aurion

savills

Savills

Industry: Commercial property services
Employees: 1000+
Solution: On Premise Aurion Software
Customer since: 2003

Savills is one of the world's leading property agencies, offering services from investment sales and leasing strategy to valuation, project management, occupier services and asset management. Ingrid McDonald has been Savills National Payroll Manager in Australia and New Zealand since March 2019, but in those two years she has had to find solutions for both the JobKeeper stimulus scheme and new IR award clauses governing annualised salaries.

With each challenge, Ingrid has been able to rely on Savills payroll solution from Aurion to satisfy the new compliance requirements and save her team time and effort in the process.

"I've used many different payroll systems, but Aurion is definitely one of the easier systems to learn; it's intuitive and user friendly. What struck me is that everything is easily reversable. If you've made an error, it's not difficult to identify and correct it."

Ingrid McDonald
National Payroll Manager, People & Development
Savills Australia and New Zealand

Payroll under pressure

When Ingrid became Savills National Payroll Manager two years ago, she soon came up against her first major challenge. A renewed focus on security at Savills saw an audit of segregation of duties in payroll to ensure that no one person at Savills could create, process and finalise a pay by themselves.

Describing Savills secure payroll process, Ingrid says, "The HR department completes the initial stage of entering the biometrics data. We then step in and one member of the payroll team will add salary components, whilst another member will review this entry. As a final check it comes to me for approval. We all perform different tasks to keep that segregation tight."

"Aurion was very accommodating in that we were able to put in differing levels of security," she says. "You can really personalise Aurion to very specific requests from the business. The Query Tool is a great feature. I get many requests from different areas in the greater business for specific reports that might not be available in an out-of-the-box product."

Adapting for JobKeeper

Like many businesses affected by the pandemic, Savills wanted their staff to be able to access JobKeeper payments, but to do so required a change to their reporting structure.

Before JobKeeper, Savills payroll system was set up under one ABN, which was sufficient for single touch payroll. However, to satisfy JobKeeper compliance, they needed to change the business structure to incorporate different pay entities based on location (state and territory) and pay cycle (weekly, fortnightly, monthly). "We now have ten individual entities within Savills, and we were able to reallocate all of our people with minimum effort," says Ingrid, "but I was definitely losing sleep over this!"

Ingrid says, "I couldn't have done it without our Aurion Client Advocate. We would speak after hours, and even if he was booked out, he would let me know when he had a window. He gave me plenty of encouragement and I learnt so much. He'd tell me 'you can do this' and showed me how it fit into things I already knew."

"I've had a really great experience with Aurion," says Ingrid, "I've never had exposure to that level of support with other systems."

Ingrid has the confidence to jump in and experiment with Savills test system for Aurion. It allows her to "Try new things and roll back to a previous version if they don't succeed," she says, "we're always looking at what we can improve.

"We ask, 'was this done the best back in the day', and 'can we improve it', and legislation is something pushing that ongoing review."

Custom reconciliation solution

As well as JobKeeper, Ingrid has had to deal with the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) new requirements for employers paying annualised salaries.

From 1 March 2020, organisations with employees under 22 modern awards need to record employee work times, and audit annualised salaries vs. full award wages each 12-months after the employee enters into the annualised wage arrangement or on the termination of their employment. If the salary is less then what the employee would have received under the award, the employer needs to repay the difference.

Ingrid says that because Savills has some staff employed under the clerical award, complying with the rules came down to monitoring their hours. "Previously only casuals and people paid by the hour would have to fill in a time sheet. We had to give that capability to everybody who was under the clerical award."

When Savills staff under the clerical award go into their employee self-service (ESS) to record their actual working hours, a timesheet opens for the month, they add their hours however they want, it then pushes through to their manager who makes sure they're not putting in anything funky, before its returned to payroll for payment.

Payroll returns on investment

To build this solution, Ingrid said that: "We engaged a consultant for two full days and he built us a bespoke solution in the back of the Query Tool, with several different data tables and formulas incorporated, which shows at the click of a button if anyone has been underpaid."

The solution included a way for Savills to filter the Query Tool with different parameters based on the group or timeframe they needed to report on. The timekeeping report is set up to export to an Excel csv file for easy analysis.

"Once we have run payroll, I run the Query Tool which lets me know if any employees have been disadvantaged. If anyone is worse off, as per the new legislation, we can easily correct their remuneration, and it works perfectly," says Ingrid.

"Our Aurion consultant was extremely easy to work with," she continued. "His knowledge, communication and understanding of what we were trying to achieve resulted in a successful report build that we can now use to ensure we monitor employee hours as per the new legislation."

Ingrid says, "For a very small outlay we could ensure we were compliant with legislation, which regardless of industry, is every payroll manager's number one agenda."

"By having the Aurion custom timekeeping solution built within the system, it won't be difficult for us to apply the same methodology if and when other Industrial Awards follow suit, and the fact that there won't be any additional cost is a real bonus."

Key factors for success:

- High level of expert support
- Intuitive, user friendly interface
- Adaptable, customisable platform

Let's Chat

Email hello@aurion.com
or call 1300 287 466