Personalized and sca services, enabled by

SLTN infuses AI into its employee HR services using IBM watsonx

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Employee productivity impacted by slow response times to HR-related queries

With a 28-year history of providing IT solutions for businesses in the Netherlands and around the world, SLTN has grown to become one of Europe's largest privately owned system integrators. It employs more than 600 highly skilled IT professionals, and its HR team is responsible for further enabling the growth and onboarding additional staff but also keeping these talented staff happy and productive.

"We're a small but dedicated team of five people in HR, and the volume of questions—ranging from basic policy clarifications to sensitive personal issues—can be overwhelming," says Yrjan Dommerholt, Senior HR Business Partner at SLTN. "We are spending so much time answering basic questions that it is difficult to make time for more complex or strategic work. The productivity and satisfaction of employees are sometimes impacted due to the two-to-three-day response times at busy periods on HR-related questions."

Many of the issues that employees raise with HR are highly personal, especially with employment conditions, fringe benefit and family matters, such as parental leave, sickness and bereavement. The HR team wanted to make sure they had the bandwidth to handle these issues with care and sensitivity and always give colleagues the time and support they need. That meant finding a way to reduce the team's workload, leading SLTN to explore whether AI could offer a viable solution.

" Responsible use of AI important ... IBM watsonx.governance gives us the

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tools to maintain data privacy as our development and use of AI expands."

Mark Pieplenbosch
Practice Lead for Professional Services
SLTN

Developing an innovative chat bot while respecting employee privacy

The HR team enlisted the help of AI experts from SLTN's Professional Services practice. Mark Pieplenbosch, Practice Lead for Professional Services, says: "We wanted to build something innovative that would show our clients the value of AI. So, when HR approached us, it was a perfect match."

SLTN, a three-time IBM Beacon Award winner, has had a strong partnership with IBM for many years and saw the IBM watsonx™ portfolio as an additional advantage. "Partnering with IBM on AI made perfect sense given their leadership in AI and AI governance." says Pieplenbosch. "As the market becomes more mature, our clients are realizing that governance is essential for the safe and responsible use of AI, so we were very interested to put the potential to the test with IBM watsonx and HR."

After evaluating several options, SLTN chose IBM watsonx for its emphasis on privacy and governance. The team launched a proof-of-concept watsonx.ai™ AI studio and IBM watsonx Assistant™ to SLTN HR chatbot. Initially, the chatbot's large language answer questions based on SLTN's employment condit was also integrated with the company's core HR system, enabling the chatbot to respond to employee questions in a more personalized way.

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"Today, people can ask questions like 'what are my remaining vacation days for this year?' and the chatbot will query our HR system to provide an instant answer," says Dommerholt. "They can even submit a vacation request through the chatbot, so they don't have to log into the HR system directly."

Personalized people management

Following the resounding success of its pilot project, SLTN rolled out Sophie to all 600 employees. By integrating with Microsoft Teams and Active Directory, the chatbot delivers personalized, context-aware responses while maintaining employee data privacy with support from IBM watsonx.governance™.

"Responsible use of AI is incredibly important," says Mark Pieplenbosch. "We have worked hard to ensure that sensitive employee information is properly protected, and [the] IBM watsonx.governance [toolkit] gives us the tools to maintain data privacy as the development of AI expands."

While operating within those parameters, the chatbot will unlock new insights to help the HR team improve every aspect of people management across the business. Additionally, the HR team can gain valuable HR insight using Sophie's analytics capabilities. "By analyzing common queries, we can proactively refine training or policies to better meet employees' needs," explains Pieplenbosch.

Today, the chatbot is already helping transform the experience of interacting with HR for SLTN's employees. "People can now get instant answers 24 hours a day and take action without logging into separate systems," says Dommerholt. "If you're at home in the evening discussing holiday plans with your partner, you don't have to wait until the next day to check with HR about your vacation days."

"HR is the intersection where people's personal and professional lives meet," concludes Dommerholt. "Building this chatbot with IBM us the time and headspace to be there for our colleagu

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About SLTN

SLTN [↗] is one of Europe's largest privately owned system integrators, with annual revenue of more than 285 million euros and a staff of more than 600 highly skilled IT professionals. The company works with small-sized to medium-sized businesses, corporate accounts and large enterprises in the Netherlands and delivers projects for clients around the world.

Solution components

IBM® watsonx Assistant™	→
IBM watsonx.ai™	→
IBM watsonx.governance™	→

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