

Enabling Currys People Team to focus on employee engagement

How **empower**® transformed Employee Relations (ER) management for the UK's leading technology and service retailer, enabling an ER operating model where most ER tasks are handled by line managers. This manager empowerment has enabled the talented Currys People Team to spend more time on strategic priorities and employee engagement.



Technology Partner of the Year
Winner 2023



The Company

Currys is a leading omnichannel retailer of technology products and services operating across 8 countries. Through its *Capable and Committed Colleagues*, its vision is to “help everyone enjoy amazing technology”, and its commitment is that every leader will build a highly engaged team.

Currys evolved its operating model to a ‘omnichannel model’ to ensure it can continue to deliver against its vision, no matter where customers choose to shop. Offering digital experiences that reinforce its core values is what makes Currys unique.

AdviserPlus have been a supplier to Currys since 2021. Currys chose the innovative **empower**® solution from AdviserPlus because of how its unique combination of technology, analytics and expert ER advisers transform ER management to deliver better employee experiences.

At a Glance

Industry:

Omnichannel retail

Key challenges:

People Team consumed in tactical delivery with little time for proactive planning and strategy. Siloed processes were limiting efficiency and visibility of key data insights.

Solution:

empower® delivers the digitalisation, analytics and HR expertise to transform ER processes and empower line managers to self-serve people matters, freeing the People Team to focus on strategy.

Results:

88% of employee relations tasks are now manager-led. HR have been able to deliver industry-leading employee engagement strategies as a result.



The Challenge

Currys puts customer service at the heart of its proposition, and one of its strategic priorities is to have Capable and Committed Colleagues because “Happy colleagues make happy customers”, but its ER Shared Services model was not evolving with the business sufficiently to support this strategy long-term.

The previous ER provider lacked the flexibility, consistency of experience and collaborative approach that was needed to evolve with the needs of the business. The relationship was highly transactional, resulting in the in-house ER team being heavily involved in the day-to-day tactical delivery of people matters. This service was no longer fit for purpose and Currys needed to find a supplier that could deliver a solution better tailored to its culture and core values.

The internal ER team within Currys was also reliant on old processes, which meant that task management wasn't streamlined and visibility of data insights was limited. Processes were inconsistent, limiting the opportunity to innovate and meet the evolving needs of the organisation and colleagues.

Following a strategic review, the HR leadership team identified the need for clearer, simpler and faster ways of working. They were looking for a technology-led solution that would accelerate transformation within the ER function and deliver:

- ✦ **Best-in-class ER services fit for Currys people-first reputation**
- ✦ **Analytics that deliver insight-led decisions**
- ✦ **Line manager self-service tools to deliver process efficiencies and improve ways of working**

The Solution

AdviserPlus was successful in its bid for the managed service because of the unique proposition of its innovative **empower**[®] solution. **empower**[®] combines a custom-built ER technology platform, people analytics and the option of outsourced expert ER advisers to transform ER management.

The platform provides line managers with the tools and tailored, guided journeys to confidently and consistently manage the end-to-end process for employee relations matters, such as sickness absence, disciplinary, performance and grievances. Cases now progress far faster than before because managers can self-serve 24/7.

The analytics dashboard and reporting provides real-time visibility of data that has enabled the team to surface actionable insights, such as identifying departments where more manager training is required, or where absenteeism requires proactive action.

A leaner, higher calibre team of ER experts support Currys via the AdviserPlus advice line. AdviserPlus were able to provide a service staffed by 62% fewer people than the previous incumbent because of the efficiencies delivered by the **empower**[®] technology. The AdviserPlus team are also more highly qualified because only more complex cases are now being referred on to ER Advisers now that managers can self-serve. The team also work more collaboratively with the in-house ER team to drive innovation.

The consistency and visibility that **empower**[®] delivers means that ER cases are now being more accurately recorded under the correct incident categories. This is helping to surface the root cause of issues that were previously lost within siloed data, such as instances of bullying and grievances, which has enabled Currys ER team to respond proactively to remediate issues faster than before.

**LINE MANAGERS
HAVE THE TOOLS
TO CONFIDENTLY AND
CONSISTENTLY MANAGE
PEOPLE MATTERS**



The Benefits

Prior to **empower**®, the in-house People Team were heavily involved in ER cases, leading to an over-reliance on HR for tactical support. Now, 88% of the tasks involved in the management of ER matters are undertaken by line managers themselves. This level of manager self-service was achieved within 3 months of launch and has resulted in the ER team no longer being consumed in tactical delivery. The key benefit has been to free up the in-house team to focus on proactive planning, identifying and addressing the root cause of issues, championing ED&I initiatives, and building manager capability.

Since **empower**® launched, the following future-focused initiatives have been initiated as a direct result of the Currys ER team having more time:

- ✦ **The development of online ER skills modules that support line manager growth.**
- ✦ **New, proactive initiatives have been launched to deal with the root cause of ER issues, using data insights to identify hotspot areas that need support to drive improvements that support Currys culture, values and colleague engagement.**
- ✦ **An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy overhaul to develop progressive new policies fit for the modern workforce, such as Menopause, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy Loss and many more. AdviserPlus provided consultation and design services to produce the suite of contemporary, on-culture policies.**

The Results

- ✦ **88%** of all tasks in the management of employee relations matters are now entirely manager-led.
- ✦ Line manager empowerment was optimised within **3 months** of launch.
- ✦ **73%** of the entire line manager cohort of 3,000+ have self-served an ER case in the last year, so adoption of the digitalisation of processes has been fantastic.
- ✦ **62%** reduction in outsourced advice line resource from the previous incumbent, resulting in cost-efficiencies.
- ✦ **ER cases** are more accurately recorded under the correct incident categories, surfacing issues previously lost within siloed data, enabling proactive, faster responses.
- ✦ **24/7 access** provides managers with the flexibility to access the service at a time that suits them, complimented by a team of expert advisers to help coach managers in more complex situations.

“The efficiency of the implementation and the engaging onboarding process meant we could see the benefits almost immediately. Manager adoption is high and the access to insight has helped us focus our resources on building capability where it is most needed. This is a true cultural enabler. We feel like we have a genuine partnership with AdviserPlus that is enabling us to focus on driving colleague engagement and building manager capability.”

Alison Metcalfe, Head of ER and People Change, Currys

“We’re delighted to have established such a collaborative relationship with the innovative team at Currys. They are leading the charge in people-first employee engagement strategies, and we’re excited to be able to support them in achieving success. We’re very much aligned in our values and are looking forward to continuing to innovate together.”

Susan McLaren, Account Director, AdviserPlus comments

AdviserPlus' award-winning solution

This case study was central to the success at the British HR Awards 2023, where AdviserPlus jointly won the 'Technology Partner of the Year' award with Currys! The Awards celebrate companies that are transforming people experiences and helping to shape a new future of work in HR, so it is an honour to be recognised as a leader in tech-enabled people empowerment.



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AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group

AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group, a leading UK provider of specialist technology and innovative HR, change and employment law solutions that drive business performance through people performance. Our experts share a deep understanding of today's complex HR landscape, delivering advice, insights, analytics and interventions that make a real impact.



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