

ANSWERS HR – NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH

With each passing day local and national media report the recession claiming yet another victim. Whether it is a business within our region having to increase its prices to meet increasing business costs or the dreaded news of more job redundancies it's hard to stay positive, BUT there is a business within Tees Valley that is not only managing to survive these testing times but with the launch of a new product and partnership with another local business has meant it is seeing an increase in work and is looking to take on more staff.

Answers HR is the brainchild of Alasdair Ross, Managing Director of Answers in a Box based in Darlington, Co. Durham. When developing the product it was important to provide businesses the affordability of a comprehensive human resource provision without them having to employ either HR in-house or an external HR consultant, and at the same time giving them the reassurance of a comprehensive HR resource that would help prevent them falling foul of employment legislation.

Alasdair says "With all businesses large and small facing challenging times, it is a sad reflection that there has also been a significant rise in the number of employment tribunal payouts which have come at a heavy cost, especially as in most cases these awards could have been avoided if the correct HR procedures had been in place. Many businesses seem to think they don't need to have HR in place at all, or they simply find it too cost prohibitive, and this is something I passionately want to change". Last year saw an increase in employment tribunal awards topping £32 million in 2008, which was a rise of over £7 million from 2004/05 (Source: Tribunals Service Annual Report 2007-2008). Moreover, it is believed that these figures may represent only a fraction of the total costs of employment law related claims, as the majority of claims are settled out of court.

The Answers HR product is a secure web-hosted employee self-service system offering employers everything from holiday and absence management, employment contracts, relevant policy and procedures with automatic updates to all staff, and much more. A major difference to other HR systems is that it has been designed with the end user in mind making it easy and intuitive for employees to use and access, and all at about a third of the cost of similar HR software. A major inclusive benefit is access to a HR expert based locally to you and who cares enough to be interested in finding your business the right solution to your issue, rather than just a faceless call centre operative somewhere on the end of a phone.



One local HR Consultant was so impressed with the product that he has now partnered with Answers HR to offer this as an additional service to his clients. David Dorman-Smith of Mayberry Consultancy, Middlesbrough, has always been aware that there are a growing percentage of smaller businesses that missed out because they either didn't feel big enough to warrant an in-house HR facility or simply couldn't afford a monthly fee to retain a HR Consultant.

As David says "This situation always made me feel that these businesses are exposing themselves to all manner of employment law issues which could ultimately cost them dearly, but with no decent alternative option in the market place you find these clients only come to you when there are in crisis which is very sad as it's often too late. On seeing Answers HR in operation I knew that this would fill that much needed gap in the market place. Since partnering with Answers in a Box I can now offer potential smaller clients a great alternative for their HR resource, safe in the knowledge they can handle the day-to-day aspects of their HR requirements whilst knowing they can call when they need help with something more complex".

David was also thrilled that he could work with a local company "It is great to see that although the business sector is facing some tough times, within the North East we have a steady resolve that means we won't just sit it out, but will work together to create new business opportunities to help grow not only ourselves but others in our business community".

To find out more call **0800 980 7377** visit: www.answers-hr.co.uk or e-mail: info@answers-hr.co.uk