Business Productivity:
Selecting the Best HRIS For Your Organization

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A COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

A LEADER IN THE FOOD SERVICES INDUSTRY, known as one of the Top 10 companies to work for, was at the point of selecting the best Enterprise Human Resources Information System (HRIS) to meet their needs.

Using past experience as their baseline, the organization recognized how important it was to consider all internal stakeholders when making their selection. In the past, the company faced significant loss of revenue, productivity, and operational inefficiencies because the system selected presented a poor user experience. To add complexity to the situation, this multinational organization needed to ensure that this system would be robust across cultures and languages; meeting needs of employees worldwide.

After many successful projects between Key Lime Interactive (KLI) and this client, they brought in KLI to ensure that the software chosen would:

- Enhance employee workflow for HR activities
- Optimize productivity in the workplace via the marriage of "time and attendance" with "analytics" modules
- Meet the needs of a global employee pool

The Solution

Since the client had a strong affinity toward one software over the others, Key Lime was tasked with the responsibility of validating their decision. To do this, we opted to execute a two-pronged approach to fully address the concerns presented by the client; a competitive analysis, followed by moderated qualitative usability testing.

As a typical first step in understanding the relative strengths and weaknesses of a selection against the competitors, KLI engaged in an expert competitive evaluation. The goal of this component was to determine if there were any features or capabilities offered by competitors that the selected software was lacking that would deem this choice inferior; and was the site usable. A set of general web heuristics were adopted, as well as a series of heuristics that were created to compare across the entire competitive landscape. Two KLI researchers completed the review, then merged data to present an unbiased report about where the software fell when compared to competitors.

Next, KLI researchers designed a task-based usability test that could be delivered in localized language in several global regions. The goal of this part of the study was to ensure that the software wasn't just superior in theory, but that it performed well and produced an experience that was easy to master and integrate into the daily workflow of the client's employees. Tasks such as: the modification of personal data, reporting time and attendance, management functions, information seeking and analytic review were included. All of the participants tested using some combination of mobile devices (iPad, Android Phone, Mobile Web Application) and on a desktop computer.

A sample size of 12 participants was tested in each of four international regions (US, China, Brazil, and Canada) bringing the total sample size to 48 participants. Regional segmentation was included as part

of the analysis to ensure that the software provided uniform satisfaction. Testing was completed in-person, in native language by skilled KLI moderators, and the results were translated and presented in English.

The Outcome

The expert competitive analysis indicated that the software the client was leaning toward did, in fact, stand out from the crowd with innovative features and seemed to be an appropriate match to the various personas they were targeting. The formal heuristic evaluation scored the tool approximately 18% higher in a weighted algorithm that considered user priorities for such a tool. As it compared on paper, the solution looked promising at meeting the client's needs, but needed to be observed in action to truly be sure.

The HR and finance stakeholders gained invaluable insight about the employee perspective of this tool.

The moderated usability research provided an overwhelmingly positive review of the HRIS system, providing the client valuable information to finalize their software decision.

- While watching participants from several different countries and company departments perform the tasks in an intuitive and streamlined way, the team was convinced that onboarding and maintenance using this solution would be easy.
- Our analysts were able to easily identify areas that caused slight confusion and viewed them as simply areas that required additional instruction when the employees were presented with this solution. Ultimately, running this study helped the client to create an instructional webinar that walked through relevant tasks that was deployed with the software.
- The HR and finance stakeholders who were present in each region for the sessions gained invaluable insight about the employee perspective of this tool, so when they set operational requirements they had this top of mind and could ensure that they were setting realistic goals.

- KLI researchers uncovered an opportunity for a deep-dive study that would further identify the best configuration settings within the software.

After implementation, the client reported increased employee satisfaction with use of the software. "Information is clear and accessible. Employees are able to answer many questions before raising their concerns with HR staff, which increases the productivity of this department. Analytics have improved and we are able to definitively report an upward trend in average performance. In the past, this was conjecture because managers found data entry confusing and, therefore, data was inconsistent company-wide. The software enables us to chart and share these statistics, which I estimate increases morale."

Other ways to use this methodology

Starting with a competitive evaluation is an industry standard protocol. In this example, the evaluation was simply to determine the various features and capabilities of competing tools and to check them off in a Harvey ball chart. It could, however, be used to measure a conceptual design against competition. If you have an idea of what you'd best like to create and how it should perform, it's wise to thoroughly investigate what is out there to ensure that your solution leapfrogs the competitive set.

A standard in-lab moderated usability study can be applied to countless scenarios. Every product imaginable can be tested by asking users to simply use it and observe.

A big take-away from this study was that the present stakeholders learned a great deal as well. By watching usability sessions, you are inspired to empathize with the users and, typically, this allows for a greater understanding of how to best manage expectations or design a solution that meets business and user needs.

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