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## Self-service IT can give your career a boost

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Tim Smedley is fed up with younger employees being branded as lazy or incompetent just because of their age

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Dont tell your finance director, but weve finally got confirmation of something weve all long suspected: almost half of HR managers keep a crafty eye on their CV when theyre deciding which business software or services to buy.

This was one of the findings from a recent survey of 100 UK HR directors and managers, in which 44 per cent of respondents admitted that expanding their personal experience and enhancing their CV were important factors in helping them determine whether or not to invest in HR software or services. The surprise wasnt so much that these self-serving instincts play a big role in corporate software selection it was more the fact that so many senior HR professionals had the guts to admit it.

The choices you make about business software and services are bound to have an impact on your career - a very negative impact if you get it hopelessly wrong and end up running some sprawling IT project that never ends, busts the budget and fails to deliver anything remotely resembling tangible value. And there are plenty of people →

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out there wholl have realised during their software selection process that shoving a major SAP implementation on your CV isnt exactly going to hurt it. In fact, software and services play such an integral part in modern people management that there are very good reasons why you should boast about what youve done on the IT front, assuming you can translate it into some kind of business benefit. The only question is: are you polishing your CV at the expense of the greater corporate interest?

Thankfully, the answer seems to be no for the majority of HR professionals. According to the survey, published by Webster Buchanan Research in association with Computers in Personnel, the biggest drivers for investment in software or services are improving quality of service to employees and managers, reducing HR admin costs and cutting IT costs three factors that were each cited by almost nine out of 10 respondents. In addition, almost eight out of 10 respondents were looking to improve the quality of management information, and almost three-quarters wanted to free HR from its administrative burdens to provide more strategic input to the business.

This all helps explain why technology, such as manager and employee self-service, are grabbing so much attention in both HR and payroll. According to the survey results, 17 per cent of respondents now provide electronic payslips and a further 42 per cent plan to do so within 12 months so if youre not doing it yourself, you could soon find yourself in the minority.

Similarly, almost half the respondents planned to give employees access to their pay history online. A raft of other HR self-service initiatives are also in the pipeline, from recruitment to absence management to training.

Even if economic realities slow down the pace of self-service adoption (as they probably will), the findings suggest that the majority of companies now find the business case for HR self-service pretty compelling. And why not? You can cut admin costs by letting employees enter data and carry out routine transactions, and you can typically provide quicker services and better information access to everyone involved in the process. Achieve that kind of business outcome and, who knows, your revamped CV really might help to propel you to a better job.

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