



Payroll Excellence Unveiled: The Journey of Tugela People with Advantage Travel Partnership

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An Independently Owned Travel Business

The Advantage Travel Partnership is the UK's pre-eminent business network representing travel agents and travel management companies.

Its members are all independently owned travel business who operate across 750 locations throughout the UK, representing a large proportion of the UK's travel agency landscape. In addition, Advantage's global network footprint continues to expand with representations in 83 countries across 96 network partners who work together in servicing corporate accounts.

Collectively, as a global network its members generate over £15.6 billion in global sales annually – with £7.6 billion from travel sales from its UK membership – and cater for many millions of holidaymakers and business travellers by assisting them with their travel arrangements.



A Tale of Re-Engagement

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However, less than six months later, Advantage was deeply disenchanted with this payroll service provider and decided to reengage with Tugela People.

Tugela People pulled out all the stops to provide Advantage with urgent assistance in managing their payroll.

“ When Advantage reached out to us again, it was clear they needed urgent and effective solutions. Our team dedicated itself to understanding their challenges and delivered a tailored approach that met their immediate needs and long-term goals. We pride ourselves on transforming difficult situations into success stories through innovation and dedication.



Thomas Schilling, Commercial Director and Founder at Tugela People



The Client

The Brief

Challenges a Plenty!

It was a classic case of 'failing to plan is planning to fail' by the previous supplier. Despite being a reputed payroll and HR service provider, the onboarding process was poorly documented, and inadequate attention was given to the first payment run. Subsequent payments were incorrect, and despite paying for payroll report previews, Advantage never received them, leaving anomalies unflagged and uncorrected.

There were also serious issues, such as unauthorised BACS payments and a concerning indifference to Advantage's escalating issues. Communication was poor, with agents frequently blaming Advantage for errors rather than offering cooperative solutions.

The distinct lack of understanding regarding Advantage's employee benefits and management protocols resulted in significant costs for both Advantage and its employees.

Overall, the service provider displayed a fundamental misunderstanding of payroll legislation, with Advantage

often having to provide guidance. This reversed the expected customer-provider relationship and highlighted the provider's inability to grasp basic UK payroll legislation.

Ultimately, the situation became unsustainable, and Advantage had no choice but to seek out another partner capable of competently managing their payroll on their behalf.



Understanding Advantage's Requirements

Tugela People pulled out all the stops to provide Advantage with urgent assistance in managing their payroll.

To begin with, and as part of our carefully mapped-out consultancy process, the payroll team at Tugela People took the time to thoroughly understand Advantage's requirements and identify their pain points by undertaking an in-depth health check on all their processes and procedures to identify what needed to be addressed and recommend a solution going forward.

Based on these findings, Tugela People recommended their Fully Managed Payroll service, which Advantage chose to adopt.

Due to the numerous challenges Advantage had faced with their incumbent payroll-managed service provider, we ran a couple of parallel payrolls as part of our onboarding process before fully taking over their payroll.

The service Tugela People provide to Advantage has evolved significantly since we initially took on their payroll management. Addressing the various issues caused by the previous provider has been time-consuming, and Tugela People has played a crucial role in addressing and resolving them. After transitioning their payroll to Tugela People, additional problems were identified, such as incorrect holiday records, miscalculated pension contributions, and incorrect tax codes.

Jeremy Mohamed went on to say, "Our commitment to precision and proactive problem-solving has been key in resolving the issues Advantage faced with their previous provider. By addressing and correcting the errors, we've been able to restore trust and deliver the reliable payroll service they deserve".

“ At Tugela People, we follow a documented eight-step onboarding process developed from our extensive industry experience and based on best practices. We understand that payroll is a critical business process, which is why we meticulously map out each transition step, incorporating audit and validation mechanisms to minimise disruption. This ensures our clients' payroll is set up and managed correctly from the outset, giving them confidence that their payroll is in safe hands.

Jeremy Mohamed,
Head of Payroll at Tugela People

The Solution

The Results

Enhanced Communications

As part of our Fully Managed Payroll Service, Tugela People Payroll, we use a centralised and secure message hub that eliminates the need for emails and creates a visible audit trail of communications.

Customers can enter all their payroll changes, view the status of their payroll at any time, communicate directly with their payroller and raise and monitor payroll queries. Additionally, this provides our clients with one area for all payroll queries to be logged, tracked, escalated, and resolved. This service has proved of real benefit to Advantage, which has historically encountered extreme difficulties when communicating with their past payroll solution provider.

Thomas Schilling added, "The communication issues and service gaps experienced by Advantage were not just challenges; they were opportunities for us to demonstrate our commitment to excellence. By providing a centralised, secure communication hub and refining our services to meet their evolving needs, we've not only resolved their issues but also set a new standard for client support."

Adapting and Meeting Evolving Needs

In February this year, Advantage sought Tugela People's advice on an HRIS solution. With a clear understanding of their requirements, we were able to recommend a solution. The selected HR system featured a self-guided implementation supported by videos and documents from the solution

provider. Our consultants were available to assist as needed, ensuring a smooth rollout. This HRIS is fully integrated with the Tugela People Payroll system, eliminating double entry and providing a single source of truth for their HR and payroll data.

“As part of our ongoing Managed Payroll Service and to ensure it continues to meet Advantage's needs, we engage in regular updates with our clients, who feel comfortable reaching out with new requirements as they arise. These requests are promptly implemented, tested, and approved within the client's required timeframe. As a service provider, we are constantly striving to ensure that we are able to adapt and grow our services to meet the needs of our clients. A good example of this is Advantage's current expanding reporting capabilities, which we are working with them to refine and deliver according to their requirements”.

“Supporting Advantage has been incredibly rewarding. I'm dedicated to ensuring their payroll is accurate and efficient every month. The positive feedback we've received underscores the impact of our work and the importance of our proactive approach in addressing their needs. It's great to see our efforts making such a significant difference for their business.”

Corné Carter, Client Payroll Specialist at Tugela People



Reflecting on their experience with Tugela People, Xian Mayes, Head of People for the Advantage Travel Partnership, shared her thoughts on the exceptional service provided:

“Tugela People, Thomas and Jeremy have gone over and above anything I would expect a provider to do – they gave me the assurance and certainty that we needed in a growing business. We're not a complicated business, however, payroll is the single most important aspect of my department, and I'm proud to be one of their clients, and cannot recommend them enough. Their integrity, and solution-focused work ethic aligns beautifully with Advantage Travel Partnership.

Corné is a wonderful asset to the payroll team and has integrated into Tugela People – and Advantage – really well. Her customer service is outstanding, and she works hard with us to ensure our payroll is accurate, month after month.

All of the solutions suggested for us are working brilliantly – it has been so noticeable for the business, and they engaged with the app and platform instantly.

Contact Us

To find out more about Tugela People's Fully Managed Payroll or to discuss your requirements, please contact us:

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