

## Dinesh Weerakkody shares his views on current HRIS trends in Sri Lanka

The economic crisis is no longer big news. Businesses in all industries are looking at ways and means of running down their operational costs. Dinesh Weerakkody, who represents Cornucopia HR Bangalore in Sri Lanka, one of the fastest growing HR Consultancy Outfits in India, talks about some of the technology options companies have to reduce operational costs. He believes that Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) could be one such tool to institutionalize operational excellence in a business and promote employee self reliance.

### **What is the current market for HR solutions in Sri Lanka?**

The current market for HR solutions in Sri Lanka has grown significantly in the last five years. HR systems are very effective because the system can help management identify the fat and to effectively manage transaction costs, and also improve service delivery. Though many companies say this is not the best time to invest in technology, any kind of investment in the right technology could help companies improve productivity in the work place. The trend of downsizing and 'rightsizing' – resulting from this economic crisis – has further increased the scope for good HR solutions. Good HR systems help companies make decisions that are well grounded on data. It also helps to clearly distinguish the company's best performers from the rest, and create a pay-for-performance culture.

Companies in Sri Lanka often regard themselves as unique and attempt to develop and implement unique HR data portals and services. However, in my view the best option for a company would be to look at the many effective products in the market, and adapt one of them which is simpler and less expensive than building one from scratch.

### **How can companies find the best solution at a minimum investment?**

There are some companies in Sri Lanka that provide time tested good HR solutions. Investing in such solutions depends mainly on what benefits you intend to reap and the company budget.

One solution that comes to mind when talking about low-cost HR solutions is the 'Software as a Service' Model. Countries all over the globe provide SAAS products to their customers. The HR solution provider to introduce this technology in Sri Lanka is hSenid Business Solutions - People's Web is the 'Software as a Service' (SAAS) version of their HR solution, HRM Enterprise. Solutions like that are more user friendly, accessible and secure, it will help employees to manage their personal careers and Business Heads to use employee data and resources to produce value for their company. There are also many homegrown solutions coming out of some outfits in Bangalore.

### **What are the benefits of a SAAS Model in comparison to the upfront HR purchase options available in Sri Lanka?**

SAAS (Software as a Service) refers to the service wherein the provider of the software issues licenses on the given software application for use as a service. Such a service bears minimum investment unlike the alternative option of purchasing the software upfront. The number of

licenses a company requires depends on the number of employees within the organization. Apart from this, there is no other hardware or software cost that needs to be invested in such a service. The overall benefit to a business would be in the form of cost savings in administration cost, standardization, increase speed and quality of service and free HR time for strategic work.

**What is the Return on Investment (ROI) for any given company on such HR solutions?**

This is a very popular question. I would say the main goal of investing in a HR system – whether it is a one-off investment or in a full blown system is to reduce the time spent on admin stuff, reduce cost and improve service delivery so that directly and indirectly the time saved via the technology could be spent on issues like talent management, employee engagement and building organizational capability. Technology driven service centres enjoy economies of scale, enabling employee concerns to be resolved by a fewer dedicated HR resources. In addition, service centres standardize HR Processes, thus reducing redundancy and duplication. In sum, I would say that properly designed technology solution frees HR professionals to focus more on strategic work that can deliver more value to a company.

**How do you pick a vendor or a provider?**

As with any business, not everyone who offers the service is really able to deliver excellent work, keep up with the volume, fix the problems on the run and ensure continuity. So one needs to look for vendors who have a good track record and come with good reference. I am sure that increasing competition will cater to those solution providers who can meet this criteria.