

Better Cotton Initiative



How Natural HR is helping the Better Cotton Initiative to manage their 120 employees and focus on engaging their global workforce.



120 employees



Not-for-profit organisation



London, UK



bettercotton.org



The client

Better Cotton Initiative

Working with over 2.3m farmers in 23 countries, Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) is the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world. The not-for-profit organisation have 22% of global cotton production go through their programmes, with a goal to increase this to 30% over the next few months.

Better Cotton was established in 2009 and experienced rapid growth since. Now employing 120 people ranging from remote workers to office-based across eight countries; some 20 employees are part of their remote workforce and 100 are based in offices located in London, Geneva, Lahore, New Delhi and Shanghai.

The challenge

Small HR team had limited resources to manage their people effectively

Due to Better Cotton's growth, the small in-house HR team had limited resources to manage their people effectively. With just one full-time HR employee based in the UK and a small team of part-time HR administrators, Better Cotton's HR team wanted better oversight of their employees around the globe. This was partly due to differing time zones, languages and priorities of teams in other countries.

"I'd say go for it. The system has benefitted us in so many ways and is a great platform."

Olivia,
HR and Admin Officer

Olivia, Better Cotton's HR and Admin Officer shared the struggles the team was facing. "Disparate systems, manual admin and security were our biggest challenges. It was hard to manage everything HR-related from leave requests, compliance, updating employee records and much more. Our processes were all manual."

Olivia went on to say, "We found ourselves storing data on Dropbox which didn't have the security we wanted and needed. As Dropbox is a public cloud, the level of encryption is not good enough for sensitive HR documents and data. It just wasn't good enough." This inability to share policies with the right people and store sensitive data in a secure, centralised system was a concern.

Finally, Better Cotton's previous processes were flawed as administrators and managers in different countries couldn't manage their people themselves.

"HR wasn't informed about a lot of people issues and any time off requests would have to be manually managed by the HR team using spreadsheets."

Unsurprisingly, Better Cotton started to look for a centralised HR platform to help tackle these challenges.

The solution

A digital transformation project that scales with the business

Due to Better Cotton's growth, they decided to go through a period of digital transformation in their organisation and an HR platform was integral to this as there was no system currently in place and current methods wouldn't scale with the organisation. The initial research into systems was conducted by their technical lead who shortlisted six potential providers, including Natural HR.

"When we were looking for a system, we wanted something that offered great functionality to meet our needs, a simple interface so all employees will engage with the software and at a cost that fell within the cost structure set out due to us being a not-for-profit organisation," Olivia said.

“After an initial demo, we knew Natural HR was the right HR system for us. Not only was it more cost-effective than the other systems, it actually has better functionality and was easy to navigate.”

The benefits

Better Cotton digitised all their manual processes into a central system

Better Cotton has since overhauled their entire HR practices and digitised all their manual processes into a central system. Olivia excitedly said, “All our employees can now find all the data they need at their fingertips in seconds and can update their addresses and personal details without coming to HR. This means that data is more up-to-date and HR doesn’t have to get involved – line managers will take ownership.

“The self-service aspect of Natural HR is a definite positive for employees and they have praised its ease-of-use and modern feel.” Employees can now quickly see their annual leave entitlement, whereas before they would email HR, sapping valuable time away from other key HR projects that drive the organisation forward.

Better Cotton can now better manage employees’ assets, especially across multiple countries meaning that onboarding, offboarding, maintenance and upgrades have become slick, simple processes.

It doesn’t stop there either. Dropbox and spreadsheets have now been replaced and the amount of emails coming into the HR inbox has massively reduced. “The reduction of emails has been greatly appreciated. Before, it was becoming overwhelming.”

Talking about Better Cotton’s implementation, Olivia had nothing but good things to say about the entire process. “We were reliant on Natural HR to guide us through the implementation process as we’d never set up a system before. With our workload and small team, we lacked the time to dedicate our focus to implementation, but luckily, Natural HR gave us helpful reminders and took the majority of the workload. They managed it brilliantly and I would definitely commend the implementation team at Natural HR.”

“We’ll use Natural HR as an all-in-one system to remove all the manual processes, and we all absolutely love it.”

Olivia
HR and Admin Officer

The future

Expand into new modules such as workflows, recruitment and reporting

When it comes to the future of Natural HR within Better Cotton, Olivia is very aware that there is a lot more the system can do that they’re not using yet, but they are slowly rolling out new modules.

“We’re not using it to the best of its ability yet, but we’re using it currently for financial modelling for the 2020 budget through the reporting module because it’s helpful having all employee information in one place. This has helped speed up decision-making and improved accuracy.

“Along with shaping the budget, we also use the time off module, core database to adjust contract details and update personal information, document management, e-signatures and the social stream.”

Next to be introduced will be the recruitment module and to expand the use of forms and workflows to include regular and standardised performance reviews.

“The future will see us use Natural HR as an all-in-one system to remove all the manual processes, and we all absolutely love it,” Olivia concluded.



Get in touch :)

Email: info@naturalhr.com
Phone: +44 (0) 121 663 1500

naturalhr.com