

Houston Zoo is “Naturally Wild” About Sage Abra HRMS

Houston Zoo is quickly becoming one of the biggest tourist attractions in Houston. Founded in 1922, the zoo welcomes 1.4 million guests every year, and is home to more than 3,100 exotic animals representing over 500 species. By conserving endangered species, providing engaging educational opportunities and creating stimulating exhibits, it strives to be “naturally wild.”

“Wild” was also a good descriptor for the zoo’s paper-based management systems in the human resources (HR) and payroll departments. The organization had long outgrown its manual processes, so it searched for HR and payroll software where each unit could function independently, yet also integrate seamlessly with one another. The solution was Sage Abra HRMS™.

Sage Abra for “A to Z”

“Sage Abra HRMS has automated our entire HR department from A to Z,” says Elizabeth Acevedo, HR director. “We use it for almost everything—employee information, attendance, salaries. We’ll soon implement it for training, ID, and security purposes.”

Best of all, according to Acevedo, are the reports she can generate with Sage Abra HR®. “I’ve checked with other zoos who don’t use Sage Abra, and it takes them literally days to crank out a demographic report,” she notes. “With Abra HR and Crystal Reports®, I can produce the report in minutes. Whenever our executives or board need information, I create a report at the touch of a button. Overall, I estimate that Abra HR is saving us the work of an entire full-time employee in our department.”

“A Trip to Heaven”

The zoo had been outsourcing its payroll, but found that corrections or additional runs were expensive. If data was submitted even a few minutes late, a fine was charged. “I was having a nervous breakdown every other Wednesday, worrying about getting all our information to the payroll vendor on time,” says Donna Martin, payroll manager.

Martin was delighted when the zoo decided to implement Abra Payroll®, since she had used Abra HRMS in a previous position. “Getting Abra Payroll was like a trip to heaven for me,” Martin says.



CUSTOMER

Houston Zoo, Inc.

INDUSTRY

Nonprofit zoo

LOCATION

Houston, TX

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

One

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

300

SAGE PRODUCTS

- Abra HR
- Abra Payroll
- Abra Alerts
- Abra Attendance
- Abra Recruiting Solution
- Abra Train

CHALLENGE

Automate HR and payroll services for thriving nonprofit that is open 365 days a year, in order to improve accuracy and reporting options and bring payroll in-house

SOLUTION

Sage Abra HRMS for an end-to-end solution, with implementation including a full complement of human resources modules and payroll

RESULTS

Sage Abra HRMS has reduced the need for one full-time employee; reports that previously took days are now done in minutes; timesheet corrections can be done quickly and inexpensively in-house

“Because of the software, my workload is much more manageable and consistent. I actually get to celebrate a few holidays during the year; whereas before Sage Abra, I never knew when I would have to work on weekends or holidays to complete our payroll process.”

Seamless Integration

Houston Zoo uses Abra Payroll to cut paychecks or process direct deposits, depending on the employee's preference. The software integrates seamlessly with the zoo's other nonprofit fund accounting package and membership software. Abra Payroll creates a magnetic file so Martin can do quarterly and year-end taxes.

“Abra Payroll makes it really easy to upload data and export it to practically any kind of report,” says Martin. “I produce reports on payroll, the direct deposit register, or our check registers. We also create special reports with the data from Sage Abra, such as 401(k) information or conservation deductions. We're very big on conservation, and conduct a staff drive at the beginning of each fiscal year. Donations are flagged in Abra, and then matched by some of our larger donors. We've been able to do some fantastic things in South America with the funds identified in this manner.”

Flexible Control

Houston Zoo has experienced major efficiencies due to the move to Abra Payroll. “It's not so much that we're saving a lot of hours, since we were outsourcing the work before. Instead, with Abra Payroll we have so much more flexibility and control. For instance, whenever we needed to void or reissue a check while using the outside vendor, it cost us a great deal and took a long time. Now we can reprocess a check almost instantaneously or do an extra check run whenever we want. That's something our employees really appreciate,” she explains.

Acevedo is a firm believer in the choice to implement the new software. “Selecting Abra HRMS is one of the best things we've done here,” she says. Martin concurs. “I wouldn't want to do my job without Abra HRMS.”

“Sage Abra HR is saving us the work of an entire full-time employee in our department.”

Elizabeth Acevedo
Human Resources Director
Houston Zoo, Inc.

About Sage

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The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 14,800 people and supports 5.7 million customers worldwide. For more information, please visit the Web site at www.sagenorthamerica.com or call **866-308-2378**.