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Reality HR is always our first port of call when we need HR support. Having worked with Reality HR previously, I knew we were in safe hands; they never fail to deliver on their promises and provide a service that is consistently professional.

When we found ourselves in urgent need, Reality HR were able to act very quickly. Knowing we had a partner we could trust was invaluable, especially at a time when you need it the most.

Ann Chambers – HR Director



Meet ECOTONE and learn about **the challenge** they faced with their HR

Ecotone is a pioneer in natural and organic food, distributing household brands such as Clipper Teas, Kallo, Whole Earth, Almond Breeze and Mrs Crimbles. They define their mission as 'healthier food, healthier people, healthier planet' and vegetarian products account for 97% of their range.

In the UK, they employ c.150 people across two sites: their head office in Camberley and a tea factory in Beaminster, Dorset (the home of Clipper Teas).

When their newly appointed internal HR Manager suddenly went on long-term sick leave, Ecotone found themselves in urgent need of external HR support to manage the HR function for their production site in Beaminster – home of the Clipper Teas brand.

Maintaining a high level of HR service was critical for business continuity. Ecotone UK's HR Director, Ann Chambers, explains: "To find ourselves without an HR Manager so suddenly was hugely problematic. We didn't have the internal resource to fill the gap, so we needed a long-term sustainable solution, not a short-term quick-fix. If this wasn't challenging enough, we were also experiencing major problems with our payroll system. Our Time and Attendance system was simply not fit for purpose to handle our many and varied shift structures. We were losing credibility with our employees and found that we were fire-fighting payroll problems every month which left us with no time to get to solve the real issue."

The action taken by Reality HR

Reality HR responded immediately with a pragmatic approach to the urgent situation. To enable Ecotone to retain the level of HR support needed, they took the following action:

- Identified Ecotone's needs, putting a plan of action together that would support the needs of the business both in the immediate and longer-term
- Provided an HR professional to cover the absence of their internal HR Manager. Thanks to Reality HR's award-winning flexible work policy, they were able to draw on their resource of HR Associates, recruiting an HR professional who was able to offer Wessanen the flexibility of working days and hours required to support the HR function
- Recognised the impact of the payroll issues and gave a prioritised focus to ensure satisfactory resolution
- Designed a series of training sessions to better enable managers with the skills required to lead successful teams



Reality HR reacted extremely quickly and were able to deliver a solution that fitted our needs perfectly. We have a happier team and overall our HR presence is in a good place for when our internal HR Manager returns to the business.

Ann Chambers HR Director

The outcome

HR support continuity – and a brand new payroll system. As a direct result of Reality HR's support, Ecotone has experienced the following benefits:

- Continued HR support thanks to Reality HR's quick response; an experienced HR Manager was placed at their Beaminster office within one week of the initial phone call working flexible hours to suit the business needs
- With a prioritised approach to fix the payroll challenges, 99.99% salary accuracy was delivered within one month
- Pay queries were minimised, conserving HR resource which enabled Reality HR to play an integral role in the assessment and review of a new Time and Attendance system. Once all options have been considered, Reality HR will manage the successful project management of the change-over and integration from the current system to the new one
- Higher morale amongst employees as payroll problems were eradicated
- Training is being delivered by Reality HR; their strong knowledge of both the company and each individual has enabled a highly personalised approach
- The expectation is that from the first training session Managers will be able to put into operation the skills they have learned so that they are more confident in leading their teams with more self-assured people management skills

