brightpay

Payroll transformed:
How cloud platforms supercharge the payroll process for employers

Be more expert: The freedom of online employer platforms

The payroll and HR landscape is fast evolving as business savvy employers move towards next generation online technologies.

Until now, day-to-day payroll tasks such as annual leave management, distributing payslips to employees and backing up your payroll file could sometimes be a very tedious and time-consuming process.

Today, managing and tracking this information can be much easier thanks to **payroll software with cloud integration**. Your payroll and HR processes can be more integrated with the cloud and streamlined with your payroll software than ever before.

What's more, these cloud platforms enable employers to work more efficiently, by streamlining administrative processes and delegating manual tasks to their employees. Ultimately, this gives employers more time to focus on other aspects of running a business.

In this guide, we'll zoom in on six exciting ways cloud platforms have transformed the payroll process. Not in the distant or even medium-term future: now. Here's how cloud integration can help you today.

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It's totally automatic: Cloud backup and the new security conscious workforce

Do you remember the heady days of May 2018? In the lead-up to GDPR D-day, the profession was consumed by a mass panic as the far-reaching data security laws loomed on the horizon.

But then, the day came and passed and - nothing. Well, not exactly nothing: GDPR is in full effect, but the hectic GDPR-mania dissipated rather quickly as no massive fines or crackdowns materialised.

In an **entertaining column** marking GDPR's one year anniversary, an article by Tom Herbert compared May 2018 short-lived hysteria to the Dancing Mania that swept Europe in the Middle Ages. Men and women, sometimes thousands at a time, would dance for hours on end before collapsing of exhaustion and sometimes dying on the spot.

Europe's dancing mania disappeared as mysteriously as it appeared. And rather similarly, GDPR mania also slipped away into the night as 25 May came and went.

The thing is, GDPR is still very much around - and while some might procrastinate on their duties, being compliant now will pay off once the Information Commissioner's Office pulls out the compliance stick.

Using the right payroll software with in-built data security as best practice will make **GDPR compliance** a much simpler endeavour. Add in online synchronisation and automated backup of payroll data in the cloud, your data accuracy and GDPR compliance improves further.

But GDPR's very existence indicates a deeper point: Data security is important in today's world, especially when we store, process and send confidential information such as payslips, P60s and P45s.

If disaster strikes, how prepared are you for a disaster recovery situation? Or, if your computer breaks down or is hacked? Under the old regime before cloud backup, the consequences would be dire - but now, these problems can be solved quickly.

BrightPay Connect, our cloud integration, **maintains a chronological history of your backups** automatically for you. These backups can be restored at any time, if required. It's simply an added layer of data protection. And if the worst happens, you know you can salvage the situation.

Self-service: What we can learn from supermarket queues

Consider the checkout queue at a supermarket. If you only have a few items, it's faster and simpler to go to self-service. But if you have more complex needs - say, a trolley-full of shopping or you need a pack of smokes perhaps - that's when you need human service.

All throughout our daily lives, self-service has become a byword for simple convenience and speed. When the task required is simple and we know what we need, sometimes it's simply better to just DIY.

Employers can offer this same convenience to their employees. An employee can easily access their own personal payroll information through **BrightPay's employee self-service functionality**. Employees can view and retrieve their historic payslips and other payroll documents such as a P60, P45, or P11ds and auto enrolment communications. These documents can be exported to PDF and printed.

Employees will have the option to download their payslips from the employee self-service. These payslips are automatically added to the employees' self-service portal each pay period, which eliminates the need for the employer to print or email payslips. It's not only convenient, but more environmentally friendly.

There's an important distinction to be made, however, when we think about self-service. Self-service is a supplement, not a substitute. For employers freed from humdrum admin, self-service is an opportunity to offer better, more personalised experience for employees.

Not quite a stargate – but pretty damn good

Perhaps the most famous portal in popular culture is featured in the classic sci-fi film Stargate. In the film, when a Stargate is discovered on Earth, human space travel is altered overnight. Just like that, we become an inter-galactic race, able to travel vast distances in the blink of an eye.

Back in real life, there are no fanciful Stargate portals. But there are the more everyday variety of online portals that have transformed self-service and made business simpler. Okay, it's not interstellar travel - but the impact of online portals shouldn't be understated.

As we saw earlier, you can now invite your employees to their own self-service portal. But BrightPay takes this further, with the ability to invite your accountant to an online self-service portal too.

At times, employers will need to send payroll reports to their accountant by email which, aside from security issues, can be quite a laborious and time-consuming task. An online payroll dashboard eliminates these twin concerns by empowering the accountant to help themselves.

The BrightPay Connect employer portal automatically synchronises payroll reports and employer information in one central online location, providing your accountant with access to an overview of payroll reports and amounts due to HMRC.

No more laborious, repetitive admin. Just one online portal that can save you time every pay period by eliminating the need to manually email reports to your accountant.

Payroll: There's an app for that

If you're looking for the exact year smartphones took off in the UK, the best guess is probably 2008. The iPhone and Android had just launched in the UK market, while only 17% of people owned a smartphone.

Fast forward to now, and that figure has risen to 78%, and 95% among 16-24 year-olds, **according to Ofcom**. And the smartphone is more than a device, it's practically an extension of our limbs.

The average adult now checks their smartphones, on average, every 12 minutes of the waking day. Two-in-five adults (40%) first look at their phone within five minutes of waking up, climbing to 65% of those aged under 35.

Alongside the smartphone's rise is the app. Ten years on from Apple's famous 'There's an app for that' campaign, there truly is an app for just about anything. That's because consumers are comfortable with using their phones to complete important tasks.

For employers, it's important that whatever **payroll software** they use complements this trend toward smartphone and app usage.
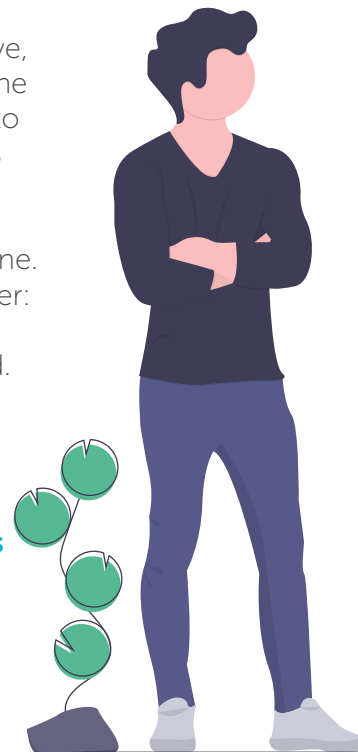
That's why BrightPay has developed a smartphone and tablet app, so employees can access their data wherever, whenever.

BrightPay's employee smartphone or tablet app is available with BrightPay Connect. For employers & HR Managers, the user-friendly portal will streamline payroll processing while reducing the number of payroll queries from employees.

Meanwhile for employees, the app introduces powerful features on the move, with secure access using their smartphone or tablet. The employee app is available to download for free on any Android or iOS device.

This app is BrightPay's own proprietary one. It's not an add-on, or a third-party provider: it's us. With GDPR, you need to know where and how your data is being stored. If this data is strewn among different suppliers, it's simply harder to keep tabs.

Convenience and data security don't need to be at odds, and with **BrightPay's employee app**, you get the best of both worlds.

Life's a holiday: How cloud platforms automate annual leave

In the run up to the holiday seasons, such as Christmas and summer holidays, employee holiday requests transform from a trickle into a flood. Christmas, school holidays and the warmer weather mean people taking some well deserved time off.

For businesses, however, booking a two-week break is far from relaxing. The process of annual leave management can still be a manual, spreadsheet, paper-based or, worse, email heavy exercise. That's valuable time wasted doing tedious admin tasks - you could be spending that time elsewhere, on running your business or even taking your own vacation!

BrightPay Connect's online annual leave tools completely eliminate these cumbersome people management tasks. It's more than just **payroll software**, it's a ready-to-go, easy-to-use HR software solution. HR software shouldn't be an expensive luxury reserved for big corporates. BrightPay Connect is affordable and designed with small businesses in mind.

The benefits of BrightPay Connect's online annual leave tools come in three main prongs, enabling:

- Employers to effectively plan their company calendar and staff resources

- Employees to request leave on a portal or smartphone app

- Employees to access leave taken and leave remaining records

All the while, leave is automatically recorded on the payroll software and synced to the cloud. It's easier for both the employer and the employee. The annual holiday rush should be a reason to be excited, not an admin nightmare.

No more back-and-forth: Engaging employees with one central online location

Everyone hates email tennis. There's a simple task that needs to be performed but conducted by email it becomes a multi-message nightmare.

These cumbersome interactions add-up. On average, office workers receive 200 emails a day and spend about two-and-a-half hours reading and replying to them.

There's a better way to engage with employees. As we saw earlier, the time consuming task of handling an employee request, such as a leave balance enquiry, can be automated and delegated to the employee for them to look for this information themselves through their employee self-service app. No back-and-forth on email needed and no manually digging through spreadsheets for you to respond to the request.

But what about other employee queries? What if the employee misplaced their contract of employment, or is wondering about a specific company policy or procedure? By using a cloud platform, employers can securely upload various employee documents, and grant access to the employee to view these documents through their online portal, wherever, whenever.

The powerful document upload feature allows managers to share documents with individuals, teams or the whole company at the touch of a button. Simply upload an individual's contract of employment, performance or training records, training material, or distribute the company handbook including all policies and procedures.

The document upload feature ensures company documents are organised and employees can access relevant information quickly & easily. For the employer, an activity log allows managers and HR to record and track who has viewed the circulated documents and who has not.

BrightPay's document upload feature means that managers and employees can securely access HR information and documents anytime, anywhere.

Employers can say goodbye to managing their workforce with a haphazard system of onerous email communications, spreadsheets, documents and post-it notes.

You deserve five-star payroll software

Software can never replace the personal interaction required as part of the payroll process, but it can supplement it in many ingenious ways. Through self-service, through apps, through cloud backup: payroll software is about making your life easier.

Your payroll software should hum along quietly in the background, automating and simplifying the repetitive aspects of the job and keeping you compliant.

It's here where BrightPay stands head and shoulders above the rest. Last year, our software won 'Payroll Software of the Year' at AccountingWEB's Software Excellence Awards. BrightPay also has **a five star rating**, a 99% customer satisfaction rate and is used to process the payroll for over 200,000 businesses across the UK and Ireland.

We've only covered six examples of how BrightPay Connect's online payroll platform can help you become more efficient. But there's so much more on offer. If you'd like to hear how BrightPay Connect can help you, get in touch today.

Book a demo today ➜

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