

St Helens College

St Helens College find new efficiency and empower staff with MyView

Company Information

St Helens College, located in Greater Merseyside between Manchester and Liverpool, is one of the largest providers of Further and Higher Education, and Training in the North West of England.

Challenge

The college wanted to use self-service HR and payroll to reduce administration and empower staff, as part of a wider programme of intranet and electronic communications development.

Solution

The MyView self-service module has been added to the existing ResourceLink HR and payroll solution.

Benefits

- A more efficient way to manage holiday requests.
- An online tool gives managers an instant view of staff availability and makes planning much easier.
- Reduced paperwork across college departments and in HR.
- Reduced sickness absence as a result of real-time information about attendance.

St Helens College, located in Greater Merseyside between Manchester and Liverpool, is one of the largest providers of Further and Higher Education, and Training in the North West of England. It serves approximately 13,000 full and part-time students on programmes ranging from basic skills to post-graduate courses over 3 campuses, employing over 800 staff. The College's mission statement is 'it's all about you', which expresses the organisation's commitment to being customer focused.

Integrating self-service into HR and payroll

St Helens had been successfully using NorthgateArinso's ResourceLink integrated HR and payroll solution for several years. This had brought many improvements in efficiency and quality of service, and the HR management team were keen to explore added functionality.

A staff survey in 2008 acted as the catalyst for the introduction of the MyView self-service module for ResourceLink. The survey showed strong support from employees for extended use of electronic communications through the college's intranet.

"We already felt that it would be a natural progression to give staff the ability to do things online," says Lyn Robinson, HR Manager. "The survey backed this up, confirming that we were right to open up the HR system and create more transparency by letting employees access a range of relevant information."

Against this background, the college talked to NorthgateArinso about a phased introduction of self-service HR and payroll functionality, based around MyView.

Another driver for introducing self-service was that the college is spread across several sites.

This, and the fact that lecturers work in a classroom environment rather than together in offices, meant that the traditional model of team communications wasn't appropriate. Greater use of technology was seen as the route to improved communications.

A new tool for booking holidays

One of the immediate objectives of introducing MyView was to replace the college's paper-based system for booking annual leave, as Lyn Robinson explains: "We ran a holiday card system, with each staff being issued with a new card at the start of the academic year. Every time they wanted to book some time off they would make a note of the details on the card and send it to HR via their departmental administrator.

"The system was far from perfect. Too much time was spent administering it and cards were often lost. Managers also had to keep their own records about when leave had been booked for each member of staff. What we really needed was a single place to store the information, which could be accessed by managers and staff as appropriate."

In the summer of 2008 in particular it also became clear that managers didn't have the tools necessary to keep track of where their staff were. They were finding it difficult to tell who was working at the college and who was on holiday.

MyView has delivered the answer: an online tool through which staff can book their holidays and managers can approve or deny requests. Each member of staff can always see their own holiday entitlement and booked leave, while managers get an instant view of their team's availability.



"What our customer said"

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John Hays, Head of HR

Lyn Robinson says there are additional benefits of MyView: "We find that staff now use the online facility to book all their leave at the start of the year rather than piece by piece throughout the year. This is a big help to managers as they can identify any potential issues well in advance and make the necessary staffing arrangements.

"We believe staff will be less likely to reach the end of year without taking all of their entitlement. Managers can monitor things and remind staff that they need to use up their leave days. It's also much easier to manage holidays for part-time staff. Previously this involved manual calculations to work out pro-rata entitlement but now MyView does it all for us."

Staff, managers and HR welcome less red tape

Feedback about MyView is positive, with staff clearly welcoming the ability to book their leave online and finding the system easy and quick to use. They also like receiving a rapid response to whether their leave request has been approved, rather than the week or two that the manual system typically involved.

Perhaps most importantly of all, MyView is bringing down the amount of time that teaching staff spend on HR and payroll related administration. They can now get instant access to information and there's less form filling, so they can dedicate even more time to providing the best possible learning experience for students.

Time is also being saved in departmental administration, while HR welcome the improved efficiency. They are able to use the time saved to get on with important day-to-day work and new development activities, rather than unnecessary administration.

"It's a much simpler process all round," says Lyn Robinson.

"We are also seeing an improvement in accuracy as there's no chance of the human errors that relying on manual calculations used to involve."

A positive impact on sickness absence

MyView has given staff immediate access to details of their own attendance. Primarily this is to check holiday bookings but the tool also shows sick days and other absence. Within a few weeks of this facility being implemented, the HR team noticed an improvement in attendance.

Head of HR John Hays explains: "I think that seeing how many days you have been absent acts as a motivator. Generally people want to perform well in everything they do, including attendance. If someone is reminded that they have taken a few days off sick every time they use MyView, they seem motivated to make sure they keep future sickness to a minimum."

This initial use of MyView to manage sickness will be extended with the introduction of a facility for managers to record all absence online.

Making the switch to online payslips

Another successful achievement from MyView has been the introduction of online payslips: instead of printing these and having them collected from the payroll office, staff have access to their own payslip with password protection to ensure confidentiality.

The cost of printing 800 payslips each month has been removed. Another benefit is that staff now have instant access to the current and previous payslips and P60s, so they can for example print them or save them to their own files if needed.

The information is always accessible, so for example staff no longer need to ask the payroll office for evidence of earnings when applying for a mortgage. It's a good example of how self-service removes unnecessary query handling from payroll offices, letting them focus on the core activity of ensuring staff are paid accurately and on time.

Involving users in self-service development

St Helens College took the approach of involving users in the development and implementation of MyView from an early stage. This helped to make sure the right functionality was in place and ensured buy-in would be high.

Implementation itself was tackled in a phased approach, which made sense from a logistics point of view and meant that positive word of mouth about MyView spread among colleagues.



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User groups are now being formed to drive future development, with all managers and a sample of staff coming together to talk about their use of MyView and what they would like to see from it.

"We already have some developments in mind," says John Hays. "We will shortly be adding functionality around staff development, with staff able to book training courses online and managers able to manage the appraisal process via MyView."

"I'm also pleased that the college is on board with the MyView further education sector user group, where colleges from around the UK are sharing their experiences of MyView and letting NorthgateArinso know what we would like to see from their development programme."

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For more information

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