

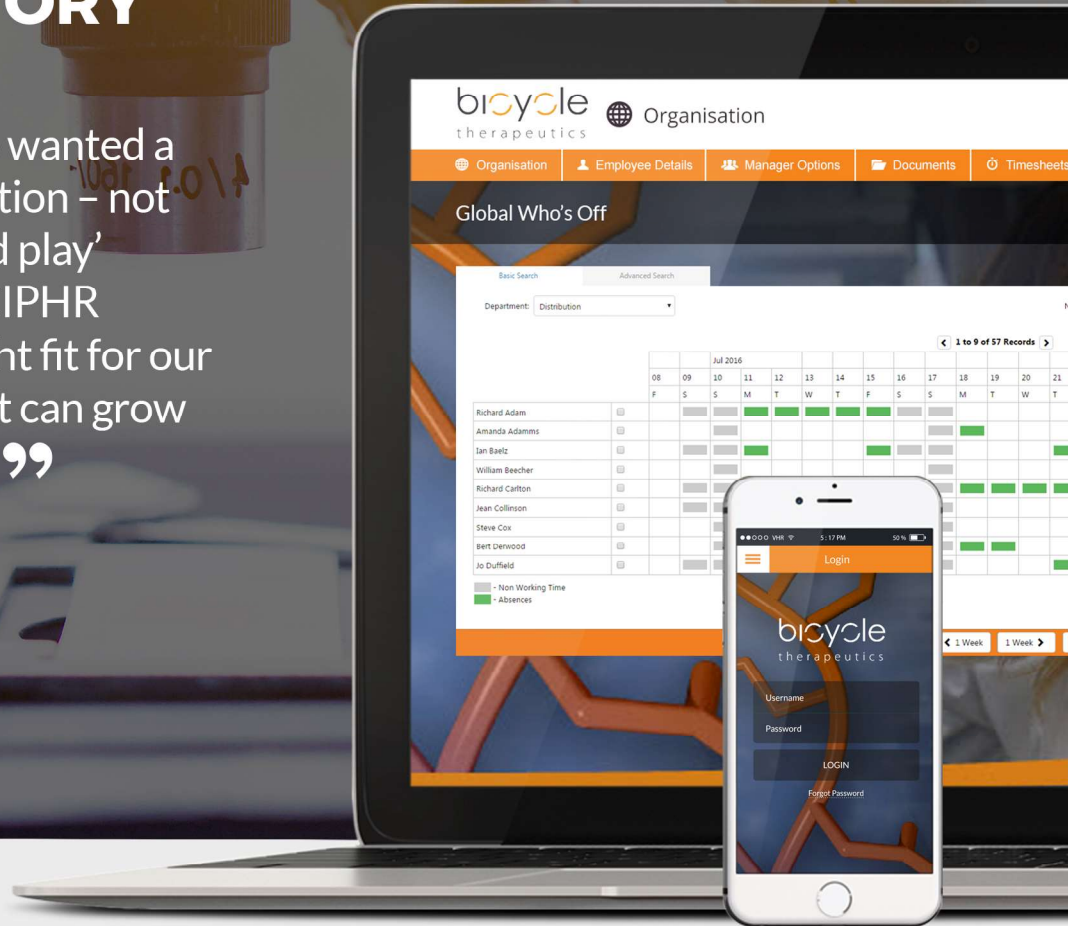
CIPHR

ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

“ We knew that we wanted a customisable HR solution – not off-the-shelf, ‘plug and play’ software. We chose CIPHR because it was the right fit for our culture, and because it can grow with us as a company. ”

bicycle
therapeutics



ABOUT BICYCLE THERAPEUTICS

Bicycle Therapeutics is a research and development biotech company, founded in 2009. It works to discover or develop new therapeutics based on its proprietary bicyclic peptide platform, with an internal focus on oncology. It has grown significantly over the past few years, and now has staff in Cambridge, UK, and Massachusetts, USA.

- Fast-growing research and development company
- Around 70 staff, split across the UK and USA
- CIPHR customer since October 2018

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MANUAL HR PROCESSES WERE LABOURIOUS AND INSECURE

For the first 10 years of its evolution, manual HR processes were enough to keep Bicycle Therapeutics ticking along. But, explains office manager Paula Barnes, more rapid growth in the past few years meant that employee requests and job applicants were taking up an increasing – and increasingly unsustainable – portion of her working day. The company also maintained most of its staff records via precarious spreadsheets.

“While HR is part of my remit, it’s not my sole responsibility,” says Barnes. “All of our processes were manual and labour-intensive, which was taking up a lot of people time. For holiday requests, for example, an employee would request time off by email, a manager would approve it and then it would be recorded on a spreadsheet. It was unwieldy, time consuming, and non-transparent as there was no way for an employee to see their leave balance without having to ask.”

“When we realised that Bicycle Therapeutics faced another period of accelerated growth, we knew that this was the time to implement change and look for an HR software solution,” says UK HR consultant, Alison Proffitt. “Opening a subsidiary US office further increased complexity, because we needed to share a subset of the people data. These issues, combined with our rising nervousness about storing data in easily corrupted spreadsheets, gave the team the impression that that we should do better.”

SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT PROVIDER

As a user of enterprise-level HR systems, Proffitt was used to working with employee lifecycle HR systems. She initially worked with Barnes to put together a requirements checklist that was then used to triage vendors against corporate objectives.

“We knew we wanted something that was customisable and not an ‘out-of-the-box’ solution that we couldn’t adapt for our particular needs,” Proffitt says. “That was partly because we operate as a trans-Atlantic company, so our chosen system had to accommodate local differences in terminology, practices and approaches. We certainly didn’t want two separate systems, *a priori* we wanted a single system that would suit teams in both countries.”

The team looked at some ‘plug and play’ options but found them too restrictive, says Proffitt. “Right down to simple things like, for example, in one system you had to call reviews ‘appraisals’ and not ‘performance reviews’; there was no flexibility to change things to suit the company culture. It was key that the HR system we chose was right for us today as well as being future proof and able to grow with us for tomorrow.”

To help assess the various HR solutions on the market, Barnes and Proffitt attended the 2018 CIPD HR and Recruitment Software Show armed with a list of key questions. “What made CIPHR initially stand out was the level of product knowledge within the team,” says Barnes. “[Account development manager] Richard [Green] answered all our questions immediately, in contrast to staff on other vendors’ stands, which gave us a huge amount of confidence in the product.”

Proffitt adds: “Just from that initial demonstration he gave us a good feeling that [CIPHR] would cover pretty much everything that we were seeking.”

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CIPHR'S SUPPORT ENSURES SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION

Bicycle Therapeutics' decision-making was swift, with their CIPHR implementation project starting in autumn 2018. "We had very aggressive timelines to deliver the first phase – HR and employee self-service – in January 2019," says Barnes. "We had a relatively short implementation period during which the CIPHR team were very helpful especially in collating and formatting the data we needed to enter into the system."

"We also held training sessions at the Bicycle offices, rather than at CIPHR's headquarters in Marlow, which proved invaluable," adds Barnes. "It was personalised small group training, just the three of us with the trainer Kevin Mousley, which meant it was interactive and we could ask for directed help at any time that was company specific. They were long, intensive days, but they paid off."

"CIPHR's service desk has been very supportive during the launch phase," she says. "You can purchase the best products in the world, but if the aftercare is rubbish, it doesn't mean anything. I've been very impressed with CIPHR's follow up. It doesn't matter whether we call or email, we get a swift response."

'CIPHR IS CRUCIAL FOR ME TO DO MY JOB NOW'

A few months on from 'go-live day' with CIPHR self-service, the launch has had a "huge" impact on Barnes' workload. "Everyone can log their own holiday requests now, which auto-populate managers' approval workflows. I see the verifications come through the shared system email, but now it's up to the managers to verify requests, which automatically updates staff records within the system."

"CIPHR's self-service functionality is now core to the business, freeing me to perform other functions within my job and relieving me of a vast amount of unnecessary administration. If there are any issues, it's usually a simple, five-minute task for the service desk to fix it. Employees really appreciate self-service and the greater transparency."

The company is also using CIPHR to better organise and streamline staff appraisal and training: development needs, objectives, and skills are all now recorded in the system. "It's great because we can quickly run a report to track objectives and then follow up," says Proffitt. The next phase in Bicycle Therapeutics' CIPHR journey will be to launch CIPHR iRecruit, which Barnes and Proffitt hope will significantly streamline the last big-ticket item on their agenda – the company's recruitment process.

"Between October and December 2018, we were hiring for nine new roles and had over 200 applications," explains Barnes. "It was very time consuming; all of that recruitment work was done manually; saving CVs to folders, alerting managers, screening candidates, producing interview shortlists and sending emails to arrange interviews."

"Having applications in future land directly in CIPHR iRecruit, allowing us to track candidates, will make a huge difference to our hiring process," adds Proffitt. "We are looking forward to the launch of CIPHR iRecruit in just a couple of weeks' time, and then move on to launching CIPHR's onboarding functionality in the summer."

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