

Transitioning to HRMS

Is your job still safe in HR?

There are multiple factors at play regarding getting your HR management system (HRMS) up to speed. Florence Mok, Managing Director, North Asia, BIPO, gives tips on smoothly transitioning to digital cloud-based HR systems, the multiple benefits it brings HR and why HR does not need to worry about losing their job to tech.



Florence Mok, Managing Director, North Asia, BIPO

Mok is no stranger to managing HR across borders in multiple directions as she oversees the entire North Asia region for BIPO, including Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, among the 16 countries that the Group has a presence in. Drawing on her in-house experience in HR leadership and HRBP roles across multiple industries, including technology, utilities, logistics and chemical sectors, Mok believes HR has a vital role in empowering the lives of their talent teams. She noted, "With the right support in place, including data analytics, process automation and digitalisation, HR can successfully lead happy, motivated and productive teams to support business growth." She added, "When it comes to data analytics, HR can leverage a massive amount of data to support strategic decisions. It's also vital to check the accuracy of this data, as it will underpin an entire range of HR initiatives, including how to recruit and retain the best talent."

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3 biggest HR challenges

1. Globalisation of HR solutions

The first HR challenge is dealing with the globalisation of HR solutions. Mok noted, "With most MNCs needing to implement HRMS globally, the challenge comes in finding a global solution that can fit all the local country regulations, requirements and market practices. This is especially true for time and attendance and payroll solutions, which need to be carefully tailored to each market. To help close this gap, HR must source a reliable local HRMS with proven integration, which affords both a globalised and localised approach."

2. Resistance to change

The second HR challenge is resistance to change. Mok said, "In this age of automation, many HR professionals fear that as technology uptake increases, this may one day take over their role. With the uptick in robotics, AI, and machine learning, humans' entire lifecycle and work culture have undergone a rapid and dramatic change. There is no doubt; these technological advancements will gradually take over many transactional HR jobs. From an HR perspective, it's vital to think in terms of value creation for the organisation and how HR can contribute to business success. However, I do not believe all these processes can be completely replaced by technology and HR teams will always play a critical role in selecting the best solutions for their organisations." She added, "As an HR professional, it's imperative to be constantly learning to equip yourself to create greater value for the organisation. Just because a company decides to outsource a payroll function, the original payroll team member can still bring additional value to the company by refocusing their roles on C&B data analysis to become a C&B expert who can support company growth."

3. HR data security

The third HR challenge is ensuring data security. Mok noted, "The HRMS platform chosen is critical. HR needs to ensure that the cloud security of their selected platform is robust enough for protecting sensitive personnel data and whether the vendor can offer automated online payroll solutions linked to the centralised employee dataset." She added, "HR should also pay attention to which cloud solution vendor they're using. The big three that, in my opinion, are considered most reliable in the market are Microsoft Azure, Amazon and AliYun, who can all provide highly-security triple-firewall protection, and redundancy backups for that data."

Contactless staff check-in systems

BIPO has its headquarters in Singapore, and owing to the demand during the pandemic; the organisation immediately launched its 'BIPO Safe Entry' contactless check-in for employees in Singapore. Mok explained, "The Safe Entry system uses advanced technology combining both facial recognition with contactless temperature scanning tools, and facemask detection features to help keep everyone safe and seamlessly support contact tracing efforts." In addition to on-site monitoring and security, the system also features real-time employee attendance records, contactless door access, multiple language capabilities and all the attendance records integrate with the HRMS. Mok added, "This real-time integration into the HRMS platform allows HR managers to track staff attendance against the roster planning. We are planning to extend this solution to other countries, including Hong Kong, from Q2 onwards."



Built-in facial recognition technology enables companies to capture real-time data when employees arrive at their place of work. They now have the option to clock-in on arrival at the company's premises based on a specific Wifi-tethered login, through GPS login when working from home, or a combination of both for hybrid working arrangements.

Data privacy is critical when handling employee records. HR should ensure that employees have given express consent to the collection, use, and disclosure of their personal data for purposes connected with their employment. Data collected for record attendance is for due diligence, enabling companies to carry out its duty of care towards its employees.

Transitioning legacy systems

When transitioning legacy HR systems, Mok noted that the critical things for HR are effecting the change management as well as the digital transformation itself. She said, "Before any transition, it's important for HR first to step back and think about the key purpose and objectives of the transformation. Define the benefits that the change will bring and the value-add to the organisation and have the best methodology in place to support employees through the process." She added, "Within this change framework, HR should facilitate constant communication at all levels that is cascaded down across the organisation to ensure all team members better understand the objectives behind the change and the key benefits and savings it will bring into each team and the organisation as a whole."

Any system change is not just limited to HR-related topics; there's always an element of selling the idea that needs to accompany the change. Mok highlighted, "During change, building the organisational brand image is also an important factor. Companies using antiquated legacy HR systems, where it's not even possible to provide a mobile app solution, may portray the image that the company is very outdated. To help attract and retain the younger generation, who are heavy mobile users, bringing app-functionality to HRMS is a benefit, which can further assist successful change management."

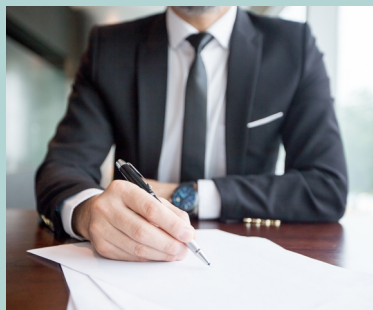
Cross-boundary compliance

The HKSAR Government is putting significant effort into boosting mobility across the Greater Bay Area (GBA). Mok noted, "The Government has been really supportive and creative in helping facilitate new opportunities, especially for young talent in Hong Kong to pursue their career throughout the GBA. While this creates some amazing talent and business opportunities for HR, it also creates a few compliance headaches in dealing with employment rules in the different jurisdictions, with several key areas to be mindful of."

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Tips to ensure compliance across GBA



Employment contract—as an employer, the company must always consider whether they want the employment contract to be attributed to the Hong Kong or GBA entity. This consideration will affect whether the employment contract will be governed by the employment laws of Hong Kong or those of Mainland China—both being quite distinct. For example, it is much more challenging to terminate any employment contract in the GBA than in the Hong Kong SAR.

Cultural differences—even within the same country, communication and language barriers exist in different regions. These present a common challenge to employees when they work across the region. HR teams have the responsibility to ensure that employees are mentally prepared to cope with these cultural differences. It is a good idea to introduce the team concerning the local work culture in which they will be carrying out their duties

Taxation system—HR needs to consider whether employees should be taxable in the Hong Kong SAR or the GBA, especially for income generated from the GBA. Where employees are under employment with a Mainland China entity and have worked in Mainland China for over 183 days, they have a high possibility of triggering liability for Mainland China individual income tax. It is essential to keep proper records of exact working times and number of working days to ensure the company remains compliant.

Social Security—employees employed under Mainland China entities should be enrolled in the local social security scheme, which is very different from the Hong Kong SAR MPF system.

As an employer, it is crucial to be apprised of local labour laws and changes to such over time. This is even more important when dealing with employees who frequently relocate across the GBA. The four areas above are for indication purposed only, and it is essential to get professional advice in all these areas. Staying compliant, staying flexible and ensuring staff are well prepared for mobility will pay dividends in terms of better business, better talent retention and better employer branding to attract new quality hires across the GBA on an ongoing basis. ■