

Software Review: PS2000 (a Human Resource software package) Developer: Peterborough Software

Peterborough Software (199?). *PS2000 (a Human Resource software package)*, Peterborough Software.

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Recently, I had the privilege of reviewing PS2000, a human resource software package written by a London based software house, Peterborough Software. Besides the United Kingdom, the company has sales and support offices in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Hongkong, Australia, New Zealand, France, Malta, South Africa and Holland. The company's turnover in 1994/1995 was \$71 million with about \$12 million being ploughed into Research and Development. Worldwide customer base is about 2200. The company prides itself in being granted ISO 9001 in UK.

PS2000 comes in 4 basic modules, viz.: Personnel, Payroll, Recruitment and Training Administration. Most of the features which a typical HR manager would look for can be found mainly in the Personnel module. Hence, this review was written based on an assessment of this module only.

User-friendliness

The software did well in this category. It did not take very long to get accustomed to the " windows" environment in which it was written. I was told that the company took special effort to get Microsoft endorsement in regard to their windows standard.

Features

The system covers more than 100 types of employee information, ranging from basic HR details to Leave entitlement, flexible benefits and succession planning. All changes/amendments made are captured in a historical file so that one can always have an audit trail. As with other packages, PS2000 allows scanning of documents to be attached within a person's record, including even a photo of the employee. The system also allows macros to be set up, which automatically will prompt a personnel clerk through a series of screens, thus eliminating the chance that the personnel clerk will forget to invoke certain screens in the course of setting up a new employee's record. The other feature which I like about the system is that the records are always arranged in the order in which they were accessed before. Of course, you can still pull out a record or a block of records that meets a criteria (e.g. all those whose names begin with " TAN"). But I thought the default way in which they appeared made a lot of sense. The ability by the system to automatically prepare an organization chart based on all the employees particulars is rather impressive. You do not need to go through a separate exercise to " resupply" information to prepare the org chart. The concept of " effective date of action" makes the system a very powerful one because, in real life, HR professionals have information about their company's staff which however will only come into effect at a later date (e.g. basic salary); the system will wait till the date has arrived before invoking the change. It is also a multi-currency system, thus making it very useful for MNC's who deal with different branches and different currency types. PS2000 has a feature that will certainly win over many E-mail users. It can actually send out information to E-mail system users (e.g. Msmail). Imagine a scene when the HR manager has just prepared a report on PS2000 and would like to send this out to various users via E-mail. Wouldn't this be fulfilling a nice

dream? The software will also interface very well with other Microsoft products such as Word and Excel.

Reportwriter

I've found this simple and powerful and flexible enough to give various formats. This tool will be almost as good as your imagination.

Versatility

The one function that really scored high marks with me is the ability by the users to add in additional fields. Most of us will always have certain fields that are unique to our company which the software writers can never dream of. Hence, this this feature is extremely valuable. Subsequent upgrades of the software will not nullify the newly created fields.

Performance

Being a technical person myself, I was particularly sensitive to the response time of the system. I found the system performing at an acceptable response time. However, I did not get a chance to see its performance, with the software residing on the file server and several users accessing it simultaneously. Those of you who are serious about the software should arrange for this to be shown to you.

Security

Very comprehensive features built in with access privileges down to users and field types.

Connectivity to other systems

Like in most software, PS2000 has an import and export facility. So long as the other software also has similar features, doing file interchange shouldn't be a problem.

Cost

A single user licence will cost about \$20K, 2 user will cost \$26K, 3 user will cost \$30K, 4 user will cost \$34K. Beyond this, every concurrent user will cost \$3K.

Support

The Singapore office was set up 3 years ago. Currently, the office has only 3 people but there are plans to increase this staffing. This was the only thing I found a little unnerving about using PS2000. However, being an international company, you will be able to get support from the other regional offices listed above.

Final Word

If you are looking for a HR software without bankrupting your payroll, PS2000 will look like a steal, given the rich functionality and user friendliness. But if you are looking for additional functions like Job Leveling, Wage Survey analysis, Job Evaluation using Hayes and other established method (how often do you do this, I wonder?), then PS2000 is not in that league. On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate the software at 7.0, given its ease of use, rich functionality's and relative low cost.

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