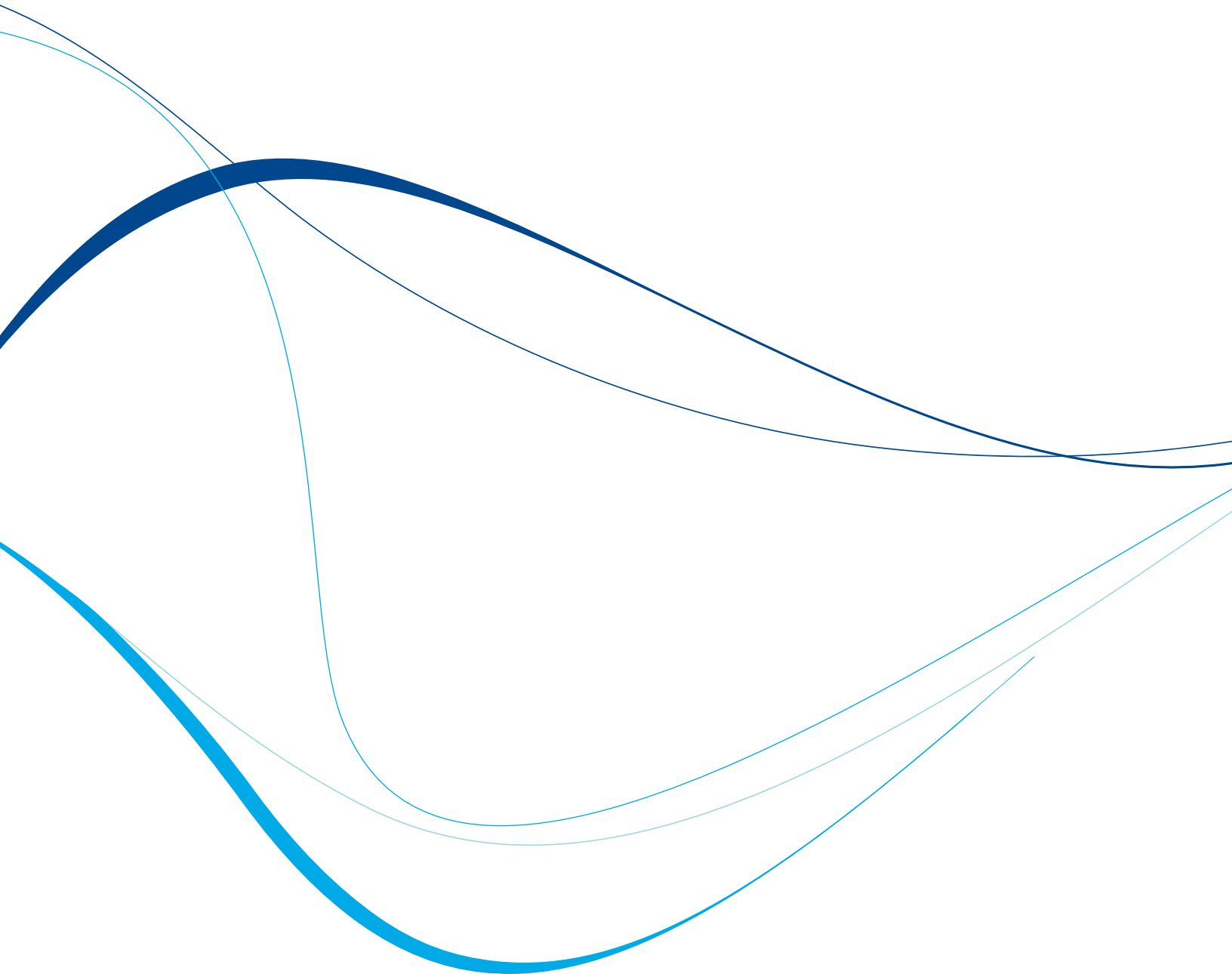


# Sage Abra

## **Overcoming the Paper Pile**

The five key efficiency gains of Sage Abra HR



## Introduction

In the tough economy we face today, it's more important than ever for the human resources (HR) department to contain costs and improve efficiency. Automating routine HR tasks and reducing administration can help your department trim expenses, save time, and reduce errors. You'll also easily comply with complex and burdensome compliance regulations.

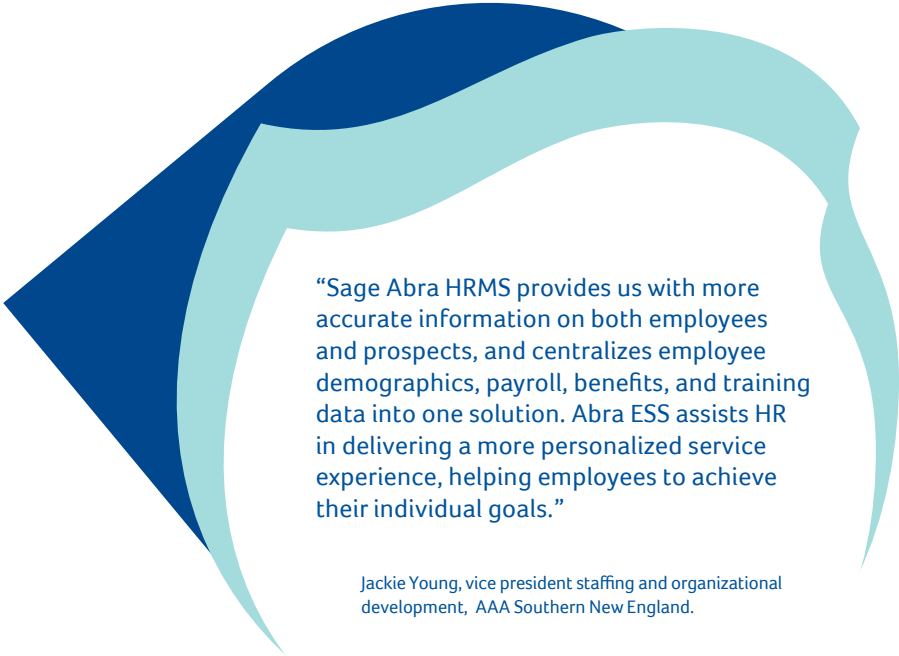
If your company is trying to track employee data, benefits plans, and compliance information with paper files and spreadsheets, it might be time to consider automating with Sage Abra HRMS. A Human Resource Management System (HRMS) provides an integrated software solution for automating and managing your organization's core workforce administration and transactions, including payroll, compliance, benefits, and more.

Because you already own Sage Abra Payroll, it's easy to achieve a complete HRMS solution by adding Sage Abra HR. To lower transaction costs further, save additional time, and improve employee engagement, you might also choose to add self-service technology with Sage Abra Employee Self Service (ESS).

### **Integrated, centralized Abra HR can help you improve efficiency in five key areas:**

- Core HR Administration
- Benefits Administration
- Compliance Management
- Reporting and Analysis
- Self-Service Automation

Abra HR puts critical data at your fingertips so you can analyze your workforce and plan effectively for the future. The time you save with Abra HR will enable you to focus on helping your company meet its objectives and weather economic uncertainty.



“Sage Abra HRMS provides us with more accurate information on both employees and prospects, and centralizes employee demographics, payroll, benefits, and training data into one solution. Abra ESS assists HR in delivering a more personalized service experience, helping employees to achieve their individual goals.”

Jackie Young, vice president staffing and organizational development, AAA Southern New England.

## Core HR Administration


HR professionals spend roughly 80 percent of their time on routine HR and benefits administration rather than focusing on corporate initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Although this work must get done, much of it is clerical and of low value to executive management. For HR to take its place at the management table, it's necessary to minimize data-entry tasks and seek more strategic opportunities within the organization.

Implementing an HRMS reduces the paperwork burden on HR by automating the most time-consuming HR functions, such as tracking and updating employee information, new-hire processing, benefits administration, compliance reporting, and more.

Most small and midsized businesses manage routine HR administration with multiple spreadsheets before they adopt an HRMS. To get complete data about an employee, such as contact information, salary, benefits plan elections, and training certifications, you might have to search through four different spreadsheets. Sometimes you update a few spreadsheets but forget to update them all, so information is inconsistent. Companywide reporting is an exercise in frustration.

When you automate your HR functions in a centralized database, you enter data just once and it is replicated automatically across integrated systems such as payroll, benefits enrollment, and time and attendance. There is no need for duplicate data entry. This saves you time and reduces the possibility of making errors through typos.

By improving HR's efficiency in routine administration and reducing the time spent on paperwork and data entry, an HRMS opens the door for you to assume a more proactive role within your company. You'll provide better service to employees at a lower cost to the company—and that's good business.



**“Yes, Sage Abra saves us time and money. But that’s not really why we got it. It helps us serve people better and faster and makes us more viable as a human resources group. Most of all, employees love it. That’s what counts for us.”**

David Allred, human resources administrator,  
The Mattei Companies, LLC

<sup>1</sup> Forrester Research, as reported by Workforce Management, “Three Stories of Self-Service Success,” January 2003, pp. 60-62.

## Benefits Administration

On average, HR departments spend 30 percent of their time on routine benefits administration tasks. Benefits form an important part of your employees' compensation packages, and benefits are integral to employee satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, MetLife recently found that 75 percent of employees surveyed say that health benefits are an important factor in their loyalty to their current employer.<sup>2</sup>

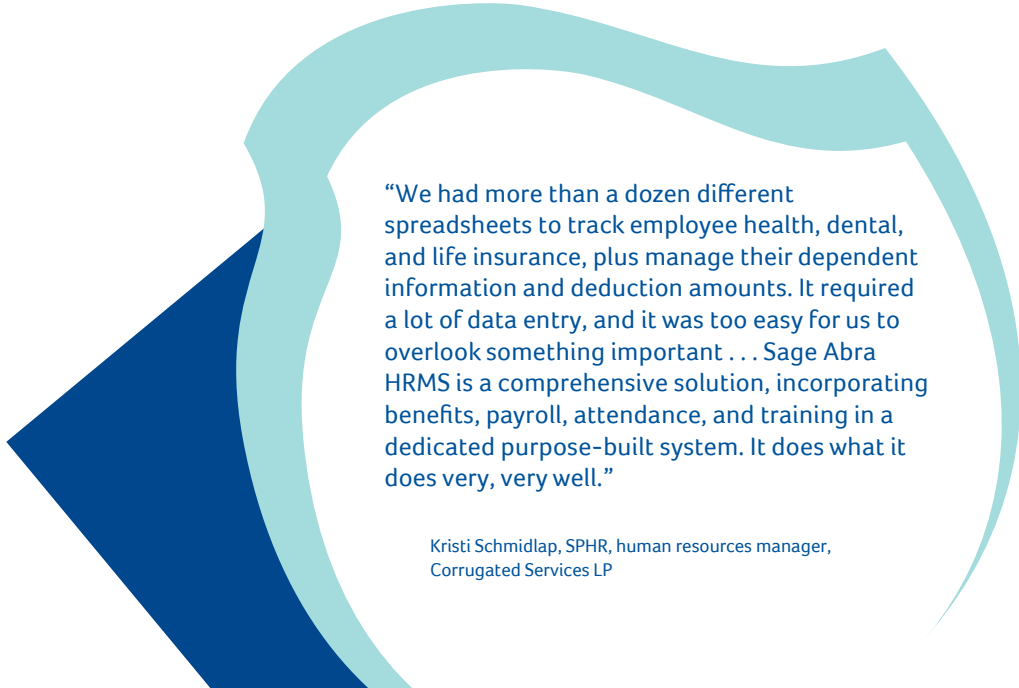
HR software can significantly decrease the amount of time needed to set up and administer multiple benefits plans. It can lower the chances of making clerical data errors that negatively impact your benefit plans. And an HRMS accurately tracks and calculates the cost of your benefits plans, so you can easily check for billing errors.

It's easy to create savings and insurance plans with an automated HR solution like Sage Abra HR. Benefit plan setup interviews take you step by step through the entire process. After setup, you can track plans, define eligibility criteria, and automatically calculate employee, dependent, and employer premiums.

### Automated HR software improves benefits administration with:

- **Increased Efficiency**—After you've entered your employees into benefit plans, the data is available throughout your HR system, eliminating extraneous data entry.
- **Time Savings**—With all employee data gathered into a central database, it's fast and easy to access information you need about any employee's benefits.
- **Better Reporting and Planning**—With your benefits data in one place, standard reports help you analyze enrollment trends, study your benefits mix, and forecast future costs.
- **Easy Billing Reconciliation**—An HR system summarizes the number of participants enrolled in a plan and calculates your expected premiums so you can catch billing errors.

<sup>2</sup> 7th annual MetLife Study of Employee Benefits Trends, p. 18.



“We had more than a dozen different spreadsheets to track employee health, dental, and life insurance, plus manage their dependent information and deduction amounts. It required a lot of data entry, and it was too easy for us to overlook something important . . . Sage Abra HRMS is a comprehensive solution, incorporating benefits, payroll, attendance, and training in a dedicated purpose-built system. It does what it does very, very well.”

Kristi Schmidlap, SPHR, human resources manager,  
Corrugated Services LP

## Compliance Management

The current economic challenges make the compliance landscape more complicated today than it has been in the past several years. Both economically and politically, the relationship among employees, corporations, and government is changing. Nearly all of the current legislative docket, from the public health care debate to government stimulus programs to tax code changes will affect employers in some way.

Here is just a small sample of compliance issues facing companies this year:

- Disgruntled employees filed 15 percent more employment-related claims with the government in 2008. Even more are expected this year as deep corporate layoffs increased the total number of unemployed people.<sup>3</sup>
- At the federal level, government has changed COBRA requirements and payroll tax reporting Form 941.
- The President signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, extending the statute of limitations for employees to file equal-pay discrimination lawsuits.
- Congress is actively debating the Employee Free Choice Act, legislation that would make it easier to establish new unions by eliminating employees' ability to vote with a private ballot.


If you don't have an HRMS, it's up to you to keep track of complex and ever-changing regulations at the federal, state, and local government levels. Many of the laws involve significant reporting requirements. Mistakes can lead to penalties and fines from the government, as well as expose your company to risk of costly employee lawsuits.

An HRMS will help you determine which employment laws apply to your company and track the necessary information to comply with record-keeping requirements. Regular legislative and compliance updates from your HRMS vendor help keep your organization in compliance with changing tax and employment laws.

With a good HRMS, you will be able to:

- **Track important information** including HIPAA certificates of coverage, COBRA participation, and workman's compensation cases.
- **Take the hassle out of government reporting** such as EEO, I9, and VETS-100 reports.
- **Ensure safety and compliance** when you keep complete records for OSHA regulations.
- **Keep proactive records** that will help your company defend itself in any litigation or government agency review.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathon D. Glater, "Layoffs Herald a Heyday for Employee Lawsuits," The New York Times, January 30, 2009.



“To prove EEO compliance, we used to spend hours manually counting employees. With Abra HR, it takes just ten minutes to prepare the same report. That’s a nice productivity boost for us.”

Dianne Jopling, HR director,  
Haartz Corporation

## Reporting and Analysis

Compliance reporting, while critical, isn't the only type of analysis HR departments should engage in. Increasingly, companies are realizing that workforce planning is a critical part of strategic planning. Wages and benefits are the largest expense category for many businesses. And people are the heart of most organizations. Without the right group of employees, your business lacks the skills and talent to succeed.

A good HR solution should provide a robust selection of standard reports and an easy-to-use tool that enables you to build your own customized reports. A comprehensive set of reports, tailored to your specific business and your industry, will allow you to:

- **Analyze skills** and certifications to find talent gaps in your organization.
- **Calculate current benefit costs** based on employee enrollments.
- **Accurately forecast** future benefit costs across a variety of potential benefit plans.
- **Assess cost containment** strategies.
- **Define metrics** and measure HR performance in critical areas such as training, retention, and recruiting.



“Abra HR’s report-writing features are so superior that we now produce reports that took hours in just a few minutes . . . We’re easily saving 30 percent of our administrative costs in payroll and tax . . . The software easily paid for itself in the first year.”

Wendy Mahle, director of human resources and payroll, Perfumania, Inc.

## Employee Self-Service

Employee Self-Service (ESS) technology automates workflows by giving employees and managers online access to their benefits, personnel, and paycheck information. Employees view, create, and maintain information using a Web browser over the Internet or the company intranet.

By allowing employees to access information when they want it, employees feel informed and engaged. This is especially important right now, with employee confidence and morale sinking due to the economic uncertainty. After deep layoffs and cost cutting, most workers are starting to feel burned out with increased stress and extra job duties.

Companies are increasingly recognizing that adding self-service technology to existing HR systems delivers valuable benefits to both HR departments and the employees they serve. According to Watson Wyatt, more than 50 percent of companies now use employee and manager self-service.<sup>4</sup> Companies are using ESS to:

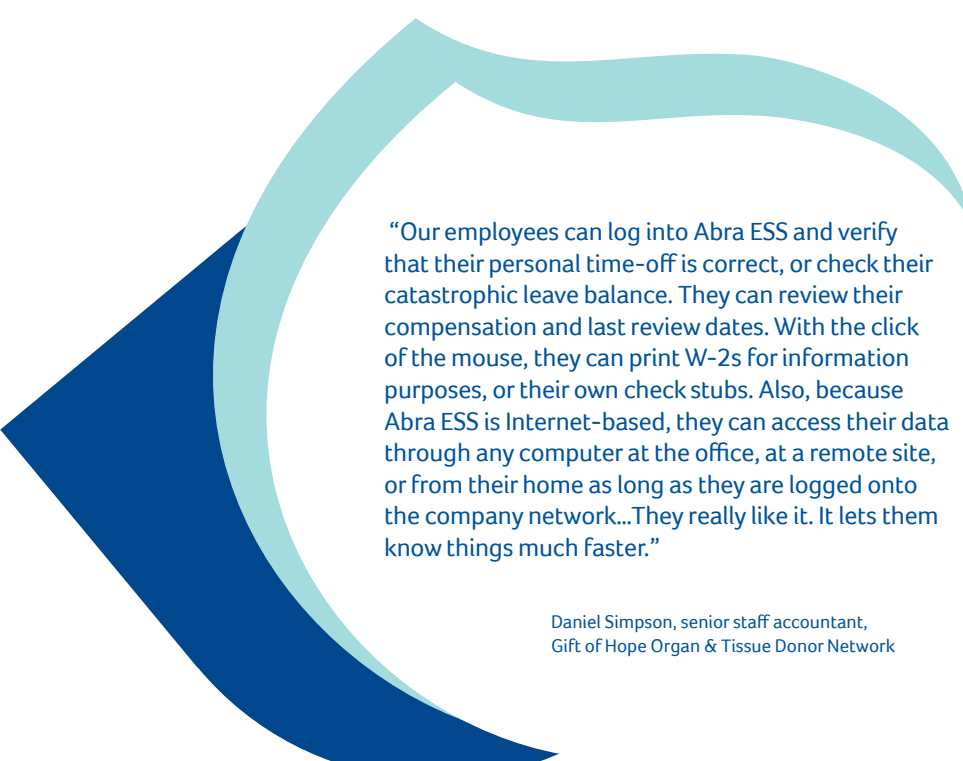
- **Save time** by reducing routine administration and paperwork.
- **Lower costs** by enabling employees to find answers to their questions and maintain personal data.
- **Improve communication with employees** to keep them engaged and productive.

ESS saves money by saving time and reducing clerical work. When employees can access and edit their own personal information, it removes much of the routine administration burden from HR. Self-service reduces the cycle time required to perform many routine HR tasks by 60 to 65 percent and lowers the average transaction cost by 20 percent.<sup>5</sup> Because self-service offers such impressive cost savings, you can achieve return on investment (ROI) in approximately two years.<sup>6</sup> When you implement a self-service system that is already integrated with your HR and payroll software, such as Abra ESS, your ROI may be even faster.

<sup>4</sup> Watson Wyatt, 2009 HR Technology Trends Survey.

<sup>5</sup> CedarCrestone, 2007–2008 HR Systems Survey, 10th Annual Edition.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



“Our employees can log into Abra ESS and verify that their personal time-off is correct, or check their catastrophic leave balance. They can review their compensation and last review dates. With the click of the mouse, they can print W-2s for information purposes, or their own check stubs. Also, because Abra ESS is Internet-based, they can access their data through any computer at the office, at a remote site, or from their home as long as they are logged onto the company network...They really like it. It lets them know things much faster.”

Daniel Simpson, senior staff accountant,  
Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network

## Gain Efficiency with Sage Abra HRMS

Sage Abra HRMS increases efficiency and lowers costs in every aspect of HR administration—HR, payroll, benefits, employee self-service, attendance, recruiting, and training. Sage Abra is modular so you can choose the combination of software options that meets your unique business needs and your budget. Abra HR and Abra ESS are fully integrated with each other, and with your Sage Abra Payroll software, for maximum time savings across the organization.

**Sage Abra HR** is a benefits, HR, and compliance management solution that automates routine processes to save time and lower costs. It centralizes employee information to streamline administration. Abra HR empowers the HR staff with quick, easy access to employee information, including demographics, insurance and savings benefits, skills, education, leave of absence, and attachments.

You can create and track any number of benefits plans, define eligibility criteria, and automatically calculate precise, detailed costs. Detailed record-keeping and reporting help you comply with complex and changing government regulations. With more than 100 standard reports and the ability to easily create customized reports, you'll easily analyze your current workforce strategy, forecast future expenses, and plan effectively for the future.

With Abra HR, you'll be able to:

- **Improve accuracy of employee data** by centralizing all benefits, payroll, and other information in one place and eliminating duplicate data entry.
- **Easily set up your benefits plans** with guided wizards.
- **Manage government compliance** with more than 100 standard reports.
- **Contain or reduce benefits costs** by catching incorrect enrollments and billing errors.
- **Track important information** including HIPAA certificates of coverage, COBRA participation, and workman's compensation cases.

**Sage Abra ESS** empowers employees and their managers to view and, when permitted, to create, edit, and maintain their critical HR data. Employees can view information such as skills, events, current job, employment history, and performance reviews securely over the Internet or a company intranet. Abra ESS provides an efficient, organized way to communicate with employees by posting news, notices, and other company information. It also reduces the transaction costs of routine HR administrative tasks.

Abra ESS helps you to:

- **Save time** by reducing the volume of calls and routine requests to the HR department.
- **Engage employees with regular, effective communications** over an interactive, online employee information portal.
- **Improve data accuracy** by allowing employees to edit and maintain personal information, emergency contacts, education, and more.
- **Empower managers with instant access** to comprehensive employee data for both direct and indirect reports.
- **Streamline time-off processes** by allowing employees to view time-off balances, attendance plans, and absence transactions, and request time off.

### Overcome Your Paper Pile with Sage Abra HR!

If you're ready to lower costs, reduce administrative time, and empower your employees, add Abra HR to your existing Abra Payroll solution. In addition to the Abra HR and Abra Payroll core modules, you can adopt integrated Sage Abra solutions, including Abra ESS, Abra Attendance, and Abra Train, that will automate the full range of your HR functions as your company's needs grow.

All of the benefits of a full-featured HRMS begin with Abra HR. This core solution will dramatically cut the time your department spends on clerical and administrative work, allowing you to focus your attention on higher corporate objectives. From keeping employee information up to date, to properly setting up and managing benefit plans, Abra HR ensures that you're fully supported with comprehensive yet easy-to-use tools.

Abra HR also keeps records and prepares reports that ensure your company's compliance with government regulations and your proactive defense against potential employee lawsuits. Additional reports help your HR department analyze current trends in your workforce and plan more effectively for the future.

Abra HR empowers the HR department to take on a more strategic role. It provides management with the insight to make better business decisions about workforce-related issues. And when combined with Abra ESS and Abra Payroll, it informs and educates employees about company news and goals, as well as the value of their benefit packages. Sage Abra HR truly provides a win-win-win for you, your company, and its employees.

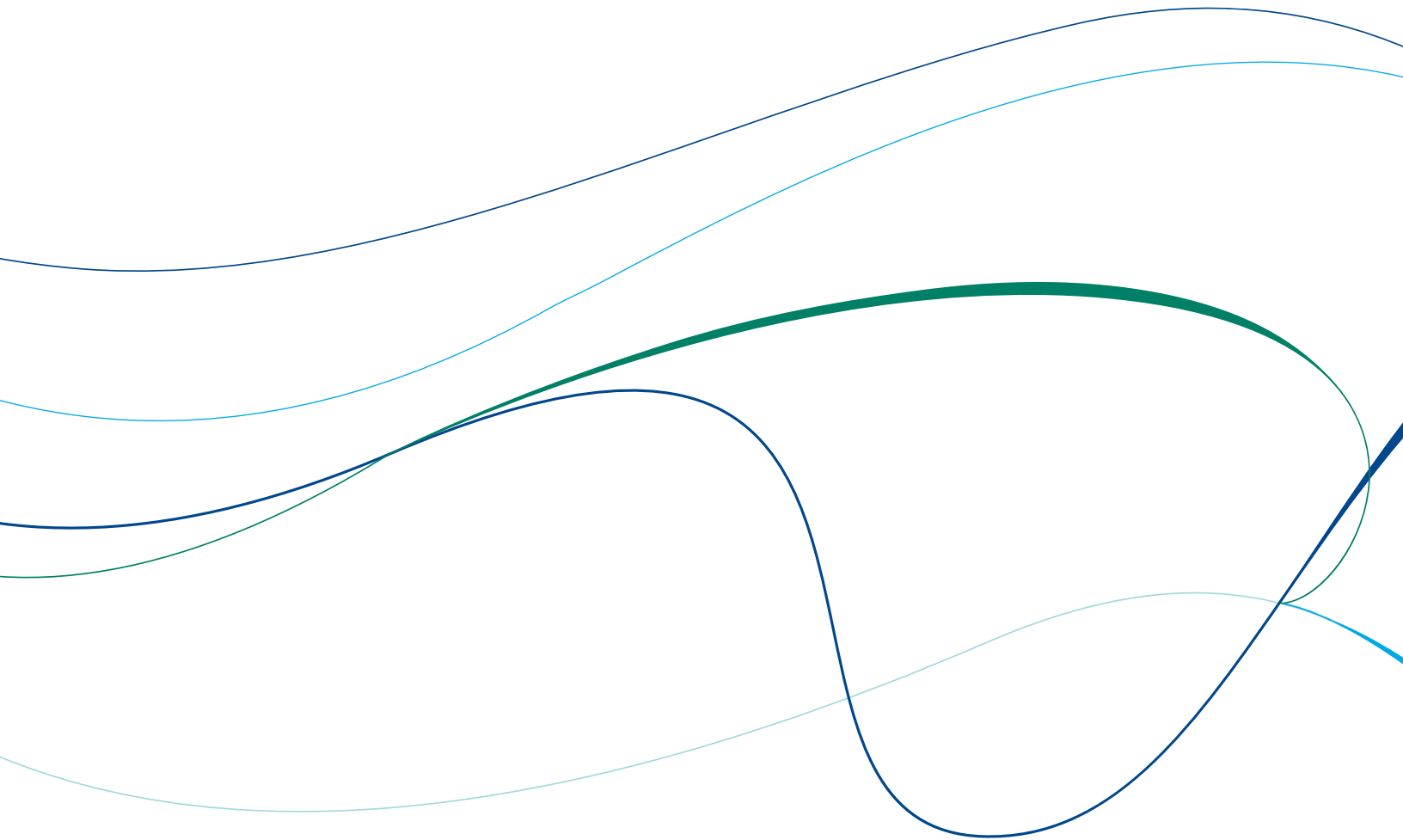


## About Sage North America

Sage North America is part of The Sage Group plc, a leading global supplier of business management software and services. At Sage, we live and breathe business every day. We are passionate about helping our customers achieve their ambitions. Our range of business software and services is continually evolving as we innovate to answer our customers' needs. Our solutions support accounting, operations, customer relationship management, human resources, time tracking, merchant services, and the specialized needs of the construction, distribution, healthcare, manufacturing, nonprofit, and real estate industries. Sage North America employs more than 5,000 people and supports nearly 2.9 million small and medium-size business customers. The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 14,800 people and supports 5.7 million customers worldwide.

**For more information, please visit the Web site at [www.sagenorthamerica.com](http://www.sagenorthamerica.com) or call 866-308-2378.**

Sage Abra has been the industry leader in midmarket HRMS systems for 25 years. Our software is supported by a nationwide network of Certified Business Partners providing a local resource for implementation, training, service, and support. **For more information, please call us at 800-424-9392, or visit our Website at [www.sage.com](http://www.sage.com).**



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