

Avara Foods installs Document Logistix Document Manager to manage 500,000 documents

Avara Foods implemented digital document management in its Human Resources department to achieve greater operational efficiency and assured compliance.

Avara Foods is one of the UK's largest food businesses, supplying chicken and turkey to the nation's most popular supermarkets and restaurants. They may only have been formed in 2018, but they have a history and heritage that dates back to the early 1960's.

Formed in a joint venture between Cargill's UK fresh poultry business and Faccenda, they've been able to build on the experience and expertise gained from almost six decades' industry service. They are a new, ambitious company with a forward-thinking mindset.

Document types and legislation complicate HR records management

Businesses of all size handle multiple types of HR records. Large businesses manage thousands of HR documents every year: P60s, P45s, P11Ds, contracts, disciplinarys, holiday requests and pension documents. The volume of documents that HR departments handle is further increased by changes in labour and privacy legislation.

Document Manager supports HR Managers to capture employee related documents efficiently in a digital format, and eliminate the need for physical document storage and handling. Documents uploaded to Document Manager are indexed to ensure that they are filed in the correct place, where they are available for instant retrieval by authorised personnel.

Company: Avara Foods

Country: UK

Industry: Food

Profile: Avara Foods is one of the UK's largest food businesses, supplying chicken and turkey to the nation's most popular supermarkets and restaurants. The company has 7000 employees whose records are managed by 110 HR staff.

Key Drivers:

Standardising electronic HR processes

Digitising legacy system records

Improving speed of document access

Business process efficiency

Improved governance and compliance

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – Avara Foods



Photo taken Pre-Covid

"The move to Document Manager represented a huge change for Avara"

Avara Foods' challenges and digital objectives

Craig Battison, HR Systems Manager at Avara Foods, described the background to installing Document Manager. Historically Avara Foods was two companies using different systems to manage HR records, varying widely in approach from scanning documents and adding them to Active Directory, to working with paper records. The decision was made to move to one consolidated digital system.

Avara Foods had a history with Document Logistix and liked the fact that Document Logistix owns its own intellectual property, as implementation and collaboration are more straightforward than dealing with a reseller.

The move to Document Manager represented a huge change for Avara Foods and was not without some technical difficulties. However, the biggest changes were cultural and operational as the legacy businesses did not have standardised processes in place. A super user group was established and tasked to be imaginative in vetting the new workflow.

The objectives for the new HR system were to have centralised, accessible documents; to comply with GDPR; to make savings by reducing paper and increasing access speed; to automate governance; and facilitate audits.

Governance is an important requirement for Avara Foods, as working with many of the largest supermarkets, the company has to demonstrate it has undertaken mandatory activities such as required training. Document Manager enables the company to identify any gaps and rectify omissions.

The Challenge of Enhancing security and audit-ready records

Avara Foods has 7000 employees (with 15,500 employee records in Document Manager, including leavers - which includes the archive). The company adds and assigns to the relevant HR team, approximately 30,000 documents per annum in Human Resources Shared Services (HRSS).

Avara Foods has about 110 members of staff working in the HR department. HR staff comprise a mix of heavy and light system users, and all have access levels appropriate to their job role, with a combination of view and edit privileges, company-wide access, site access and other designated attributes.

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – Avara Foods



Photo taken Pre-Covid

"Governance is an important requirement for Avara Foods"

HR documents contain sensitive information and personal data, which means information must be held securely to prevent any potential data breaches.

Every user access and action within Document Manager is time-stamped and recorded, so internal quality audits or external compliance audits are no longer the time-consuming worry they once were. Evidence of compliant processes can be produced instantly.

To prevent information being viewed by unauthorised personnel standard folders and files are assigned only to authorised population groups.

Further measures can be introduced so that personal data cannot be seen at all in procedures such as subject access requests (SARs). Personal data and information can be redacted (masked) to comply with a range of compliance requirements, including GDPR.

Document Manager also provides the means not only to ensure that there is only one up-to-date digital version of a document, but also to prevent loss or mischief as documents do not have to be duplicated, copied or, as they once were, removed from the office.

Accommodating large document volumes in a new digital system

A first step in implementing Document Manager involved migrating large numbers of paper records that regulations require to be kept. An intensive back-scanning exercise was undertaken in the Document Logistix scanning bureau which resulted in centralised records for each employee record containing up to 750 word-searchable pages.

Avara Foods migrated, from an existing digital archive, more than 250,000 legacy documents into the system as a part of digital documentation initiative. In addition, another quarter of a million files have been added to Document Manager since going live (that is, within fourteen months). With an average of 4 pages per document, the system holds more than 2,000,000 pages.

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – Avara Foods



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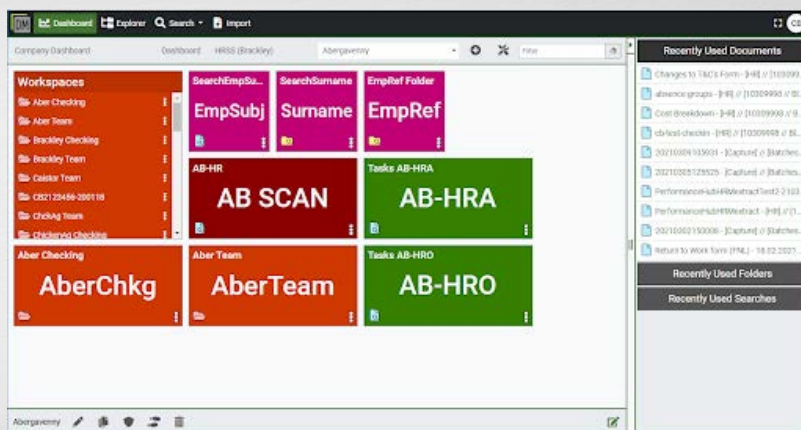
Immediate benefits: access speed and visibility

The major benefits were noticed first by the side of the business that had historically used paper documents, who instantly had the benefit of digital search and rapid information retrieval. New digital capabilities contrasted starkly with historical methods that frequently involved photocopying document originals.

Users who had used another digital system became accustomed to the new system. Nevertheless, these users also enjoyed immediate benefits such as the ability to be able to identify document gaps quickly in personnel records, for example, the absence of a right to work document, a signed contract or proof of ID.

As all users become fluent in Document Manager they will have full visibility of document life-cycles, from when documents are captured and indexed, through assignment, to their appearance on a dashboard, and their possible reassignment.

This dashboard example is one of the many user-configurable profile views available that give quick access to the HR business processes of each site. The user can add any number of information widgets to give them a holistic view and immediate access to relevant tasks.



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More opportunities for electronic standardisation

Avara Foods have been able to introduce a range of standardised forms, such as return to work documents, which are coded to be indexed to the correct location.

Similarly, there are delivery and filing accuracy benefits associated with digital document management. The ability to communicate with thousands of members of staff at one time using Document Manager's mail-merge facility is highly efficient.

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – Avara Foods



The facility replaces intensive manual and paper-based methods and ensures that each staff member receives timely information. The system also files the transmitted document automatically in staff HR records so that there is an auditable record of communication.

Integration with Avara Foods third-party HR system, Mitrefinch, has given immediate benefits. This continued combining of all data will enhance the view of all available employee records to the HR teams.

System improvements anticipated over time

As more and more first-generation documents are loaded into Document Manager, so Avara Foods will gain more benefits.

The world of HR records is varied. The records associated with employees may comprise a standard set of documents such as job application, job offer, contract, terms and conditions, new starter kit, probation letters, sick notes, maternity and paternity leave, and leaving documentation.

How long any type of record is required to be retained varies by record type, for example disciplinary records (18 months), financial records (7 years), and pension information (70 years). There is also a requirement for rules to be applied to leavers' records and records of staff who may or do re-join the company.

A paper-based, manual process simply could not cope effectively with the sheer volume of documents and their upkeep.

A long-term benefit of Avara Foods's full commitment to digital transformation will be the ability to purge any documents automatically that are associated with leavers after a prescribed period. Such auditable tasks will help the company to meet its GDPR obligations.

Over time, culture and process changes should result in further savings in time and resources, and more benefits in compliance risk management.

A look ahead to self sufficiency

In future, Avara Foods plans to implement self-service for employees. Given the company's large workforce, to eliminate intermediaries from the process of changing relatively basic information will save a lot of time. Staff will be able to update personal information such as name and address changes, and HR managers will be able to approve to go live after checking any required proof for change.



Document Manager user configurable dashboards.