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Why Does HR Need To Collect Data? An Employee's Guide

1st September 2014 - Posted By [David Richter](#) To [Octopus News](#)

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HR systems are increasingly used by HR departments to help collect, store and manage data about its workforce. At the most fundamental level HR needs to collect basic data about its employees for:

- Compliance with legal or industry requirements. For example employers are required to keep a copy of an employee's documents such as a passport to prove that an employee is eligible to work in the UK.
- Risk mitigation by keeping a paper trail of critical communications to employees.
- Administration – you need some sort of system in place to be able to store information about your employees to enable you to communicate with them, run payroll etc.

While almost all employers will be collecting this sort of data in one form or another, be it paper based or electronic, the real value for collecting data on employees is to enable HR teams to analyse the data, make predictions based on this analysis and ultimately take action.

The sort of information that an HR team will want to collect will vary depending on the industry, the company and its priorities. Examples of some of the most common types of data that companies will collect about their workforce and the sorts of questions they hope to answer are listed below:

• Absence Data

- o Are there any employees that have taken an excessive number of sick days? Who are they? Does this require any intervention?
- o How many days holiday has an employee taken? How many have they got remaining? Do they have enough holiday left to cover their latest request for leave? Is there likely to be a backlog of holiday requests towards the end of the year?

• Diversity

- o Are there teams or departments that would benefit from greater diversity in their employees? Where have we recruited previously, do we need to pro-actively target other groups?

• Employee Retention

- o What are the turnover rates of employees by location, department, team, role, pay etc? Are there any unusually high levels of turnover anywhere, does a manager need help or training to improve this situation? What was the effect of pay rises or bonuses on retention?

• Recruitment

- o What channels have worked for recruitment in the past? What is our cost and time to hire? Do we have a succession plan in place? What are the characteristics of recruits who have performed well or performed badly in our organisation?

• Budgeting

- o What impact will an X% pay rise have on our payroll? What percentage of employees have opted out of our pension scheme? What impact will this have on our likely contribution levels as the employer contribution requirements change?

- **Surveys**

o How engaged are our employees? Are there any employees or teams who have become disengaged recently? Why is this? What can we do about it?

- **Skills**

o Does our workforce have the necessary skills and expertise? Where are we lacking?

- **Training**

o What were our training costs this year? Can we make assumptions about likely training budgets next year? Is there a correlation between the performance of employees who have taken part in a particular training course?

By collecting data on a company's workforce, HR departments are able to analyse this data and take action to benefit the whole organisation. The data that is relevant will depend on a company's priorities but, as the saying goes, what gets measured gets done. As more and more information is captured by employers, the ability to effectively store and analyse this data is greatly enhanced by using HR specific software.

David Richter

Marketing Manager - Octopus HR

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CASCADEGO

1 Gelderd Road
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS12 6NJ

CONTACT

0333 939 0113
info@octopus-hr.co.uk

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dataLayer.push({'event': 'chat-started'}); } }; </script>
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