

Company: DHL

Country: UK

Industry: Logistics

Profile:

DHL was founded in 1969 and has subsequently revolutionised the world of logistics. Today, DHL is the world's leading logistics company, with 380,000 people working in more than 220 countries and territories to help customers cross borders, reach new markets and grow their business ... or simply send a letter to loved ones.

Key Drivers:

EU GDPR compliance
Business process efficiency
Digitisation
Green operations

DHL adopts Document Manager to achieve demonstrable GDPR compliance

While digital document management began life in the warehouses managing PODs, it has since been adopted by lots of other departments and integrates with every business function. Digital document management has been embraced by the Human Resources department where the business drivers are efficiency and compliance.

Sarah Gray, HR Customer Service Delivery Manager at DHL, is responsible for the HR records of circa 60,000 employees in the UK and Ireland.

Sarah joined DHL in 2018 and one of the tasks Sarah was specifically tasked with was to review DHL's EU GDPR readiness.

Sarah was faced with legacy records comprising 15 million documents, which presented huge storage, access management and retention issues. The goal being to digitise legacy records so that the multiple HR document types, with varying mandatory retention periods, could be managed efficiently. At the same time, Sarah was looking for a streamlined system to capture and manage information in the future.

As well as the new strict data privacy laws that came into effect in May 2018, any new document management system had to be able to accommodate and adhere to DHL's own strict policies.

A multiplicity of document types with their own storage and retention requirements

The world of HR records is varied and complex. 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.

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – DHL



A paper-based, manual process could not cope effectively with the sheer volume of documents, ready access and upkeep, or with the governance issues surrounding security and compliance.

DHL selected Document Logistix' flagship product, Document Manager, as the preferred centralised system to house and manage its mountain of HR records.



Initially the back-scanning of records, amounting to over 12 million records, which was achieved in a relatively short time using smart-technology Fujitsu scanners in the Document Logistix in-house scanning bureau.

All documents are indexed and assigned to relevant digital folders, from where they can be accessed, viewed, annotated, redacted or updated in a matter of seconds.

DHL was able to dismantle its old document management processes that involved scanning and hard copy storage and reclaim the physical space previously required to store vast numbers of boxes.

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Immediate benefits

Sarah Gray explains that DHL saw immediate benefits from the company's digital transformation. She identifies the company's ability to automatically purge documents associated with leavers after a prescribed period as one of the reliable, efficient and auditable tasks that has helped DHL to meet its GDPR obligations.

Sarah also points to culture and process changes that have resulted in what she calls "huge savings in time and resources."

Sarah described historical scenarios that echo Heath Robinson ingenuity, where HR business partners sent in a document for processing, or would have to visit the department to find documents to view, or request that documents be sent to them.

"We were wasting a lot of time on pointless tasks such as organising couriers to ferry documents such as incident reports," Sarah says.

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"DHL saw immediate benefits from the company's digital transformation"

Speedy access and new self-sufficiency

DHL has optimised the use of Document Manager licences across the HR team and worked together with Document Logistix on user guides and training so that system users are confident and system adoption is high.

Document Manager provides the foundations for self-sufficiency among associated stakeholders and the HR Department no longer has to act as go-betweens in the capture or provision of information.

The result is that approved personnel can access the information they need without any delay and the HR team can work on higher value projects now that simple administrative tasks are virtualised, secure and trackable.

Enhanced security and audit-ready records

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

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 – or hacked – 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 common procedures such as a subject access request (SAR). Personal data and information can be redacted (masked) to comply with a range of strictures, 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 the office.

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“Document Manager enables the department to operate lean and Green.”

In keeping with DHL’s lean and Green objectives

DHL necessarily focuses on lean processes to optimise its logistics operations and provide best value to its customers.

The company is also proud of its commitments to the environment and sustainability which are documented on the DHL website.

Sarah Gray says that Document Manager “ticked all the boxes for the HR team as it enables the department to operate lean and Green.”

With digital document management the HR team is fully productive and there is no waste and no measurable environmental impact, compared with paper-based processes.

Storage savings

Sarah Gray says that automated document purges have saved a large but unspecified amount of money, by eliminating physical storage and resource-intensive manual processes.

However, when asked about specific sums, Sarah identifies a substantial secondary cost saving now that can DHL are able to take advantage of tiered digital storage.

She ascribes a saving of £70,000 to the fact that DHL can move dormant documents to less expensive server storage, and free space on its premium service.

The documents associated with potential re-starters, or, as another example, with tribunals, that do not need to remain live for instant access, are moved to a ‘silver’ service where they are securely ring-fenced and archived, but are available should they need to be reactivated.

Management line of sight

Sarah Gray says that Document Manager enabled DHL to look more broadly at other aspects of their processes.

She says, “the addition of a simple report that enables us to see the number of documents we actively manage or hold in archives provides new visibility that means we can accurately cost our HR activities.”

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The report includes sight of leavers and potential re-joiners whose records are put ‘on a clock’ that can be restarted or that will automatically purge specified documents at a specified time in accordance with regulations.

Working with Document Logistix: a genuine relationship

Sarah Gray characterises working with Document Logistix as “very easy. They are very responsive; that’s the key element to the positive nature of the relationship.”

Sarah describes how the 2020 pandemic* raised challenges for DHL as its diverse client base includes the NHS, large national grocers, airline cabin cleaners and baggage handlers. These customers operated at what has been called the front line, with massively increased transport requirements or with requirements for heightened levels of hygiene control.

At a time when speed was of paramount importance, Sarah says she only had to email to get new categories set up within Document Manager to enable DHL to manage staff affected by the pandemic effectively.

Sarah appreciates Document Logistix’ willingness to investigate and discuss further improvements to DHL’s document management system. “We have a collaborative process, which I value, compared with providers I’ve known in other roles, when talking has been difficult.”

In conclusion, Sarah Gray says that “privacy became a global phenomenon very quickly. I can identify many benefits associated with our installation of Document Manager, but I am most pleased that DHL is now demonstrably legally compliant as a result of the system, with reliable audit trails as evidence of our robust practices.

DHL is not a company to cut corners, and in Document Logistix we have a committed provider that understands our high-performance standards and our business requirements.”