

Case Study:

Amidst Lingering Budget Cuts, Southwark Reports Significant Annual Savings with Automate Studio

Comprised of 21 wards that extend along the River Thames and down into South East London, Southwark Council encompasses many of the city's most notable features and attractions including London Bridge, the Shard, Borough Market, the Tate Modern, and the Globe Theatre.

The Council employs nearly 6,000 people and manages a vast number of services for the Borough's 293,530 residents, from highways to housing, to health and social care

The Challenge

The Council's chief initiatives included improving efficiency throughout the organization, streamlining SAP data entry and accuracy, and implementing automation and online processes when available. Across the public sector, services have continued to face departmental spending cuts, and an uncertain forecast for closing the budget gap. "We're very conscious of the fact that we don't get to cascade our work down, and we're constantly looking to do more with less and utilize our limited resources," said Susan Biggs, SAP HR Payroll Officer at the Council. They sought a solution that would allow them to reduce their workforce, lowering HR hiring and training costs.

They needed to update data affected by condensing satellite offices into a single building, including a massive reimplementation of employee payroll. The Council was also looking for a tool to simplify the creation of their election payroll for short-term employees.

"We needed an alternative for ESS/MSS for areas where the technology knowledge was not present and we didn't have the ability or resources for it," said Biggs. "We were in such financial constraints and had to cleanse all of our data manually, spreading our resources thin. If we needed to do a major change and our data was incomplete or inaccurate, our documents could not be sent to the tax office."



About Southwark

- Public Sector / Government
- Automate Studio user since 2008

Challenge

- Implement modernization, automation and online processes
- Improve efficiency savings and workforce reduction
- Update and improve data affected by employee payroll overhaul

Solution

- Automate Studio

Results

- 30% of online processes now use Automate Studio on day-to-day basis
- Annual savings of over £70K from workforce reduction
- Employee payroll process takes 1.5 days to complete, with 100% accuracy guaranteed

"Automate Studio does the job of three employees, it's our workhorse. It's the perfect clerical worker, as it doesn't have a hissy fit or sit in the corner and cry; it goes off and gets the job done right."

Susan Biggs,
SAP HR Payroll Officer, Southwark Council

Solution

Using Automate Studio, Southwark Council's HR department was able to significantly reduce manual data entry and improve data accuracy. "77% of our day to day input has now moved to online processes, and 30% of those processes use Automate Studio," said Biggs. "With Automate Studio, we can upload mass amounts of data directly from a spreadsheet. We can now send prepopulated spreadsheets to employees without ESS and 5,000 transactions can be updated in 30 minutes, which used to take over a week to complete!" she said.

In addition, a successful overhaul of the employee payroll was completed, with over 5,000 staff processed using Automate Studio. Through improved process efficiency, they were able to create an election payroll for over 800 new or existing temporary employees, avoiding multiple employee linking and NI match warnings.

Results

Prior to Automate Studio, Biggs' team didn't have the time or tools to perform data maintenance with any frequency. Now they can update 13,000 sets of details over the course of an hour. "Automate Studio is our Ronsal – it does what it says it does. Using Automate Studio, we can now rest assured everything is as it should be when we're audited several times a year, because we know the data is accurate in SAP," said Biggs.

By moving the majority of their processes online, Southwark Council has limited the need for two additional staff members, resulting in over £70K in annual savings. "Automate Studio does the job of three employees, it's our workhorse. It's the perfect clerical worker, as it doesn't have a hissy fit or sit in the corner and cry; it goes off and gets the job done right," said Biggs.

During the employee payroll completion, they were able to implement mass changes to employee sub-group data, personnel areas, and payroll administrators. Using their old processes, this would have taken three employees four weeks to update all of the changes – while doing no other work and completely shutting down payroll operations. Now the whole process takes 1.5 days with 100% accuracy guaranteed!

The Council is also saving a significant amount of time and resources utilizing Automate Studio for their temporary election payroll. "Our electoral payroll would have taken two employees over 144 hours to manually set up the records. With Automate Studio, it takes half a day to plan, record and map the whole process – and two hours to run!" said Biggs. Election payments, which would have taken 72 hours to manually enter are now processed in 40 minutes with Automate Studio.

After learning about Human Resource's widespread success with Automate Studio the Finance department now uses Automate Studio's Transaction module to automate invoicing, journal entries, purchase orders, and accounts receivables among other processes. Through automation, they reduced staffing levels and substantially increased data accuracy and efficiency.



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