



## Gist

### Streamlining operations at Gist

#### Objectives

- Fulfil obligations to working time legislation
- Streamlining administrative processes
- Interfaced and accurate payroll processing
- More efficient day-to-day business operations

#### Background to Gist

Gist is one of the UK's leading logistics providers and supply chain experts, and part of the BOC group. It serves world-class clients in a wide variety of industries, from food to fast moving consumer and industrial goods, major retailers and semiconductor manufacturers.

#### The challenge

In the summer of 2003, Gist started looking for a new system to help it track and manage work time for their 4,800 employees. The company had two major motivations. Firstly, their existing supplier was no longer willing to support their version of their old system, TruTrack; the company was told that its only option was to upgrade to a newer version. Gist decided that this was an ideal opportunity to investigate whether other systems on the market had improved functionality and could do a better job.

Secondly, Gist was acutely aware that they needed to ensure organisation-wide compliance with changing working time legislation and Health and Safety regulations, a demand which their existing system could not meet.

Streamlined administrative processes were also key drivers for senior management keen to find new efficiencies. A further aim was to improve payroll accuracy.

After a review of the market, Gist decided to appoint SMART Human Logistics in October 2003 to implement a web-based time and attendance solution.

#### Smooth and rapid implementation

The key reason for choosing SMART was an excellent cultural fit between the two companies and the SMART product.

The web-based eHuman Logistics (eHL) product had the advanced functionality that Gist required, with the self-service technology that would enable Gist employees to view their working time data via SMART's eTouchKiosks. The Gist and SMART projects teams also gelled from the word go, working closely together to agree the requirements of the new system and map the implementation. The installation began in February 2004 and rolled out to all eight sites in just 3 months – an excellent achievement for all involved.



“From an operational perspective, the introduction of the eHL solution was about more than just implementing a system; we wanted to improve our working practices, ensure fairness and consistency in terms of our rules.”

Tony Hammond, Operations General Manager,  
Management Services, Gist.

“It is critical that we create functionality which reflects our working terms and conditions and adheres to Working Time Directive and Health and Safety implications in a simple, easy to use solution. SMART eHL is that solution.”

Trevor Kenney, Lead Project Manager,  
IT Solutions, Gist.

### Defined and consistent working time rules

SMART has aided Gist at every turn to ensure a smooth implementation, gain employee buy-in and achieve consistency across Gist's workforce. After detailed negotiations with employees and their unions to define working time rules and align them across the organisation, Gist has now put a national agreement in place regarding working time rules across six of the Marks and Spencer sites. This works in conjunction with several localised agreements. Today, Gist staff work different shift patterns at each site to suit their own needs, with one in Northampton following a complex Annualised Hours scheme.

### Automated, accurate payroll

Before installing eHL, clocking-in data from each of Gist site's was collated independently onto spreadsheets. The result was that there would often be several duplications or triplications of one individual's records when they were centralised for payroll. This created a nightmare for payroll staff, requiring a great deal of manual checking from them to eliminate exceptions and compile an accurate record. The new SMART eHL system alerts shop-floor and shift managers as soon as exceptions like these occur, meaning that they are cleared on a daily basis. Hours of work, overtime, absence, sickness and other exceptions are all captured automatically, without manual intervention. SMART has also built a bespoke interface for Gist so that the eHL solution can interface directly with their Unipay BOCGroup payroll system.

### Taking advantage of advanced technology

Staff at the Gist Marks and Spencer Food sites clock in using swipe cards – and at the Carlsberg site, they use the latest biometric handreaders. These have been fully embraced by both management and the workforce; there is even a bit of a competition at the end of the shift to see who can get the best score! SMART's eTouchKiosks are also installed at all sites, mainly in canteens, making self-service functionality available to all staff. By using eTouchKiosks, staff can view their clocking tallies and overtime balances and gain visibility over their working time data, reducing enquiries to supervisors and the demand of administration resource time.

"The visibility of workforce data from our eHL solution gives us a new level of management information, which not only helps us to manage absenteeism, comply with regulations and pay people accurately, but will also enable us to plan the deployment for our workforce more strategically."

Cobus Oelofse, Head of HR (M&S), Gist.

### Improved management capabilities

Gist gets even more out of the system by using it to control absenteeism and reduce sickness, by means of advanced features such as return to work functionality. The system also provides a raft of reliable, up-to-date management information so that line-managers and senior executives can respond to the changing needs of the business on both a day-to-day and long-term strategic basis.

### Looking forward

Following the successful implementation of SMART eHL at eight of Gist's sites, the company is now anticipating a roll out to their remaining sites. Eventually Gist would also like to link eEmployee to their corporate Intranet via the eTouchKiosks, so that relevant company information and messages can be displayed on the kiosks.

### Results

- Ability to fulfil recording and monitoring obligations resulting from working time legislation
- Integrated electronic administrative processes relating to worked time
- Increased accuracy and automated payroll
- One organisational server for greater management visibility
- Improved employee control and visibility

### SMART's logistics and supply chain experience

In the words of SMART CEO, Eric Smart: "For any business there is a continuous dilemma between the ability to balance the needs of the customer and the cost of operation. In the logistics and supply chain sector this issue becomes acute given the fluctuating levels of supply and demand and additional variables such as staff rosters, absences and pay control. As Gist has recognised, these issues can be addressed by implementing a human logistics solution giving operational management long-awaited methods and tools to ensure that its work-force is right-sized, skills are used effectively and every employee delivers their true economic value to the organisation." SMART has a proven track record with specialist logistics and supply chain clients including Lynx Express, ACR Logistics, Exel, Sainsbury's Distribution and Ocado.

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