

Success Story

Ambassador Cruise Line sails ahead with Sage HR

Upstart cruise line looks to Sage HR to streamline processes while protecting data

“Data protection is vital. Sage HR lets us ringfence data so access is convenient but secure.”

Debbie Dale

HR Manager, Ambassador Cruise Line



The Challenge

Ambassador Cruise Line began operations in 2021 with 35 staff members, but HR manager Debbie Dale knew she'd need great HR software as headcount grew.



The Solution

In early 2022 Debbie contacted Sage. She had used Sage HR in previous roles and knew it had the functionality Ambassador needed with excellent customer support. Ambassador implemented Sage HR in March 2022.



The Result

Sage HR provides a single source of truth for Ambassador's HR data. It has reduced the time and effort required for shift scheduling and reporting, and improved data accuracy. Sage HR provides excellent data protection so Ambassador feels confident implementing remote access.

- Shift scheduling that took a full day now takes minutes.
- Sickness reporting was time-consuming and manual; now immediate.
- Single source of truth has improved data accuracy and quality.



Company
Ambassador Cruise Line

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Travel & Hospitality - Services

Sage Products
Sage HR

About Ambassador Cruise Line
Founded in 2021, Ambassador Cruise Line is bringing back classic cruising with a focus on good value and excellent customer service.



Modest beginnings

When Ambassador Cruise Line launched in April 2021, it had just 35 permanent staff at its Purfleet headquarters and elsewhere. But even then, HR Manager Debbie Dale knew the company would need good HR software sooner rather than later. “We started out using a piece of free HR software from a bank,” Debbie explains. “But I always knew that when permanent headcount reached a tipping point, we’d have to get something more comprehensive,” she expands.

Like any cruise line, Ambassador uses many overseas and on-ship staff during cruises, whose HR requirements are currently administered via a third-party firm. Debbie needed a software package that would streamline and enhance the HR management of Ambassador’s permanent staff. These currently number around 80, with headcount growing as the company expands. While most work onshore, it is very common for some staff to spend time at sea and the system had to be able to track and account for these, and to manage shift scheduling and annual leave admin.

Debbie got in touch with Sage in late 2021, intending to implement a new system with the start of a new financial year in April 2022. “I had worked with Sage HR in previous roles and knew it would suit our needs very well,” she explains.

Convenient access with robust data protection

Before Sage HR, many of Ambassador’s HR tasks—including reporting, annual leave scheduling and rostering—were done manually. This took a great deal of time and inevitably carried the risk of human error. Ambassador wanted to automate processes that were amenable to it, such as reporting, and make other processes, such as annual leave booking and shift scheduling, as simple and efficient as possible. In practice, this meant remote access and some self-service for staff and managers. Ambassador knew that only a system with robust data security capabilities would be appropriate for this; the firm prioritises data protection and understood that self-service and remote data access need precise and robust access controls.

“The fact that Sage HR lets us ringfence data visibility is a major advantage,” explains Debbie. “The system allows us to set precise controls over who can see what data and from where. That means we comply with our data protection obligations, protect our staff and provide maximum flexibility and convenience when it comes to shift scheduling and annual leave booking and approval,” she adds.

Following implementation in April 2022, Ambassador’s staff members were very happy with Sage HR, with feedback describing it as simple and straightforward to use.



The transparency and reliability of data in Sage HR immediately benefited Ambassador's operations.

Better business data

From a management perspective, the ease and depth of reporting are among Sage HR's best qualities. Implementation of Sage HR has freed up a great deal of time; reporting now takes just minutes and the hours previously spent requesting and collating information can now be spent on more profit-or growth-focused tasks.

In Sage HR, Ambassador now has a single, accurate source of truth that stores and collates HR data and can report and compare figures in genuinely useful ways. "It helps us to spot patterns, and to predict and fill gaps," says Debbie. "We can track and analyse data and if a manager asks me for a report I can now provide it in minutes," she continues.

In addition, managers can now see much of their data directly, and no longer have to email requests for reports or permissions. Staff at all levels find it easy to use the system, even for previously complex tasks such as accounting for time off in lieu and tracking time spent onshore versus on-ship. The single shared source removes the risks of data version confusion and human error and makes data handling much more transparent.

Indeed, the transparency and reliability of data in Sage HR immediately benefited Ambassador's operations. Making shift scheduling and rostering information visible to all team members immediately made it easier for staff to communicate about work patterns and shifts. Consequently, processes that were previously opaque or had to be negotiated via a manager are now direct, clear and efficient.

Flexible system with great customer support

Having used Sage HR for some time now, Debbie is pleased that Ambassador invested in a flexible system backed by a supportive and responsive provider. "I like the fact that you don't have to use all of the Sage HR modules or functions at once but you can activate them if and when you choose to," she says. "It is very user-friendly. If I look at sickness records, for example, it's easy to see not just how many days of absence a person has had, but also why they were absent – it provides historical data that other systems just don't. It's also flexible. With Sage HR you can always find a way to get what you want. And the support that Sage provides is exceptionally good. There's great training and support and I know that if I ever have a question I can go to the chat function and I'll have a response and solution very quickly," she expands.



“With Sage HR you can always find a way to get what you want.”

Debbie Dale

HR Manager, Ambassador Cruise Line

Sailing ahead

Looking to the future, Debbie is so pleased with Sage HR, that she is considering its use for additional staff, including those the company does not directly employ. “I think Sage HR is a great management tool even for the staff we contract with via a third party,” she says. “It would be good to have the same oversight and operational data for more aspects of the business.” Ambassador is also considering integrating its current (manual) appraisal system with Sage HR.

When asked if she would recommend Sage HR, Debbie is in no doubt. “Absolutely!” she says. “It’s a great system.”



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