



PAYROLL PROFESSIONAL

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An in-depth Case Study



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Rapid growth over the past five years reflects the considerable name that Michael Wisher & Associates has made for itself as a leading supplier of high quality temporary staff to the hospitality industry, supporting clients nationwide from offices in Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, Nottingham and Manchester.

During this period, the company's expansion has been such that it has had 7,300 temporary staff on its payroll, many of whom are students who find it a good way to earn money while working flexible hours that don't interfere with their studies. They also get to take part in some of the UK's most exclusive and popular events.

So if you are fortunate enough to visit the Chelsea Flower Show, have a flutter on the Grand National at Aintree, celebrate a try at Murrayfield RFC, cheer on a team at Wembley

Stadium – or give your legs a rest in a restaurant at a heritage site such as Leeds Castle – it is highly likely that Michael Wisher staff will be on hand to serve you.

Karen Woollard, Payroll & Accounts Manager for Michael Wisher, explained that when she joined it was a fairly small operation and its company accountants took care of the payroll. "But when we started to grow we bought the Sage Payroll package and brought the processing back in-house. This was fine for a couple of years until the business really started to take off. Unlike some other organisations we don't have a static workforce where you are able to set up a system and process standard payroll information week after week. Depending on the event we may have a handful of people at one venue and several dozen at another. They are drawn from our pool of

temps and don't necessarily work every week, nor do they work the same number of regular hours – and the pool itself is fluid with a constant flow of joiners and leavers. There is also a great deal of effort, manually entering timesheet details while human error can lead to an unacceptably high level of queries. We reached the point where it was taking a full week's work to process a 200 person payroll."

At same time as when it began to take all week to process a payroll, Michael Wisher found it needed to upgrade its internal accounting function to supplement the factoring company services that it was using, so it installed the Sage Line 50 accounting package and turned the clock back by outsourcing payroll once again – but this time to a specialist bureau rather than a firm of accountants.

Unfortunately, the idea of using a bureau service didn't work out and after eight or nine months Karen looked afresh for a new in-house software solution.

"There were a number of elements that we liked about the bureau, such as the reports that we could get, and when we discovered that the bureau used Star Payroll Professional we looked in greater depth at its capabilities." Karen continued.

"It looked ideal. Star Payroll Professional promised to give us everything we needed, taking care of setting up new starters, importing variable data from timesheets, turning out various management reports, and making sure that everyone would be paid accurately, on time. It would also integrate very well with the Sage accounting package. But this was all capped by the ePayslips service which would solve the constant problem of ensuring that staff received their weekly payslips even if they had changed addresses – very common among students – without letting us know."

Star Payroll Professional, and ePayslips in particular, not only delivered on the promise, it exceeded Karen's expectations.

"We couldn't believe how simple it was to set up ePayslips. Star arranged for staff to retain their log-ins and PIN numbers and transferred all of the personnel and payroll data from the bureau. So we hit the ground running with no interruption at all, switching back to processing weekly payroll in-house as seamlessly as possible. The saving on time and effort as well as the significant reduction in the number of queries with which we have to deal with is remarkable." she adds.

"We were printing and posting up to 600 payslips every week but as many of these were to students and other transient workers we didn't always have the most up to date addresses. We also had a higher than average number of people requesting copy payslips. Using ePayslips has resolved these problems, as well as reducing administrative time significantly by cutting out printing and stuffing envelopes, saving expenditure on paper and doing away with postal costs. Also, it is a delight that we no longer have to put up with a noisy pressure sealer in the office."

ePayslips is a revolutionary self-service facility that enables employees to access their payslips directly from a





secure website, thereby reducing costs and providing the highest level of service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Payslip information is automatically uploaded to the secure website from within Star Payroll Professional and from which employees are able to access their own payslips (both current and historic) without the need to revert to the payroll department. Security has been a paramount consideration in the design of the service – it incorporates controls normally associated with on-line banking services including a unique log-in and an employee can only see his or her own payslip.

Karen has also been pleased with the service and support Michael Wisher has received from Star, both during the initial installation and subsequently for day to day assistance. "Not only do the team know the program very well, they also have an in-depth knowledge of payroll – best practice, legislation and processes – and give good advice when it's needed. They understand why you want to do

something and can suggest the best way within the system to achieve it. Response times are also very good."

"Our confidence and satisfaction with Payroll Professional and ePayslips has gone from strength to strength. As far as I'm concerned it is a genius solution – and I would have no hesitation in recommending it to other organisations." Karen concludes.



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