



NGA Human Resources optimizes  
global collaboration with SUSE

## NGA Human Resources

### Industry and Location

Business Services | United Kingdom

### Product and Services

SUSE Linux Enterprise Server

# Success Story

## At-a-Glance

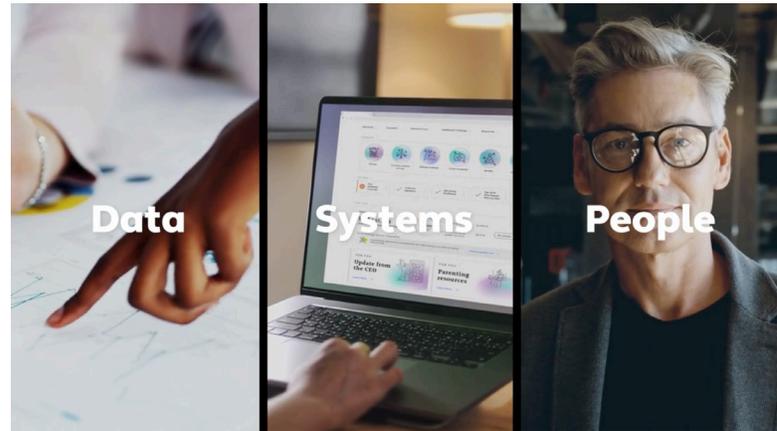
For more than 10 years, NGA Human Resources has trusted SUSE® Linux Enterprise Server (SLES) to host some of its most important information systems: the payroll environments it uses to manage its clients' HR operations. The exceptional stability, security and cost-efficiency of the SUSE operating system help NGA Human Resources deliver reliable services at competitive pricing. The solution also helps the company ensure that its clients' data is protected at all times.

## Overview

Established nearly 50 years ago, NGA Human Resources is a leading global provider of HR and payroll solutions. Its 7,500 staff help its clients administer and reward their 8 million employees across nearly 200 countries worldwide. The company combines deep HR experience with advanced technology and flexible service delivery options to help its clients become better employers.

## Challenge

Globalization in many industries has driven the relocation of internal teams to countries where the required skills are most readily available, and at the lowest salary cost. While this can certainly pro-



vide benefits in both quality and economics, it means that key business services may be dependent on infrastructure and staff resources that are spread across multiple locations and time zones.

Steven Mertens, global service lead infrastructure, NGA Human Resources, says: "We provide world-class HR services to enterprises, and high quality of service is a vital element. To develop and administer our systems we have globally distributed operations and engineering teams.

"Naturally, anything we can do to standardize the underlying technology helps minimize the barriers to smooth global collaboration. For this reason, we wanted a single platform for all enterprise systems."

## Solution

Both for standardization and to reduce TCO, NGA Human Resources migrated its core payroll and HR solutions from a proprietary UNIX platform to SLES on off-the-shelf x86 hardware.

"The cost of the previous platform was relatively high, especially because we

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**STEVEN MERTENS**

Global Service Lead Infrastructure  
NGA Human Resources

were locked into using a proprietary server platform from a single vendor,” says Mertens. “Using Linux is much more cost-effective, and in our experience, it is just as well matched to enterprise needs. We run our HR and payroll systems on SLES, and we have complete flexibility in terms of our choice of hardware.”

Aside from a small number of software packages that are only available for Windows, NGA Human Resources runs all of its critical services on SLES, including payroll applications developed and managed in-house. Almost everything runs on a virtualized platform, with just a handful of bare-metal installations where this is mandated by the application.

“VMware and SLES work very well together,” says Mertens. “When we originally went down the path of virtualization, SLES was the first distribution to include drivers for our chosen virtualization technology as standard, which made things much easier. In general terms, we find that SUSE is often ahead of the other Linux vendors in introducing support for new technologies, such as new file systems. This means we can get the benefits of cutting-edge technology without the usual risks of being an early adopter.”



NGA Human Resources provides managed HR services to thousands of enterprise clients. Smaller companies will generally share a secure multi-tenant environment, while larger clients will have a dedicated payroll instance. NGA Human Resources uses the open source Puppet tool to manage the resulting large Linux landscape.

“In total, we are running more than 1,000 instances of SLES, and this environment is constantly changing and growing,” says Mertens. “Stability has always been excellent: we’ve never had any serious issues. In fact, over the eight years I’ve been here, I doubt we’ve needed to open even 10 support tickets with SUSE.”

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## Results

Running its large payroll landscape on SLES gives NGA Human Resources a stable, secure, consistently high-performing platform that helps the company maintain excellent standards in service.

“Outsourcing a business function is a big step, and one concern is always whether the chosen provider will continue to offer a reliable and cost-effective service,” says Mertens. “At NGA Human Resources, we have built an exceptionally strong platform that enables us to focus on giving our clients the highest quality of service. And because SLES works efficiently with minimal intervention on our part, we can invest more time and effort in developing new features for our clients.”

He concludes: “As we continue to grow our business, using a standard operating system for most functions reduces the complexity and cost of service delivery. We pride ourselves on offering consistently high-quality and efficient HR services to our clients, and this capability is founded on the stable platform of SLES.”

## Benefits

- Standardized on a single platform for enterprise computing.
- Ensures exceptionally high availability and security for outsourced clients.
- Enables increased focus on new services, through reduced OS administration.

## Find out how SUSE can help you become an innovation hero!

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