STAR-INFO

Newsletter for Sage HRMS

What's Inside

Did You Know?

The Sage HRMS Customer Advisory Council is a group of user companies chosen to reflect and represent the diversity of the Sage HRMS user community. The Council is a source of input for a variety of topics, including product priorities and designs, training, and technical support. For more information about the Customer Advisory Council or to apply for membership, email: customerloyalty.abra@sage.com

Automate Open Enrollment

## Sage HRMS Benefits Management Solutions Streamline Open Enrollment Processing

I t is benefits enrollment season, and with it, the labor and paper-intensive process of distributing and then collecting enrollment forms, making sure every employee has properly completed the forms, and correctly submitting benefits selections to providers. Here we look at how you can automate open enrollment processing using your Sage Abra Suite or Sage HRMS solution as the starting point.

Benefits Of Automated Enrollment

You can expect automating benefits enrollment to save time and money for your organization. And there are other advantages beyond automating business processes. You also can expect to increase employee satisfaction. Employees can be proactive with their decisions and they have the ability to review and modify their benefits selections so they can easily see the cost of various options. Investing in employees and increasing their satisfaction is an important way organizations stay competitive.

How Sage Benefits Enrollment Works

Sage Benefits Enrollment is an optional add-on to the Sage Employee Self Service module of Sage Abra Suite and Sage HRMS. This web tool is accessible to employees and HR administrators by way of the Internet or company intranet.
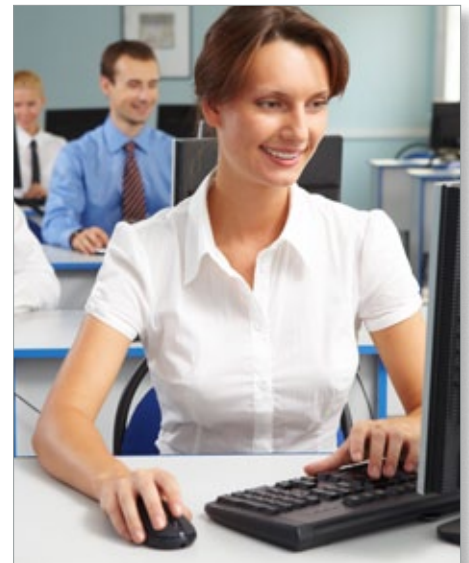
Simple Setup

Setting up your benefits plans is a straightforward process. HR administrators are given a special login role that gives them access to tasks for defining plans, workflows, and approvals. Flexible benefits enrollment project configurations support a variety of employee types and criteria that can meet the requirement of virtually any type of benefit plan. HR administrators also can customize web pages, post important messages, and add third-party links for easy employee access to provider websites.

Easy To Use

Step-by-step wizards guide employees through the benefits enrollment process.

Automate Open Enrollment

(continued from cover)

After they have logged in to Sage Employee Self Service, they will be viewing their home page, which can include recent messages, pay history, current benefits, and time off summary. A new Open Enrollment task will be available to them in the menu on the left. Open Enrollment will advise the employee of the enrollment period start and end date, as well as the effective date of the benefits. The wizard then guides the employee through the various benefit options available to them, such as medical, dental, and vision.

As an employee makes selections, they can view the total cost in the upper right corner of the screen. Their dependents' names and birth dates are displayed, and they can easily select and review the plan enrollment for each dependent. Once all benefits selections are made, a summary page shows total employee cost, and optionally, the employer's contributions. Employees also can print a benefits summary. In order to securely complete the enrollment process, they acknowledge their elections with an electronic signature. After completing the process, they still can review and edit their selections. The system will take them to a summary page of their selections, from which they can make changes if needed. The summary page also can contain links to the company benefits guide, external provider sites, and any other links that your organization might want to provide to the workforce.

Life Event Management

The system also allows employees to manage life events that may change their benefits elections. Automating this process provides HR personnel with updates to an employee's status quickly and efficiently. The employee can choose from the following life events that affect benefits:

» Birth or adoption of a child
» Change in marital status
» New hire
» Address change

You can specify the length of time, in days, that an employee has to make benefits changes after the life event. Administrators can customize which elections employees can change. For example, whether they can change the benefits, the election, or just the dependent/beneficiary. Once an employee enters a life event, a wizard takes them through the process similar to open enrollment.

After Enrollment Is Completed

The special benefits administrator login role gives you access to additional menu options for managing open enrollment, including benefits setup, benefits update, and benefits reports. The benefits update task displays a list of employees who have completed open enrollment so the administrator can review and approve the enrollment. The administrator can see all the selection detail, and if necessary send a note to the employee right from the screen if something additional is needed. Once approved, the employee will receive a message that it has been approved through Sage Employee Self Service.

HR administrators automatically can approve a whole group of employees at once if desired. Once approved, the information will be updated to Sage Abra Suite HRMS or Sage HRMS. A report can be generated to provide enrollment details to your benefit providers. This report can be exported to Microsoft Excel for you to adjust, if needed, before sending.

Seamless Integration

The Sage Benefits Enrollment software is closely integrated with both Sage Abra Suite and Sage HRMS. Upon approval, benefits data is automatically updated in your HR system.

Sage HRMS Benefits Messenger

Another option in automating the enrollment process is Sage HRMS Benefits Messenger. This add-on automates the exchange of information between Sage Abra Suite or Sage HRMS and your benefits providers. You can cut the costs and complexity of benefits administration by automating the communication of employee benefits data to health insurance carriers as frequently as you need to. Sage HRMS Benefits Messenger is a cloud-based solution that can eliminate the costly errors associated with duplicate data entry and missed enrollments. It supports virtually any carrier that accepts electronic enrollment feeds.

Call us with your questions about benefits enrollment solutions.

Tip: Installing Quarterly Payroll Tax Updates For Sage Abra Suite Payroll

Download Quarterly Update From Sage Website

Note: Read the Release Bulletin in its entirety prior to beginning the installation of any upgrade. The Release Bulletin PDF file is found in the doc folder after unzipping the tax update file.

1. Back up the Sage Abra Suite Programs folder using an external backup procedure prior to the installation. Make sure all users have exited Sage Abra Suite before beginning the backup and installation. (This backup provides a necessary safeguard in the event that a problem is encountered during the installation process.)

2. To help ensure a complete and error-free installation, close any Windows or DOS applications that might be running.

3. Using an Internet browser, navigate to the download website: http://www.sagespecialized.com/support/login.asp

4. Login to SupportPlus Online, or Register if needed, and find *Quarterly Tax Updates Available Here*.

5. Select either Site 1 or Site 2 for the desired version.

6. Save download to disk in an area other than the Sage Abra Suite directory. Create a new folder with the same name as the zip file.

7. Double-click the zip file (*.zip), inside the newly created folder. Change the extraction destination path to the desired path.

8. Open the Doc folder and read the Release Bulletin.pdf file. It is advisable to forward this file to all users of the payroll software.

9. In the newly created folder, double-click the *.exe file. The Welcome dialog box opens. Click 'Next'. The installation program will detect that a previous version of Sage Abra Suite has been installed and will proceed to update the system.

10. When the update is finished, launch Sage Abra Suite from this same location and a message will display as follows: *You have installed a new version of Sage Abra and the files must be updated.* Select **Yes** to update the files.

11. Back up your Sage Abra Suite Programs folder again using an external backup procedure. (This ensures that a backup of the new version of the software exists.)

12. When the update is complete, update the System Tax Tables as outlined below, or refer to the last page(s) of the Release Bulletin PDF found in the Doc folder along with any other important documents included with the tax update.

How To Update Taxes After Tax Update Is Installed

1. From the Menu, select *Payroll > Rules > System Tax Tables*. The System Tax Tables page opens.

2. Click *Apply Legislative Update* in the lower left corner of the page. The Update Payroll Tax Tables dialog box opens and displays the following:

» Federal, state, and local taxes that have changed since the last tax table update

» Federal, state, and local taxes that have not been previously installed

» Any tax that a Sage Abra Suite user has manually changed since the last update or Sage Abra Suite Version 7.8x the deduction limits also are updated

Note: If a Taxes tab is disabled (grayed out), there are no taxes to update in that category (Federal, State, and Local Taxes tabs).

3. Select the Backup old tables to Taxback directory check box. The system makes a copy of your current Tax Tables before it updates them with the new tables. A copy of the old tables is stored in the \DATA \ TAXBACK directory of your Sage Abra Suite system.

4. Select the check box to the left of the individual tax to update that tax. If you want to select all taxes in a category, select the check box to the left of the Identifier label. Clear this box to cancel selecting all taxes.

Note: When you select a state tax, the system automatically selects all local taxes that correspond to the state tax. You can then clear the selection for any taxes you do not want updated. Be aware that for any state that has only changed local taxes and not state taxes, the state code will not appear on the State Taxes page. You must go to the Local Taxes tab to view the localities available for update and select the appropriate local taxes.

5. When you have selected all the taxes you want updated, click OK. When the system is finished updating the taxes, the Update Payroll Tax Tables dialog box closes. Sage Abra Suite Payroll and the new tax table rates are now available for processing payrolls. Call us for assistance.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

The Benefits Of Sage HRMS And Microsoft SQL Server

Sage Abra Suite is a highly effective tool to help HR professionals manage the workforce. As your organization grows, you may want to consider migrating to the more robust Sage HRMS solution.

Industry-Standard Database

Sage HRMS is built on Microsoft SQL Server®, a relational database management system using Structured Query Language (SQL). Users of small to medium databases appreciate the system because of the support for this well documented and widely used query language. Using the accepted industry standard ensures widely available expertise, support, and continued improvements in functionality and performance. Many excellent tools are available for SQL Server, such as automatic backup and tools for easy integration with other applications. This is one of the reasons many Information Services and Technology departments prefer or demand SQL Server-based solutions.

As your organization grows, you also may need the scalability and reliability of a relational database management system. When businesses grow, a small database application can be a bottleneck for desktop software. Here we discuss four important benefits of SQL Server: performance, reliability, security, and low cost of maintenance.

Performance: Microsoft SQL Server is responsive for small and large businesses, so as the business grows, the SQL Server can handle the new volume of database requests. The server can handle millions of records and transactions. In particular, reports that pull data from large databases run significantly faster. You also can add indexes to improve performance as needed.

Reliability: SQL Server includes high-availability features such as database mirroring and replication to minimize downtime, delivering greater data reliability and eliminating the necessity for file repair.

Security: A critical issue for any HR professional is security. On top of Sage HRMS security and authorization architecture, the SQL Server security system prevents unauthorized access to its tables and the information stored in the database. Administrators easily can manage permissions. You can set consistent login policies across all accounts in the domain.

Low-Cost Maintenance: A single management console enables data administrators to monitor, manage, and tune databases from anywhere in your organization.

Considerations For Migrating To Sage HRMS

Sage Abra Suite HRMS customers can move with ease to Sage HRMS. The upgrade wizard makes it easy to receive the advantages of SQL Server while investing in the product that will be the focus of Sage Employer Solutions in the future.

With the upcoming release of Sage HRMS 2012, now is an excellent time consider the advantages of Sage HRMS over Sage Abra Suite. In this release, exciting new tools, such as Sage Employee Analytics using View Builder and Sage Employer Resources are available. Sage Abra Suite Payroll customers can take advantage of the new Sage HRMS Payroll functionality.

Sage HRMS 2012 and beyond will focus on the integration with new products and services, both desktop-based and Software as a Service (SaaS). Call us to learn what is involved in migrating to this flagship solution.

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