

## Four Problems, One Solution: IssueTrak Keeps Hudson Streamlined and in Sync

- *Sarbanes-Oxley Payroll Adjustments*
- *Tax Compliance*
- *Paycard Tracking Tool*
- *Human Resources Issue Tracking*



### Business Challenge

**Customer:** Hudson Highland Group

**Location:** New York City

**Industry:** Staffing

#### About Hudson Highland Group

Hudson is a leading provider of permanent recruitment, contract professionals and talent management services worldwide. From single placements to total outsourced solutions, Hudson helps clients achieve greater organizational performance by assessing, recruiting, developing and engaging the best and brightest people for their businesses. The company employs approximately 2,000 professionals serving clients and candidates in more than 20 countries.

New York-based Hudson Highland Group provides professional staffing and talent management solutions to clients worldwide. What distinguishes them from the other 40,000 U.S. staffing agencies though, is their wholehearted belief that to achieve great performance, companies need great people. Clients know when they engage Hudson, they'll get nothing but the best and brightest talent for their businesses.

Within North America, 5,000 Hudson employees rely on the payroll department for accurate, timely paychecks. And Peg Bramble, director of payroll for Hudson's North American operations, isn't about to let them down.

"I have seven different groups that I manage...20 people in all," says Bramble. It's a tall order, and there's always a special project. "It's very fast paced with very short turnaround times within our department. One of our payrolls runs weekly, and we do a two-hour turnaround on it. We don't have a lot of liberty as far as time, so whatever we can do to facilitate and expedite our processes is a welcome thing."

Bramble first became familiar with IssueTrak by way of Hudson's IT team,

when they used it for a major PeopleSoft project during 2004.

"People who were involved with the project were located throughout the country. We used IssueTrak to manage issues encountered during development, implementation, and maintenance. It helped us stay in tune with the whole project. It allowed us to work with internal and external teams, and it gave us much needed visibility," says Bramble.

*"I have taken IssueTrak and diversified it to achieve a wide variety of useful tools. IssueTrak gave me the operational processing edge to keep the performance of payroll at its highest level."*

*Peg Bramble, Director of Payroll*

The PeopleSoft project changed Hudson's operational procedures. Many payroll responsibilities (previously housed in the Shared Service Center) were re-located to their 50 front offices nationwide.

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## Challenges

- Needed a way to track accounting adjustments per Sarbanes-Oxley
- Experienced difficulties managing tax issues with various agencies
- Needed pay card system without relying on IT department
- Wanted to coordinate benefits issues between employees and HR
- Manual tracking resulted in less complete, less accurate records

## Solution

- A repository of changes for compliance
- Tool that manages communication flow
- Secured SaaS system for pay card tracking
- Tool to monitor and communicate issues with pay
- Better prioritization of hundreds of incoming items
- Clear approval workflows

## Benefits

- Rollout to 50 offices in two weeks
- Central tracking of 200 tax issues during a string of acquisitions
- Secure data storage of employee information
- Detailed metrics on the volume of issues and errors

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"Staff members at those offices had a learning curve as well as additional job responsibilities," says Bramble. "With payroll processing, we needed a way to track adjustments. Some corrections would be through payroll, affecting employee pay, while other adjustments affected billing."

Prior to IssueTrak, they used Excel spreadsheets to track adjustments, but they had issues making sure everything got recorded.

## Sarbanes-Oxley Payroll Adjustments

When Sarbanes-Oxley pushed Hudson to seek a better solution, Bramble gave IssueTrak a try. "We were already familiar with IssueTrak from the PeopleSoft project, so it was easy to get everybody on board," she says.

Payroll's first IssueTrak system enables staff to request corrections, monitor the progress of their requests, and build a repository of changes to ensure proper controls are met and metrics captured.

On payroll processing day, Bramble's team used to get hundreds of e-mails and follow-up phone calls. Now everything goes through IssueTrak. "IssueTrak has streamlined my process," says Bramble, "and lets us get to the crux of items that need to be addressed quickly."

One thing Bramble found extremely beneficial was IssueTrak's knowledge

"The manual processes were susceptible to data integrity if the person completing the task forgot to enter it, or did not accurately record it," says Bramble. "It's easy in our fast-paced life to correct the problem, but then forget to log it. You want to move on to the next issue, but you still need to manually put this into the spreadsheet."

management feature. "We can attach process flow documents, flow charts, and all kinds of things that are important to the process."

*"IssueTrak has streamlined my process and lets us get to the crux of items that need to be addressed quickly."*

Adjustments require one or more approvals, "but approval layers are not something staff always keep in the back of their mind," says Bramble. "We created a grid of approvals so personnel didn't have to remember this. Now when there's a change, they can quickly go to the knowledge base and see who needs to approve it."

## Tax Compliance and Communication with Local, State, and Federal Governments

A series of aggressive acquisitions further challenged Hudson's payroll team. "Our company underwent 60 acquisitions, 17 federal ID number consolidations, a spin-off, and outsourcing of our payroll taxes," says Bramble.

*"the reports we generate off this database keep upper management informed"*

"We had over 200 issues with various tax agencies that needed to be managed."

The payroll team needed a place to store all of this detail and settle these items. IssueTrak was an obvious choice.

This system helps them manage the flow of communication between Hudson and tax jurisdictions. "IssueTrak provides me with the management tools to keep notes on the progression of each tax issue. It's a convenient way for my staff and I to communicate and refer to issues, and the reports we generate off this database keep upper management informed."

## Pay Card Tracking

With two wins already under her belt, Bramble looked for more ways IssueTrak could help.

Protecting employees' personal information is something Hudson takes seriously. "With identity theft on the rise, we implemented a pay card system to process travel advances and direct deposits. We needed a way to record the issuance of these pay cards."

They use IssueTrak to record the pay card information, plus card numbers, so payroll can load/re-load them with funds.

"Using IssueTrak also helps us monitor payroll deductions that need to take place for travel advances issued through the card," says Bramble.

"We could have used a database like Access, but one of the nice features that IssueTrak offers is the fact that they house our data. Storage is an issue for our company. We're always running out of disk space, and we have to wait for IT to re-shuffle. The fact that you securely house our information was a key selling point for me."

## Human Resources Issue Tracking

Payroll's fourth IssueTrak system helps them monitor and communicate issues with pay.

"If an employee in my Houston office discovers that there was no benefit deduction on his payroll check, he'll contact his local front office, who will in turn notify us of the error. We have to notify the benefits department, who will tell us how much we should deduct from the employee's next pay check," says Bramble.

IssueTrak helps manage this cross-team communication, and Bramble herself uses the system as a health check, of sorts. When the system was designed, she made sure to build in mandatory fields that would help her measure

performance and identify problem areas.

Bramble says she uses this system to monitor her team's progression and career path. With these numbers, she knows the volume of checks and direct deposits her team can process, and their rate of errors.

*"My team's error ratio runs less than 1%."*

"And I'll tell you," says Bramble, "my team's error ratio runs less than 1%. That's an important number... one I make sure to communicate to upper management."

## Diversity and Rapid Implementation Add Up To a Winning Solution

In total, Bramble's four IssueTrak systems helped them streamline daily operations. "I was looking for a web-based tool to facilitate communications... a tool that would allow me to easily track, monitor, and evaluate data, achieve consistency in reporting, build a historical database of metrics, and help me comply with Sarbanes-Oxley.

*"We literally went from design, to implementation, to launch within days."*

"I presented my needs to upper management," says Bramble, "and they agreed to let me implement the first

tracker. After this success, it was an easy sell for the others I wanted."

And implementation was fast! Bramble says, "We literally went from design, to implementation, to launch within days. Our first tracker was out within weeks. We did a staged rollout, and within a two-week period, all 50 offices were on the system.

"I have taken IssueTrak and diversified it to achieve a wide variety of useful tools. With Hudson's full-scale PeopleSoft launch, many departments were scrambling to keep their arms around their operations. IssueTrak gave me the operational processing edge to keep the performance of payroll at its highest level."

### About IssueTrak

IssueTrak develops, sells and supports issue tracking software. First released in 2000, its signature software package has become a robust platform for internal and external customer support, IT help desk, workflow management, and issue tracking throughout the enterprise. The 100% web-based software is currently used by more than 1,500 companies in 34 countries, and across 54 major industry groups. Based in Virginia Beach, VA, the company is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and has been recognized with a number of awards, including the Inc 500, Inc 5000, and Deloitte Technology Fast 500.