

CIOs and HR directors should partner to deliver business value

As the human resources (HR) function in most companies becomes more tech-driven and automated, so does the business partnership between the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the HR director become increasingly important.

That's the word from **Fanie Jansen, CIO at Sage AAMEA (Africa, Australia, Middle East & Asia)**, who says that today's high pressure HR environment demands that HR departments use technologies such as the cloud, mobility and social tools to improve productivity, streamline processes, and promote sharing of information.

"Today, HR departments are wrestling with complex issues such as strikes, talent development, performance management and growing regulatory and legislative requirements," says Jansen. "These challenges mean that it's more important than ever to automate HR and payroll processes where possible. HR departments are also working to the quality and analysis of data to meet statutory reporting requirements and improve strategic decision-making."

In South African companies, HR departments are rapidly becoming among the biggest spenders on technology in the enterprise as they seek scalable technology solutions to help them manage payroll and HR processes. There's a lot of routine admin in HR – automating as much of that as possible can save the organisation time and money, says Jansen. And that's where the HR director is asking for the CIO's support.

Jansen says that HR departments are increasingly looking to the IT department and the CIO for help to choosing and implement the right technologies to give them the agility they need to stay ahead of today's fast-changing HR environment. For example, many HR directors have become interested in the potential of the cloud to reduce IT spending, simplify their technology environments, and

quickly provision agile new business systems.

The CIO has an invaluable role to play in helping the HR director to understand the security implications of the cloud and choose a system that fits into the enterprise's IT architecture. "Cloud-based solutions mean that companies no longer have to invest in their own infrastructure; software enhancements and updates are taken care of; and they never have to worry about backing up their data," Jansen says.

Jansen says an important trend in the HR space sees the HR department extend access to many of its systems to employees, allowing them to access HR applications from their PCs, tablets or smartphones. For example, employees can apply for leave or provide a doctor's certificate online when they're taking sick leave through the employee self-service application.

That reduces the HR department's admin burden, while also providing more convenience to the employee. And such electronic processes also produce a wealth of data that enables HR to make better decisions. Another trend for larger companies is to work towards integrating HR and payroll software with business intelligence, time and attendance and workflow to reduce the need to capture data manually.

Says Jansen: "Technology can be an important strategic enabler for the HR department as it seeks to improve its employee value proposition and manage a growing compliance burden. Here, the CIO has an important role to play in helping the HR department to maximise the value it delivers to the business."