours worked, shift patterns, and so on with a view to constantly improving productivity.

For some issues – specially workforce management and ad hoc scheduling – real-time information and reporting is required, allowing timely decisions that can maintain customer service levels and performance against KPIs.

13. PREDICTIVE CAPABILITIES

It's not enough to report on what was and what is, today's HRMS must offer a view of what will be, offering a guide on future performance against metrics and KPIs and suggesting the factors which may influence results either way.

14. AUTOMATED DATA-GATHERING

This should be a given, but your HR analytics package should be able to access whatever information it needs, when it needs it in order to provide you with the insights you want. This includes access beyond the HRMS database – a CRM, ERP and other business intelligence software will contain data which can be combined and cross-referenced with HR data to produce more sophisticated reporting.

15. RECRUITMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Ideally, your HR analytics application will be able to reference business goals and KPI performance to identify the roles and skills required by the business to meet its targets. This then informs recruitment planning and activity, bringing HR and managers together for targeted hiring. Appropriate HR analytics can ensure you're recruiting the right people, at the right time, and within budget.

16. ACCESS CONTROLS

Some data and reports may be public, some will most certainly not be. Your analytics app should allow tiers and levels of access to what can be 'classified information'. This approach to security should protect against reports being shared with non-authorized users.

17. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The reality is that cost is still a significant factor driving many business decisions. A good HR analytics package is an opportunity for the HR function to demonstrate that it is sensitive to the harder-edged business realities by linking reports and insights to workforce costings.

RECRUITMENT

18. RECRUITMENT AND SALARY FORECASTING

Using your HRMS employee data, your HRMS can anticipate future retirements or promotions. Through predictive analysis, it can anticipate where future holes may exist in the organization chart long before the hiring manager puts in a request to hire.

Current employee salaries are a good data point when planning for a new hire. HRMS recruitment modules can conduct data analysis on peer positions as well as the ones above and below your requisition. This provides you with a sanity check for the future anticipated salary.

19. DATA PROFILING

How often have you heard a hiring manager say, 'We want another employee just like Joe!' If you analyze the data for Joe and your other top performers in your HRMS recruitment, you will be better positioned to find that needle in the haystack. By reviewing the HRMS data of top performers, you can start to find trends such as education level, area of study, years of experience, etc.

20. RECRUITMENT ANALYSIS

While recruiters know about sources such as the hiring fair at the local university or the tech job fair, your HRMS data can help you to find other, lesser known hiring sources. In particular, if you analyze the sources of hired candidates, i.e. employees, this will give you a better target than if you review only the sources of candidates overall.

21. INTERNAL APPLICATIONS

A company's best candidate can be a current employee. The issue is that either the employee does not know about the opening or the recruiter does not know that the employee exists. Are you making it easy for current employees to register interest and find open positions? Solutions can range from something as simple as forwarding a weekly email of open positions to something more complex such as mining the database for employee talent. Either way, your HRMS recruitment module will be the backbone of any such efforts.

22. SOCIAL NETWORK INTEGRATION

Integration with social media - particularly LinkedIn, in this case - can make it easier for you to attract top talent. Your HRMS can link up with an array of social media platforms, making job applications quicker for the candidate, and speeding up the process at your end too.

23. APPLICANT TRACKING

Automatic applicant tracking is one of the best-established recruitment features and it continues to be your biggest potential time saver. Knowing at the touch of a button (or click of a mouse) exactly which candidates are at which stages of the hiring process can save hours of time and prevent a great of frustration. Automatic push notifications, to-do prompts and process monitoring should be expected standard features.

24. PARSING RESUMES

Even when you don't have a vacancy advertised, you may still be receiving resumes from hopeful potential employees. Manual filing and management can turn this into a substantial job. However, an HRMS recruitment module with the facility to automatically 'mine' the resume for key information such as name, address, contact details, even core skills, will give you a current database of candidate profiles to invite once you do have a vacancy.

ONBOARDING

25. PAPERLESS

It's almost certain that technology-driven onboarding is paperless, with access (especially by the new hire) via a web browser. Not only is this a lower cost and much more environmentally-friendly, but it's also much more rapid and secure (compare email to the postal service).

Equally, whereas in the past, new staff might have to sit through an induction event and/or corporate video in their first week, this same information can be sent to them in advance of first day, allowing them to 'hit the ground running'.

26. GAMIFICATION

An email with attachments to read and videos to watch may not always receive the close attention you're hoping for. This is why some organizations are gamifying their onboarding, creating a much more engaging and interactive process to obtain the necessary information, about the company and its people which in turn leads to better retention of that same information.

27. AUTOMATED REMINDERS

When starting a new position, it is easy to become snowed under with basic admin and housekeeping tasks. Some get deprioritized, and sometimes end up being forgotten entirely. Help your new hire to find their feet by scheduling reminders to notify them of tasks they haven't completed yet, and save your HR department confusion over incomplete records down the line.

28. AUTOMATIC SCHEDULING

Most new hires have a number of people they need to meet in their first couple of weeks – good onboarding software will take care of this, synchronizing the calendars of all necessary personnel, sending out meeting requests and monitoring responses.

29. PROBATION MANAGEMENT

It's best practice, recruitment-wise, for new hires to have a probationary period the passing of which depends on job performance, attendance and appropriate conduct. With a goal-setting function, onboarding software can be used to agree key targets and measures for the first few months of employment.

30. COMPLIANCE

Although the details vary from country to country, employing a new member of staff inevitably has a compliance angle – usually involving the collection and submission of tax data, the issue of an employment contract, and so on. An automated onboarding system automatically creates a paper trail (well, a 'paperless' trail really) which can clearly demonstrate that the necessary documents and data have been issued, collected and provided.

SOCIAL HR

31. INSTANT MESSAGING

An instant messaging feature allows your employees to keep in touch without the hassle of email, and without having to compile lengthy lists of phone numbers. Handy for keeping in touch with remote workers, or those out on site-specific work.

32. GROUP COLLABORATION

Group messages and project message boards allow project team members to collaborate remotely, and to exchange ideas on the go.

33. FILE UPLOAD

Allow employees to upload documents, powerpoints, pictures and audio files to your HRMS, where their team members can collaborate on them remotely. This saves the time which would otherwise have been spent emailing attachments round to large groups of people, and allows teams to focus more on the task at hand. No more cumbersome group emails, and no more 'didn't get the email' excuses for missing deadlines.

34. SOCIAL NETWORK INTEGRATION

Via an onboarding portal and/or the corporate LinkedIn page, the new hire can be guided to connect with new colleagues and key managers in advance of starting so that on Day One, they are seeing names and faces that are at least semi-familiar. The same functionality can also be used to forge an early connection with a company mentor.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

35. CERTIFICATIONS ADMINISTRATION

Let's face it, the main pain of learning management is all that administrative work – training nominations, course management, updating materials, ensuring compliance where necessary (SCORM, AICC, etc.) and that's before anybody's learned a thing! A learning management module should handle all this and more, dealing automatically with enrollments, cancellations, notifications, engagement with managers and instructors, plus a degree of evaluation reporting, showing the effectiveness of the learning activity.

36. TRAINING DIRECTORY

Whether it's a MOOC (massive open online course) or a bite-sized just-in-time individual download, the full range of learning options on offer should be manageable from a single interface, giving employees all the information they need to make the most appropriate choice. This includes mapping activities against any competency framework you may have in place for individual performance management, connecting the learning to the needs of specific skills and roles.

37. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Having the right skills and knowledge for the job is something any employee can take a personal interest in. This means that learning and development is a key opportunity to boost employee engagement and the user experience when accessing the LMS can be make or break. Easy access to their own records, job needs, future aspirations and a range of options plus suggestions cross-referenced to their personal development plan are the ingredients for heightened engagement.

38. PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

Certain roles require professional qualifications and/or continuing professional development. An ideal LMS will identify such roles, send the appropriate reminders to prompt the necessary learning activity, track the expiry/renewal of certificates and licences, and basically support those employees in the maintenance of their professional status.

39. EVALUATION DATA

Simple reporting functionality goes a long way in tracking the performance of your learning provision. Auto-collation of evaluation data offers essential basic feedback on whether your learning options and interventions are targeting the right skills, people, teams, etc. The right learning and development module will link this to KPIs and team/departmental targets to track levels of ROI.

40. ACCESSIBILITY

A big issue with learning and development is the accessibility of the learning to all employees and the accessibility to the software is no different. Wherever an employee is and whatever their role may be, they should be able to access the LMS when they need it. Compatibility with assistive technologies (screen readers, voice activation, etc.) goes a long way to ensuring universal access.

41. COMPANY POLICIES AND BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

You don't train employees for the sake of it. Ideally, the money you spend on certifications, training programs and classes should be seen as an investment in meeting the company's strategic goals. Have these easily accessible in your learning and development module so that employees can refer back to them when they need to.

42. DATABASE OF EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATIONS

Nothing too fancy, but very useful to have. An employee certification database allows your HR department to keep on top of who can use what, and who is qualified to do what job, and to take action to renew any certifications about to expire. Useful for everything from sending your office first-aiders on a six month refresher course to ensuring that no-one operates heavy machinery without appropriate qualifications.

COMPLIANCE

43. AUTOMATED RECRUITMENT COMPLIANCE

A major consideration during the hiring process is avoiding discriminatory practices that might leave the business open to a claim. Job advertisements, interviewer questions, reference checks, and so on are all open to risk of prejudice on grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, gender, age and possibly sexual orientation. HR compliance features built into the software can at least ensure that all communications (invitations to interview, offer letters, etc.) are solid.

44. AUTOMATED EEOC COMPLIANCE

The US's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is charged with guarding against the abovementioned discriminatory practices. Common recruitment practice is to ask successful job candidates to fill out an EEO self-identification questionnaire. Again, the right software will come with fully compliant questionnaires and also ensure that the resulting information is used in the appropriate manner, including reporting on the diversity of the workforce.

45. AUTOMATED ONBOARDING COMPLIANCE

Software-driven onboarding of new hires leaves an electronic trail, showing exactly what has been sent and received (and signed and returned) and when. This makes it a simple matter to prove HR compliance for documents such as I-9, W-4, and state withholding forms, OSHA rights & safety training, any confidentiality agreements, key staff policies and the employee handbook.

46. AUTOMATED HEALTHCARE BENEFITS COMPLIANCE

Healthcare-related compliance in the US takes in a number of pieces of federal legislation. In particular the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), but also potentially the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, the Mental Health Parity Provisions, the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act, and the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act. Put simply, the simplest solution is to have HR software that takes care of the data collection and IRS reporting automatically, and is kept up to date with any changes to the law.

47. PAID TIME OFF (PTO) AND FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act "...entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave." [Quoted from the Department of Labor website.

If that sounds complicated, factor in that any unused paid time off can be used concurrently with the FMLA leave and there's a certain comfort to leaving the recordkeeping in the cyber-hands of some trusted software that keeps count of the days and prompts managers to ask or answer the right questions at the right time.

PAYROLL

48. FLEXIBLE PAYROLL PERIODS

Some employees are paid every week. Others are paid fortnightly. Others are paid once per month. Often, organizations will pay different types of employee over different time periods, so having a payroll system that can cope with different payroll periods will cut down the time it takes to process employees' pay and reduce data input error.

49. BULK PROCESSING AND UNPROCESSING

Simply put, these features allow HR teams to automate payment of multiple employee wages per period. The 'unprocessing' feature allow these to be undone if anyone identifies a mistake that needs to be corrected.

50. ONLINE PAYSLIPS

Use your HRMS to make your employees' lives easier by making their recent payslips available to view and download any time. Why not save a few trees whilst you're at it and move to a completely paperless payroll system?

51. PAY ADJUSTMENTS AND OVERTIME

This allows accounting, payroll or HR staff to amend employees' pay to factor in bonuses, reductions, pension contribution salary sacrifice, unpaid leave or any other number of adjustments.

52. GLOBAL PAYROLL COMPLIANCE

Payroll compliance varies from country to country, and from state to state. This means that if you have multiple offices managing compliance adherence can get confusing. Luckily, your HRMS can automate your payroll to comply with regulations depending on geographical location.

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