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ITR Case Study

Staples Canada Inc.



About Staples Canada Inc.

Type Retail

Location Toronto, Canada

Website www.staples.ca

Customer Needs

- Scalable time and attendance software
- Bilingual software and support
- Unified process for enrolling employees
- Central repository for time and attendance data
- Accurate labor reporting

Company Profile

When The Business Depot Ltd first entered the Canadian market in 1991 they planned to open 25 stores during the first three years. Their goals were suddenly revised when popular demand dictated that they open twice as many. Their philosophy of giving customers exactly what they wanted - deep discounted prices on the widest range of office products in Canada - became a reality. In August 1994, Staples Inc. acquired full ownership, and stores were launched under the banners Staples Business Depot in English Canada, and Bureau en Gros in Quebec. As of 2008, the company officially became Staples Canada Inc., and today, boasts over 300 stores, several distribution centers and call centers across Canada, and an employee roster of almost 14,000 associates.

Business Challenge

Staples' commitment to controlling expenses and offering low prices demanded that they control their labor costs. Because they were growing so quickly year after year, they needed a vendor and an application that could grow with them as well as offer support nationally to their stores. They allowed each store to manage its workforce independently but their corporate headquarters required a unified process for the enrollment of associates in their HR software, and a central repository for time and attendance information and absence tracking. They needed data collection at each store; using the existing POS system was not adequate for the number of employees, nor sufficient for performing payroll and statutory holiday calculations. They needed accurate reporting at the store levels so store managers could keep their costs within budget and schedule efficiently.

Selection Process

The organization's IT strategy of becoming an innovative, systems-oriented company and its mandate to control operating expenses were reflected in its early commitment to an automated time and attendance system. As with any growth plan, management knew it had to pay attention to costs and understood human resources was one of the expenses that needed to be tightly managed from the beginning. After a thorough vendor selection process, Staples Canada selected ITR over two larger, publicly traded competitors. The choice hinged on four main factors: ITR has a nationwide presence, its software met the specification criteria, the cost accommodated budget constraints, and ITR's software was available in French and English.



"Having a company you can depend on 100% of the time makes a big difference. You have to know unquestionably that your vendor will be there for you when you need them. I wish all of my partners were like ITR."

Dave Howe, Accounting Manager
Staples Canada Inc.

The Solution

In the early startup period, the configuration was simple. A data collector was installed at each store and connected by modem to head office, where the ITR software resided. The organization quickly outgrew this arrangement. Over the years, ITR continued to upgrade Staples to meet their changing infrastructure demands. In 2006, ITR deployed TimeZone™ software and it was successfully rolled out to all of the stores, call centers and distribution centers. To meet tight deadlines, a "Train the Trainer" format for users of the system was selected, in which certain Staples employees were chosen to train store managers. ITR initially performed first level support to encourage quick adoption of the new user interface and to ensure any issues were quickly addressed but after the initial rollout and live parallel payroll runs proved successful, Staples' Help Desk assumed first level support and ITR became second level support for escalations only.

According to Payroll Manager J. Kilpatrick, "The key to the success has been the relationship management of the account. Staples has put ITR to the test several times and the company has risen to the challenge."

Results and Benefits

Initially operating TimeZone™ on Staples' existing Citrix environment cut deployment costs substantially for Staples. Over time, they moved their call centers to the web version of TimeZone™ which operated in tandem with the client server version, allowing Staples to embrace their web upgrade strategy as time and resources allowed. The upgrade and ultimate centralization and integration of payroll information and time and attendance data has resulted in cross-functional cooperation among payroll, human resources, and finance, successfully meeting the company's on-going goal of streamlining its operating costs and passing along the resulting savings to its customers. Most importantly, ITR continues to anticipate and embrace new technology trends to meet the needs of its partner, Staples.



International Time Recorder Company Ltd.

7A Taymall Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M8Z 3Y8
Canada

Tel: 416-252-1186
Fax: 416-255-1565
Toll Free: 1-877-567-0633
info@itr.ca