

## Success Story

# Lovehoney builds on its passion for employees with Sage People

Leading online retailer chooses Sage People to deliver on the People Company promise



Lovehoney is a British success story. From its humble beginnings in 2002 operating out of the current co-founders' bedroom, to today boasting an expanding operation, with nine global e-commerce sites, as well as offices and warehouses in the USA and Australia.

With the company now manufacturing over 1,500 of its own products under the Lovehoney brand, the company is experiencing on average more than 30% growth year on year. This success has certainly caught the media's attention with the company starring in its own documentary series 'Frisky Business'. They also hold an exclusive license to produce products based on the Fifty Shades of Grey trilogy by EL James, and in 2016 received the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise.

"It's certainly bonkers here at times – it's not your standard corporate business," laughs Claire Webber, Head of HR at Lovehoney. "No day is ever the same, and that's what makes Lovehoney so special." Claire also recognizes, though, that within this exciting environment also comes the responsibility for their people.

She explains: "Our fast-paced growth has certainly given us some challenges in terms of our employees. In the earlier days of the business, the HR focus was on legal compliance and admin, but it's evolved. Having an effective hire to retire people strategy is essential as we work in such a niche sector. Add to that the EU GDPR legislation, we knew we had to be savvy in our approach as we continued to grow and operate globally."

Sage

**Company**  
Lovehoney

**Location**  
United Kingdom

**Industry**  
e-commerce

**Sage Products**  
Sage People

Lovehoney®

### About Lovehoney

Lovehoney is a British success story. The fast-moving consumer goods company boasts an expanding operation with nine global e-commerce sites, as well as offices and warehouses globally.



### **Becoming an employer of choice**

“One of the objectives I have is better utilization of our people, and getting the best out of them, rather than to just keep adding resource,” says Claire. “I had to address moving from transactional HR towards being more proactive and strategic, delivering real value back to the business.”

Attracting and retaining top talent is vital to Lovehoney. “Our people strategy – which encompasses being an employer of choice, identifying talent and giving opportunities for people to grow and develop – requires us to be inclusive and data driven”, explains Claire.

“For example, having a range of policies that underpin our culture, rather than just delivering the legal basics is important. But these policies also need to be appropriate for the country in which those employees are operating. And we somehow need to make these policies accessible and visible.”

As a fast-moving consumer goods company, the investment Lovehoney makes in their people is crucial - and retaining them is key.

Claire explains: “We needed to find a better way of operating – using a system that would support our performance, succession planning and talent mapping, and keep all the data in one place and cross referenceable, taking GDPR into account.”

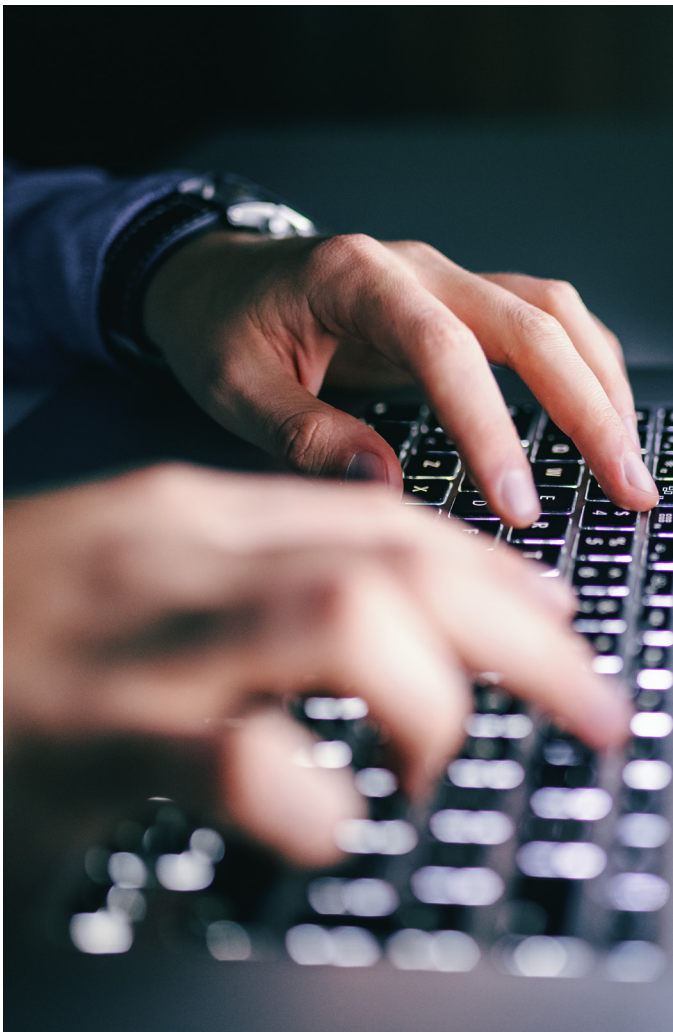
### **Selecting the right platform for complex needs**

Lovehoney wanted to find a system that would automate core HR tasks, such as managing absences, to free up the HR team’s time to concentrate on building better experiences for their people.

The lack of a single system to manage administrative tasks was beginning to have an impact across the business. For example, timesheets were not being completed on time, consequently slowing down the payroll process.

“We were looking for a system that would address these challenges, providing an environment for us to grow and adapt,” says Claire. “We had to address the issue that some of our people don’t have access to a computer, and that was an important facet to our requirements. Most of all, we wanted to create flexible and accessible experiences for our people.”

With an appetite in place to transform HR, Lovehoney started to investigate HR solutions for their business. As an e-commerce company, embracing cloud technology and automation – with the benefits of robust security measures – was a driver in the decision-making process. As a result, the company turned to Sage People.



Automated core HR tasks.

“Sage People ticked all of our requirements,” says Claire. “We could also start to make sense of our data pretty much immediately.”

“We needed to ensure that the system was intuitive, flexible and could provide better governance. As a business that has been evolving in an entrepreneurial manner, it was key that we could start to build data sets that supported its ongoing growth in a more controlled manner to assist with objective decision making. Fundamental to this was a global capability, with local compliance application, and being able to empower our managers no matter which country they operated within.”

Before Sage People, timesheets were a big problem. If they weren't completed on time, the HR team would be chasing managers and staff and that inhibited the company's ability to operate effectively. Now with the system in place, it's completely automated, which has saved significant time and reduced the pressure.

“They're no longer a stressful exercise!” Claire exclaims, relieved. “Now when it comes to salary sacrifices, Sage People supports the management of these schemes and keeps us legally compliant by undertaking the necessary checks to avoid paying under the national living wage post salary sacrifice.”

#### **Managing regional compliance and employment law**

With the company expanding at the rate it was, Claire also knew the importance of both global and regional compliance. This was, again, an area where Sage People specifically would help.

“Australia has strict employment rules, and it would have been difficult if not impossible to implement manually. Through Sage People, we were able to build and configure different rules and permutations that applied only to this region, meeting compliance with Fair Work Australia - a government body that oversees employment legislation,” says Claire.

Additionally, there was a regional need to create policy rules for the accrual and application of personal leave, annual leave, long service leave, or domestic violence allowances, that would allow Lovehoney to operate in a manner that gave true visibility to their employee's compliance with Fair Work regulations.

With that requirement in mind, Claire adds: “All our roles in Australia are covered by a ‘Modern Award’; a document authored by the Fair Work Ombudsman, which sets out the minimum terms and conditions of employment on top of National Employment Standards (NES), and in many cases the rules that apply to each award vary by region.”

“This challenges how we support managers of mixed teams as the need to understand the broader picture as well as the micro award rules is complex. Using Sage People gives us the ability to do some of the hard work automatically and provide data to assist with decision making in a timely manner,” she adds.



“The reporting capability I now have is exceptional. Seeing all aspects of HR through the Sage People system means we have moved from being a transactional business unit, to a proactive, strategic one.”

**Claire Webber**  
Head of HR, Lovehoney

#### **The right relationship for Lovehoney**

With ambitious targets over the next three years, Claire is confident she can meet one of the team’s objectives –getting more from their people in a scalable way.

“It’s not about growing our people numbers,” she says. “It’s about making sure we use our team more effectively. We’re now managing the complete employee lifecycle on Sage People, and that has saved us time and money, as well as being able to meet local needs for our employees. Being able to pick up strategic activity, without employing extra heads, has only been possible with the automation provided by Sage People.”

“The reporting capability I now have is exceptional. Seeing all aspects of HR through the Sage People system means we have moved from being a transactional business unit, to a proactive, strategic one,” says a satisfied Claire.



Sage

© 2022 The Sage Group plc or its licensors. Sage, Sage logos, Sage product and service names mentioned herein are the trademarks of The Sage Group plc or its licensors. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.