



Rolling Out UKG Solutions Globally



Best practices for common challenges

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For many organizations, the next step to building their business is having a global presence. Managing your organization’s global roll-out and operations can be quite challenging, but there are many best practices to be learned from others.

When rolling out UKG® solutions globally, there are many factors that organizations need to consider. Do you have the right stakeholders involved? In applicable countries, have you engaged the European Works Councils? Are you compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)? Are you compliant with that country’s labor laws? The list of questions and considerations can go on and on when thinking of conducting business in a new country and implementing UKG solutions. On top of that, each region, and even country, can vary greatly.

Read on to learn about challenges that other UKG customers faced, and that quickly turned into best practices, as your organization prepares to conduct business in other countries.

Common challenges

U.S. point of view

Stakeholders and champions

Language and culture

General Data Protection Regulation

European Works Councils



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Implementing new technology in any location can be complex and require significant change management. But expanding your solution globally can bring unique challenges. Based on conversations with some of our leading customers, we've compiled some of their insights and best practices here.

U.S. point of view

One of the most common challenges U.S.-based companies face when expanding globally is getting out of the "U.S. mindset." From language and culture to labor laws and European Works Councils, there are vast differences between operating and working in the United States than say, Germany.

One example of this is from a large U.S. retailer. When they expanded their global operations into Germany, they made a few missteps along the way, resulting in the German stores performing poorly. There were several reasons for this: first, they tried to bring their U.S. way of working to Germany. They also did not adapt their product lines to fit German culture.

Another misstep was that they placed their stores outside of major cities. They failed to understand that Germans were not willing to travel that far out of the city if there were other options closer, even if their prices were lower than the competition. Beyond these cultural oversights, they ran into challenges with Germany's complex labor laws and business hours.

By taking the time up front to better understand that countries have their own ways of conducting business and adapting what your organization does in the U.S. to fit the culture, language, and regulations of the country you are trying to implement in, your organization has a better chance to be successful globally. When it comes to your workforce management solution, it is even more critical to adhere to local rules and laws. If not, your organization could incur some hefty fines.

UKG best practice: To avoid getting stuck in a U.S. mindset when your organization is going global, be sure to include a diverse audience. Having local partners who know the culture, language, and laws can ensure a smoother implementation process.

"Park your North American mindset. These countries have their own way of keeping time and their own way of paying people. It's neither better nor worse than what the U.S. does; it is just different. You just need to take a breath, be objective, and not compare it to what we are doing."

Sean Bradley
Senior Director of IT for Sitel Group®

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Stakeholders and champions

A challenge many UKG customers face is ensuring they have the correct stakeholders. One customer stressed a failure they had implementing UKG solutions came from not having the right stakeholders involved. They explained that when they were implementing the system, they did not have buy-in from the people who were actually going to use the solution. Ultimately, it failed because the manager who would be using UKG solutions was not involved in the process and refused to use it. Not only is it important to have executive-level buy-in, but it also is important to get buy-in from the end-users and include them in the process. Even though this particular customer had one failure, they have had several successful implementations. One key to their success is having regional timekeepers and UKG experts or champions. Having a dedicated team of people to learn UKG terminology and respond to requests can greatly enhance the implementation process and participation from end-users.

UKG best practice: Identify your stakeholders at the beginning. Have a mix of high-level leadership, as well as middle managers and end-users. For a successful implementation, everyone needs to be working together and involved in the process. Throughout your implementation process, identify your UKG champions.

Sean Bradley from Sitel Group®, a global leader in customer experience products and solutions, said to “...develop a couple of UKG champions. They are going to work with us to develop the training documentation and they will help with translating. It will become apparent as you get into the project who your power users will be. Give them extra training and access to your UKG engineers.”

Language and culture

When rolling out UKG solutions in other countries, language is certainly one of the main challenges a lot of our customers face. At a professional level, a lot of executives speak English in other countries; however, most of the time, end-users do not. This poses a challenge for many organizations. That is why it is so important to develop your UKG champions.



UKG champions

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They can help with training documents and ensure that the UKG workforce management terminology is being translated correctly into that country's native language. A punch in at a timeclock means something different in other countries than it does in the United States. Some words or phrases in the English language don't translate directly. Their meaning can be different. Having in-country champions or partners is critical. They can help you with the translations to ensure everyone understands the terminology, making them more likely to adopt the system.

Like language, cultural barriers can pose a challenge when an organization expands globally. Other countries approach employment and workforce management much differently from how we do in the U.S. It is ingrained as a part of their culture. In the U.S., you work an hour and get paid an hour. In other countries, it is not the same. You have different ways of working and cultural factors that affect the workday.

UKG best practice: Make sure you are listening to what your stakeholders and end-users are saying and, if possible, get training documents translated into that country's native language. When implementing UKG solutions, it is critical that everyone be on the same page; language and culture are big barriers to entry in other countries.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

GDPR is a regulation in EU law regarding data protection and privacy. When organizations are thinking of expanding into Europe, this is a huge factor in how and where to store data. Sean Bradley from Sitel Group said this about GDPR: "You have to be very, very careful of data protection — of who can see what, what's visible, who can get what reports, and where your data is stored. If it's not stored in the EU, why not? Do you have a valid business reason for not doing that?" A lot of organizations have special data centers to store their data in based on where they are located. Certain EU countries, like Germany, may ask why your organization doesn't have a data center there, as they prefer to have their data remain in their country.

UKG best practice: There are many intricacies that go into data protection in the EU, so it is vital to stay on top of the regulations in order to stay compliant. It is also important — and this ties back into language as well — that you are providing everything in both English and a country's native language for data protection and privacy.

European Works Council

Similar to GDPR, several European countries have works councils that have specific labor laws organizations have to follow. Sean Bradley from Sitel Group said that was one of the biggest challenges he and his team faced when rolling out UKG solutions globally. He said, "My advice to anyone working in Germany is when you have your kickoff meeting with your HR partners, finance, operations, whoever it may be, and you are designing the UKG system, bring the works council in right at the beginning and you will be much better served."

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UKG best practice: Engage with a country's works council right away to make sure they are aware of what you are doing and that you are following all the applicable laws and regulations.

Of course, there is so much more to consider when expanding your organization globally, but this list can give you a great starting point and lead you down a path to great success when conducting business and rolling out UKG solutions.



Check out our other global resources

To learn more about how UKG can help your global operations, check out our *Managing a Global Workforce* page.