NEWS INTERNATIONAL

BUILDING EMPLOYEE AND MANAGER SELF-SERVICE WITH SAP® INTERACTIVE FORMS

"We are seeing the cycle times for our HR processes reduced anywhere from 50% to 75% thanks to SAP Interactive Forms. We are no longer chasing down missing or inaccurate information."

Michael Gill, Group Financial Controller, News International Ltd.

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: News International Ltd.
- Location: London
- Industry: Media
- Products and services: UK subsidiary of world's leading publisher of English-language newspapers
- Employees: 4,000
- Web site: www.newsinternational.co.uk
- Implementation partner: Diagonal Consulting Ltd.

Challenges and Opportunities
- Establish effective self-service operations for time-constrained employees
- Eliminate multiple data entry
- Manage frequent staff changes and short-term contract hiring efficiently
- Shift critical resources from rekeying data and fixing errors to more value-added activities

Objectives
- Replace legacy paper-based human resource management system with intelligent, interactive forms that support HR self-service and require no formal training
- Align HR processes with other key operations by integrating new interactive forms with deployed enterprise software

SAP Solutions and Services
SAP® Interactive Forms software by Adobe

Implementation Highlights
- Collaborative approach that relied on critical insights into organizational culture and processes
- Form interface designs supporting optimized process workflows

Why SAP
- Intuitive interfaces requiring no formal user training
- Process controls and data validation built into interactive forms
- Integration with deployed SAP ERP application
- Paperless form entry to reduce carbon footprint

Benefits
- Cycle times for HR processes reduced by up to 75%
- Employee and manager self-service using data validation and workflow enforcement in online forms
- Faster decision making for approvers by making all relevant information available in a single form interface
- Error resolution and data-related quality control tasks reduced
- Multiple data entry eliminated
- Greater visibility of employee-related changes and HR approval processes
- New-hire processing times improved

Existing Environment
SAP ERP

News International

As part of the world's leading publisher of English-language newspapers, News International Ltd. relies heavily on a single, invaluable resource – its people. When the company needed a streamlined way to manage staff-related changes without user training, News International deployed SAP® Interactive Forms software by Adobe. The solution integrates with the company's deployed SAP ERP application to bring full error handling, a simplified workflow, and status monitoring in a highly intuitive and visual form interface.

Coping with Paper-Based HR Processes

News International is the UK subsidiary of News Corporation, which runs dozens of newspapers and media outlets across the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia. News International has been operating since 1969 and publishes four national newspapers in the United Kingdom. These include *The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun*, and *News of the World.* In terms of growth, market share, circulation, and reader engagement, News International's titles are among the world's most successful. A key reason for this success is the highly talented individuals who produce content for and manage these world-class news brands.

But while News International has an abundance of talent, it's limited in another valuable asset – time. Given the company's deadline-intensive environment, its people need technology that's intuitive to use and speeds workflows. This is especially true in human resource management, where rapid staffing changes and short-term contract hiring are par for the course. "Our people simply do not have time for a lot of user training," says Michael Gill, group financial controller at News International. "We also have a steady influx of new users who will need to complete employee information in our systems, and we have to make sure they can do it quickly and accurately."

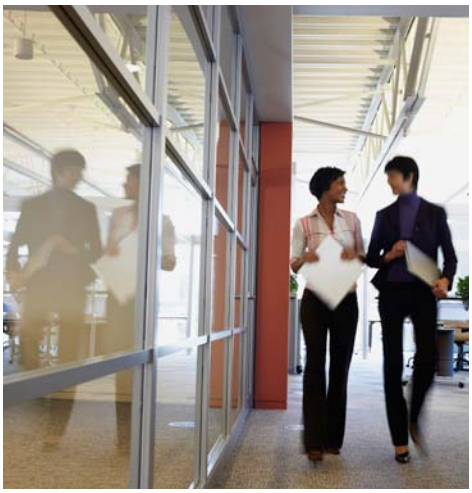
To stay on top of employee changes throughout the company, News International relied on various paper forms whose content would have to be reentered into the company's information systems. This not only required duplicate manual effort but often led to erroneous data entry. "Users would fill out the paper forms the best they could," says Gill. "But if they had questions about a particular entry, they would either have to guess or leave the information blank." In addition to the highly manual processes involved, critical staff time was often spent reconciling incomplete or erroneous data or determining employee status.

Finding a Better Way to Run HR

Rolling out training sessions for its time-constrained employees was not an option for News International. Instead, the publisher required a solution that would be intuitive to staff members and have them up and running right away. The company wanted to enable these business users to enter and update employee information only once and leverage data already available in SAP ERP by prefilling form fields with known information. The company also wanted a solution that could validate data as it is entered to eliminate the need to follow up and fix erroneous data.

To meet these and other critical requirements, News International selected SAP Interactive Forms. The software would provide employees with interactive forms created in Adobe PDF and generated directly from SAP software. SAP ERP would immediately capture data entered in the forms without the need for error-prone, manual reinput. In addition, the forms could be configured to be clear and straightforward to business users. "We chose SAP Interactive Forms because we can customize the forms to our specific needs," says Gill. "They can have the same look and feel as the paper forms they replace."

Deploying SAP Interactive Forms also made sense from a sustainability perspective, given that News International's parent company has embarked on a global energy initiative to reduce energy use and carbon emissions. As part of this initiative, News International



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Michael Gill, Group Financial Controller, News International Ltd.

became the United Kingdom's first carbon-neutral newspaper publisher. "Bridging the paper-to-digital divide not only makes sense from an efficiency point of view," explains Gill, "it's also consistent with our values as a company."

Employing a Collaborative Implementation Approach

To deliver employee and manager self-service across the company, News International teamed up with Diagonal Consulting Ltd. Simultaneously with implementing SAP Interactive Forms, Diagonal also upgraded the publisher's deployment of SAP ERP. Diagonal and News International worked collaboratively throughout the project. "A key reason for the project's success was the fact that Diagonal made a conscious effort to understand the people and culture at News International," says Gill. "This not only ensured a smooth working relationship, but it also enabled Diagonal to challenge some of our existing business processes in a highly informed and constructive manner."

By closely aligning the form interfaces built with SAP Interactive Forms with News International's optimized workflow, the project team was able to make recruitment and other employee processes highly intuitive. This supported rapid adoption, even by infrequent business users. In addition, to accelerate project completion, Diagonal employed a proven low-cost, high-value delivery model that leveraged on- and off-site technical expertise.

Applying Intelligent Form Validation

With the successful deployment of several intelligent online forms using SAP Interactive Forms, News International has brought key HR processes in line with its other highly streamlined and integrated business processes. The ability to leverage information from SAP ERP using a form interface has been a key factor in empowering employees to do more on their own. "The mandatory fields designated by SAP Interactive Forms leave no room for doubt as to what's required from the employee processing the form," says Gill. "And detailed error messages enable the individual to complete the form without having to refer to IT or expert users."

"With process and data controls built into the forms themselves, we can shift critical staff time to more value-added activities."

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For example, the software checks the salary field to confirm that the salary changes entered are within approved limits. In addition, mandatory field completion helps ensure that all relevant information is entered to support timely system verification and administrative processing. "SAP Interactive Forms has taken the learning out of the whole process," Gill continues. "The software has saved us a lot of time in getting new employees set up as required."

Streamlining Workflow

SAP Interactive Forms also enforces News International's workflow and approval policies with the forms themselves. Detailed explanations and justifications are provided with key fields to help ensure that subsequent approvers can make informed, timely, and appropriate decisions. The software allows for full transparency of the hiring approval process and enables real-time approvals to accelerate the execution of hiring requests. The forms are also secured by user role, thereby limiting access to sensitive HR information to authorized persons. "The ability for the approver to display the PDF form in its entirety at any stage means that everything is now in one place," says Gill.

Slashing Cycle Times for HR Processes by Up to 75%

With SAP Interactive Forms supporting its HR processes, News International has significantly improved operational efficiency. "We are seeing the cycle times for our HR processes reduced anywhere from 50% to 75% thanks to SAP Interactive Forms," says Gill. "We are no longer chasing down missing or inaccurate information." For example, News International has greatly reduced the time required for new hire requests to move through the approval process and result in a hired position. The

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software also prevalidates data so business users can do more for themselves and reduce the need for back-office resources. "With process and data controls built into the forms themselves," explains Gill, "we can shift critical staff time to more value-added activities."

Expanding Self-Service Beyond HR

Moving forward, News International is building on the success it has already achieved with SAP Interactive Forms. In addition to creating more forms to support its employee and organizational HR needs, the publisher will continue to work with Diagonal to deploy the software in support of other operations. "After seeing what we've already achieved with our HR processes," concludes Gill, "our intention is to take SAP Interactive Forms into other back-office operations – including finance."

Diagonal

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