



REGIONAL HR UPDATE: EUROPE

Holiday Time ... a time to relax?!

| CHRISTIAN ADLUNG

Shouldn't the holidays be a time when you sit back for awhile, relax, spend some time with your family and think about the year that is almost over? So, why is it that so many European companies still convert their HR and/or payroll system at this time of the year and go live on January 1st (or maybe January 2nd, allowing one more day to recuperate after the New Year's party)?

From a legal perspective there is no rule in Europe that says you have to change payrolls at the beginning of the year. Obviously there are some advantages, like having a full year of data in one system. However, for payroll and tax reasons, you still need to load historical data into a new system. So if you switch payrolls during the fiscal year, you could still load historical data for the first part of the year so you would still have a full year of data in the new system.

From a project perspective, there are a lot of advantages to not going live in January. First, the holiday season is an important time in Europe, comparable to the Thanksgiving week in the US. Almost nobody works during the last two weeks of the year in Europe, which traditionally lasts from December 23rd until the end of the first week in January. For those people who do work during this time, they are extremely busy performing year end work in the Finance, as well as in the Payroll Department. Therefore, those people are not in a position to support any type of new implementation work, such as user acceptance testing, training, etc.

For these reasons, we generally recommend that our European clients move their go-live date to any other date except January. For example, the end of the tax year (March in Germany or April in the UK) is a much better time to go live with Payroll in Europe. For HR, the best go-live date is the time when you have all the resources you need available for testing, training and production support.

Of course, there may be some compelling event for your company on the first of January, such as termination of the contract with your existing HR/payroll vendor. If this is the case, then you should be sure to calculate some extra time in your project plan and to inform the people in advance who you need to be available.

In this sense, I wish you a very happy holiday season, a relaxing time-off, and a great start into the New Year 2010! 🌐

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