

## SUCCESS STORY

# Sage People shines a light on diversity data at Channel 4

*National broadcaster consolidates nine systems into Sage People, to empower managers and employees*



Channel 4 is one of the UK's leading broadcasters. Set up by the Government in 1982 and commercially funded, the TV channel's remit is to challenge the status quo through high-quality, alternative programming. Channel 4 operates a publisher/broadcaster model, commissioning production companies to provide a swathe of interesting and creative content. The company also has a film arm – Film4 – which has achieved 135 Oscar nominations and produced 34 Oscar-winning films, including Slumdog Millionaire. Based in London, the company is undergoing relocation to multiple sites, including Leeds, Glasgow, Bristol, and Manchester.



Company  
**Channel 4**

Location  
**London**

Industry  
**Leisure, Media and Entertainment**

Sage Products:  
**Sage Business Cloud People**

For more info, visit:  
[www.sagepeople.com](http://www.sagepeople.com)

### Key outcomes:

- A single HR system that delivers clean data and quick reporting helping Channel 4 deliver on diversity targets.
- Employees and line managers are empowered to self-serve HR information from the system leaving HR to perform a more strategic role.
- A tailored, location-specific system that helps engage highly-skilled, multi-regional employees.



*Nine separate systems were replaced by Sage People so reporting is much quicker.*

## We needed to digitalize our operations and transform our systems to empower our staff to work more efficiently.”

Charlotte Light, Controller of Systems Delivery, Channel 4

With multiple HR systems spread across sites throughout the UK, a disparate workforce and stringent regulatory requirements to report on diversity targets, Channel 4's HR department was struggling to locate and use its data properly and engage with its 1,000 employees.

Charlotte Light, Controller of Systems Delivery at Channel 4, says working in a fast-paced environment like the broadcast sector requires the organization to provide its employees and managers with an agile, appealing way of working with HR. “Advertising is a big part of the business, so we're having to move quite fast to deal with the digital changes that are hitting our business externally. From an internal perspective, this means our staff needs the support and capabilities to keep pace with those changes. We needed to digitize our operations and transform our systems to empower our staff to work more efficiently and meet those challenges head-on.”

### **Data dilemma**

Gaynor Bailey, HR Program and Operations Manager at Channel 4, says the company's legacy HR systems weren't able to cope with these changes. “We had nine different systems within HR, and one of the main struggles for us was getting the data out of those multiple systems to report on diversity and analytics to our senior management team.”

According to Bailey, as part of Channel 4's public remit, the company must report to OFCOM on diversity targets within its organization. However, trying to extract this information is complex and time-consuming.

“Often we need to get analysts involved to knit the information from multiple systems together to produce any kind of report. And because we are so passionate about how we obtain that diversity information we've given guarantees to our employees about who sees this information, making this even more challenging.”

In addition, any urgent requests for people's data from the CEO or senior management could take weeks to compile, by which point either the need was gone, or the information was out of date.



*Channel 4 have been able to engage employees through a user-friendly interface.*

**“Employees now expect a better user and technology experience, and they definitely couldn’t get that with the legacy system we had.”**

Gaynor Bailey, HR Program and Operations Manager, Channel 4

#### **Broken engagement**

The lack of access to data and information wasn’t just challenging around its diversity targets. It was a catalyst for employee disengagement, says Bailey. “It’s not just about HR having access to information, it’s also employees being in control of their own data,” she adds. “It’s hard for them to remember user names and passwords for systems like appraisals that are only used a couple of times a year. This means they avoid using the system and also that we have to spend time re-educating them, instead of thinking strategically about our HR.”

Jane Edison, Program Manager for corporate systems, agrees, and says it was also challenging for her technical team. “Integration and support were major issues for us,” she says. “Having knowledge of nine different systems and supporting that from a technology perspective led to complexity. It also makes it difficult from a user point of view because each program had a different interface so the user experience was very poor.”

“Employees now expect a better user and technology experience, and they definitely couldn’t get that with the legacy system we had.” Technology that engaged employees and provided a seamless workforce experience was also a priority for the Chief HR Officer, according to Bailey. “We wanted to be as efficient as possible, removing processes and automating what we could, and ensure that line managers could self-serve the information they need to support the decisions they’re making. We wanted to empower them to manage their team, not let HR manage it for them.”



*Sage People provides metrics to senior management that were not possible before.*

### **A system to deliver the vision**

With stringent criteria of what a new HR system should deliver, Channel 4 conducted a wide tender process. They were left with two vendors that were both invited in to present. “Sage People did an amazing job,” says Bailey. “They had 15 minutes with our new chief HR officer and they were able to demonstrate that the product was quick, it was nimble and that it was flexible to our needs, especially as we were going through a number of changes as an organization.”

The implementation and go-live process took around eight months to deliver. In the first four months, the Sage People team worked with Channel 4 to identify the configuration and what areas to focus on. This was to ensure Channel 4 could extract the information from the nine different systems into one. Then followed four months of testing and working out how Channel 4 would deliver it to employees through a training program and short, tailored instructional videos.

**“Our heads of department and senior managers can see that information whenever they need to.”**

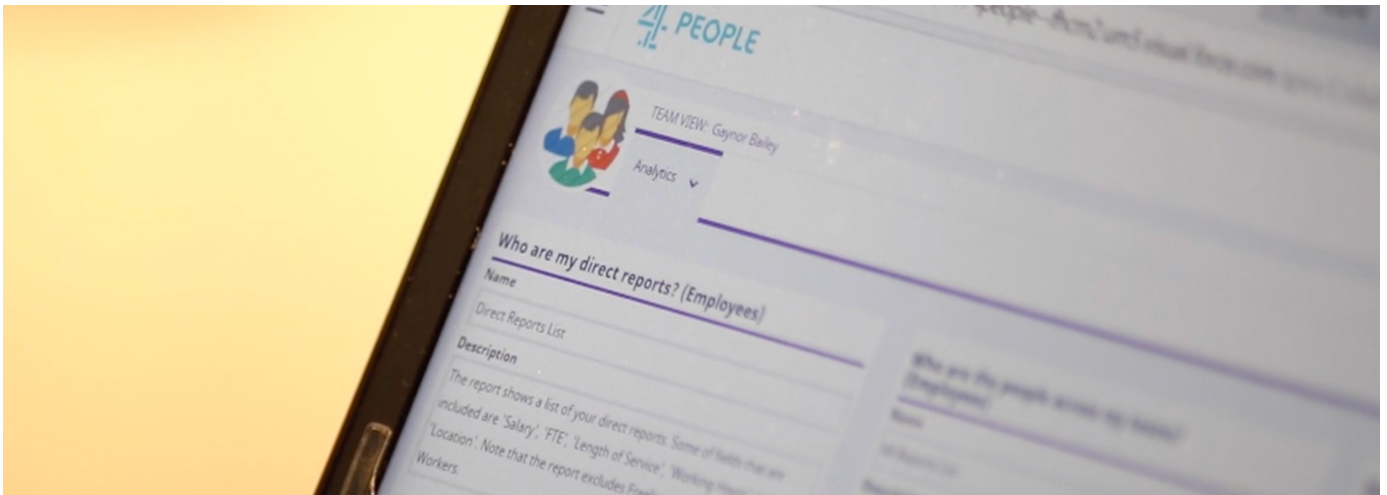
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Gaynor Bailey, HR Program and Operations Manager, Channel 4

### **Delivering the data on diversity**

Sage People has ensured Channel 4 has a single source of truth for all its employee data, including data on its diversity targets. Gathering this information and reporting it to OFCOM is now a much simpler, quicker process with reports taking hours rather than weeks to compile, according to Bailey.

This speedier reporting helps the broadcaster hit its diversity targets by highlighting areas that require greater attention. It also ensures the organization is mitigating any risk for delayed or inaccurate diversity reports. “It’s essential that we can quickly report on our position against our diversity targets so having that information in one system means our heads of department and senior managers can see that information whenever they need to.”



To aid employee adoption, Sage People was rebranded as '4 People'.

“One of the most important aspects for us was that we re-branded Sage People as 4 People. This is especially great as our regional locations can see content that is specifically relevant to them.”

Gaynor Bailey, HR Program and Operations Manager, Channel 4

#### **Empowering self-service**

With all the data in one place, HR can also provide information more quickly to executives through the Sage People. “This means we don’t have to extract it to deliver it, they can go in and see the information by self-serving the data,” Bailey says.

This has been a huge time saving for line managers, Light agrees. “From a consolidated data perspective, previously I would have had to put in a request to HR admin and they would provide me with a report and that might take days. Now in Sage People, I can see the same information in less than a minute. It really transforms how you manage your team.”

According to Edison, this self-serve aspect of Sage People has made a dramatic difference to her team’s ability to be strategic. “We used to have one person dedicated to generating reporting data for HR. With Sage People’s self-service functionality, we’ve been able to re-purpose that person into a value-add role to provide strategic support and enhancements to HR, which is a win/win for everybody.”

#### **Multi-site advantages**

With Sage People, Channel 4 employees can now access all their HR information from just one system regardless of where they are working from. This is particularly relevant given the firm’s multi-site relocation which is on the horizon. “One of the most important aspects for us was that we re-branded Sage People as 4 People,” says Bailey. “This is especially great for our regional locations because it means that, for example, people in Leeds or Glasgow see their logo and the content that is relevant to them,” she adds.

Light says the relocation has encouraged the firm to think about its internal systems. “Historically, we’ve been based in a single location so we haven’t needed agile tools for internal working. As we’ve expanded we’ve had to look at our investments and Sage People has really played into our strategy to make our employees more flexible and agile in terms of where, when and how they can work.”



*The HR team are now able to add real value to the business.*

## “One supplier, one system to support, one user experience.”

Jane Edison, Program Manager, Channel 4

### **Multi-site advantages**

Sage People hasn't just empowered Channel 4 employees to work more flexibly, it's helped create benefits from a training and consistency perspective too, Edison says. “Even just from a support and integration perspective, we have just one supplier, one system to support, one user experience. We can train our support team on a single system, rather than nine different ones. When we looked at the business case, the benefits of getting rid of our disparate systems and having one system added up.”

Commenting on the impact of Sage People on her team, Light says, “Sage People is one of those systems that's going to help us be operationally efficient. We used to have to access data through analysts, which took several weeks. Now we can access it ourselves in minutes. We don't have to worry about whether the data is clean or not either, which – when we're looking at things like diversity or recruitment – is really important to us.”

Bailey concludes: “Without Sage People as an HR function we wouldn't be able to deliver on our vision, which is to empower our line managers and provide them with the information to make informed decisions, and for Channel 4 to become a people first company.”



### **About Sage Business Cloud People**

Sage Business Cloud People enables mid-size, multinational companies to manage workforces through its global, cloud HR and people system, transforming how organizations acquire, engage, manage and develop their employees. Implemented quickly and simple to use, the award winning system increases workforce visibility, HR productivity and provides better experiences across the entire workforce.