E-BOOK

International HR: 5 benefits of a global HR strategy

How to overcome the challenges of managing a multinational workforce with technology

Contents

Introduction

The global evolution

The world has shrunk. Every country on every continent is more interconnected than ever, and international expansion is no longer the reserve of huge conglomerates. Smaller and mid-sized companies are stepping into the global arena. The world is truly anyone's oyster.

For HR and People leaders, globalisation presents the challenge of not just managing a multinational workforce—but keeping pace as the business expands into new territories and grows its global footprint.

Multiple work locations with multiple systems—possibly in multiple languages—invariably means different ways of doing things. This makes it difficult to maintain compliance, creates more room for error, generates separate silos of working, and makes it virtually impossible to get a full and accurate picture of your global workforce.

There's not an HR professional in the world that hasn't felt a degree of panic when the CEO has asked for an up-to-date, company-wide statistic by end of play, that they're not sure if they have globally. For growing multinational, mid-sized companies, you might be able to quickly cobble together some stats for the country you're headquartered in—but getting the figures for every region the business operates in can be a minefield. Does each location even track and record this information? If they do, is it current?

Despite the pandemic, 45% of businesses are either currently expanding globally or only slightly delaying their expansion and plan to do it within one year.

Source: Regaining Momentum in 2020 and Beyond

Embrace a global HR strategy

However, it doesn't have to send you into panic every time a data request comes in. Imagine being able to rattle off any people management data the c-suite requires in just a few clicks. Imagine having total visibility of your global workforce and the ability to engage with all employees no matter where in the world they are based. Imagine aligning all local processes and procedures into one standardised way of operating.

A global HR strategy can do all of that. And more.

It can ensure that you have the right structure and organisational design in place to align your HR and People strategy with the business strategy. The right approach combines scale and agility to optimise people management in every market that your company does business.

We know the pressure being placed on HR and People leaders is more demanding than ever. You need to find newer, more agile ways to manage your people while enabling the workforce to flex and align to shifting priorities, new ways of working, and adapt to today's very different world of work—all with minimal disruption.

Implementing a global HR strategy will make sure you empower agility and drive business resilience across the organisation.

Wherever you're at on your global HR journey, our eBook will explain the five outcomes you can expect from a global HR strategy.

If you've been operating in multiple countries for a while and want to align to a global strategy but don't know where to begin, keep reading. If you're yet to begin on a global expansion journey and want to understand the benefits of a consistent approach, this is for you. Or maybe you already have a global HR strategy in place, but want to see how you're tracking and compare best-in-class practices—well you're in the right place.

By the end of this eBook, we promise you will be confident and equipped to create, improve or expand a global HR strategy. One that frees you up from laborious admin and enables you to sleep soundly at night, knowing you have a global people management solution in place that supports the business and can handle anything the c-suite requires.

Five benefits you can expect from a global HR strategy

Automation and consistency

Free yourself from time-consuming admin, onboard effortlessly, and smoothly manage your global workforce with HR automation.

Flexibility for local variation

Combine scale and agility to optimise your people management across borders, with easy configurability.

Manage local compliance from one, global system

Take the headache out of managing multiple regulations with automated policy updates and one central system.

Comprehensive reporting and analytics

Harness the power of your People data and make quick, informed, actionable decisions with one system of record.

Better digital employee experiences

Create consistent, world-class employee experiences your employees will love, no matter where they are based.

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Automation and consistency

Half of all work tasks will be automated by 2025 according to the World Economic Forum, and HR leaders are more likely to experience the benefits of automation than any other profession, according to Hay's What Workers Want Report. Automated HR admin frees up your time to concentrate on the value-added tasks that really make a difference.

Streamlining your HR processes through automation also creates consistency. When there are inconsistencies across markets, such as seven different processes across seven different countries, it creates inefficiencies and duplicate effort. Automating HR processes across locations, means the business can scale quickly and easily—vital for companies looking to expand their global footprint. It means companies can have a consistent approach no matter what region they're in.

Having a consistent global HR strategy also delivers fairness and equality. It ensures your multinational workforce is treated with the same values and creates a standardised framework across different processes, such as hiring and onboarding.

A global HR system that automates core processes massively reduces the amount of time spent on HR admin and allows you to move away from being a purely transactional function, to be a strategic, People-focused team with a consistent approach worldwide.

Streamline your strategy and let automation free you up to manage your diverse workforce effortlessly with a global cloud HR system:

- Manage expansion across regions, countries and continents more effectively and efficiently.
- Streamline processes and improve efficiencies across all regions with automated and easily configurable workflows.
- Relinquish the burden of overseeing employee requests by empowering your entire workforce with self-service, from any device.
- Find and hire the best people faster with automated job posting and resume screening.
- Onboard effortlessly with electronic signatures and automated notifications and escalations to ensure tasks are completed.
- Reinvent your approach to performance management with continuous performance conversations, 360 feedback and instant peer or colleague recognition.
- Support collaborative working and opportunities for international placements by having a consistent system that makes it easy to transition employees between regions.

Flexibility for local variation

As organisations become increasingly global, the c-suite will be looking to HR and People leaders to support them in building, managing and maintaining a global workforce. The ability to scale your people management capabilities—and scale them at the same pace the business is expanding into new territories—is vital.

You'll need to implement a global HR strategy that combines scale with agility to optimise talent management in every market that the business operates in. You'll need HR capabilities that can enable you to realign your workforce and working practices with the shifting global footprint of the business.

A successful global HR strategy is a balance of consistency and flexibility: consistent standardised processes and procedures, combined with the flexibility to accommodate local policies and ways of working.

A global cloud HR system creates flexibility by giving you the power to create a unique global approach based on your specific requirements, allowing your HR and People team to easily configure workflows and processes, and adapt content and system access for specific regions.

How to be flexible, agile, and adaptive with a global cloud HR system:

- Easily manage multiple languages, multiple currencies and multiple date formats.
- Seamlessly adapt to local variations on policy and compliance.
- Create global business processes across regions, while accommodating local business variances by adapting workflows as needed.
- Provide distinctive self-service experiences based on location—adapt content for different regions, with changeable branding elements that can be localised as needed.
- Localise time and attendance by accommodating location-specific public, religious and cultural holidays across your multinational workforce.
- Benefit from a system that can quickly and easily scale with you as the business grows, effortlessly evolving to suit your current needs and regional variances as you move into new markets.

Manage local compliance from one, global system

The difficulties and complexities of global and local employment policies can take up a lot of HR's time, particularly if your business operates in multiple countries and time zones. Maintaining compliance is an absolute necessity, but it is even more of a challenge when businesses move into less familiar locations.

From working time regulations and sick leave, to data compliance, pensions and health care, the laws, regulations, and policies all vary country by country, so HR and People teams need a global strategy that allows you to effortlessly manage and maintain global practices and local rules.

Without a global system, it is easy for companies to get tripped up by the variances in regulations by each country. Parental leave is a prime example; in some countries mothers and fathers are offered paid leave when they have a child, in other regions it is just the mothers, and in some, no paid leave is offered at all. The length of parental leave also varies by country.

A global cloud HR system takes care of this so you can rest easily, safe in the knowledge that you have the tools to help manage regulations and legislation at a local level across your international operations.

How to get peace of mind with a global HR system that supports compliance with local regulations:

- Take the headache out of managing multiple regulations by setting up predefined policy rules for local compliance requirements, and let the system do the work.
- Easily manage localised policies that accrue automatically such as annual leave, public holidays, pensions and eligibility rules for benefits.
- Boost productivity and free up time with one global system of record.
- Mitigate risk with built-in compliance with data and security standards like GDPR, Privacy Shield, and ISO 27001.
- Implement sophisticated permissions to ensure sensitive HR data is only accessible to those who need it.
- Share local policies and regional-specific communications easily via employee self-service portals that can be tailored for each geo.

Comprehensive reporting and analytics

Multinational businesses operate in fast moving markets and need to be flexible, nimble and agile to keep pace in a competitive and fast paced environment. Having a complete, and visible, picture of the company at any one time is key.

A global HR strategy requires full oversight of the company's biggest strength—its people—at any one time. As HR and People leaders, can you deliver accurate group-wide people data to executives when they need it so they can make quick, informed and actionable decisions?

Cobbling together headcounts, attrition rates, salary information, absenteeism, and other metrics from different offices, all with their own reporting methods, is time consuming and open to human error.

A cloud HR system acts as one source of truth for collecting, reporting and analysing People data. This helps align HR with the organisation's needs and also builds business resilience, particularly in uncertain times and changing economic climates.

Harness the power of your people data with centralised reporting and analytics:

- Get real-time, accurate people data from across your global network to act on insights in a more agile manner.

- Access data faster, easier and securely; a global cloud HR system lets you access your people data from anywhere at any time and is highly secure.

- More accurate data you can trust; a single source of truth removes the potential inaccuracies from having multiple people entering multiple data into multiple systems.

- Track trends and analyse data across different regions so you can implement tailored strategies per region, and help the business stay one step ahead.

- Help managers be prepared; see which teams might be a flight risk, what areas of the business need a succession plan, what the current total time to hire is and more.

- Have the ability to see skills and competencies across locations— something more important than ever when employees are dispersed.
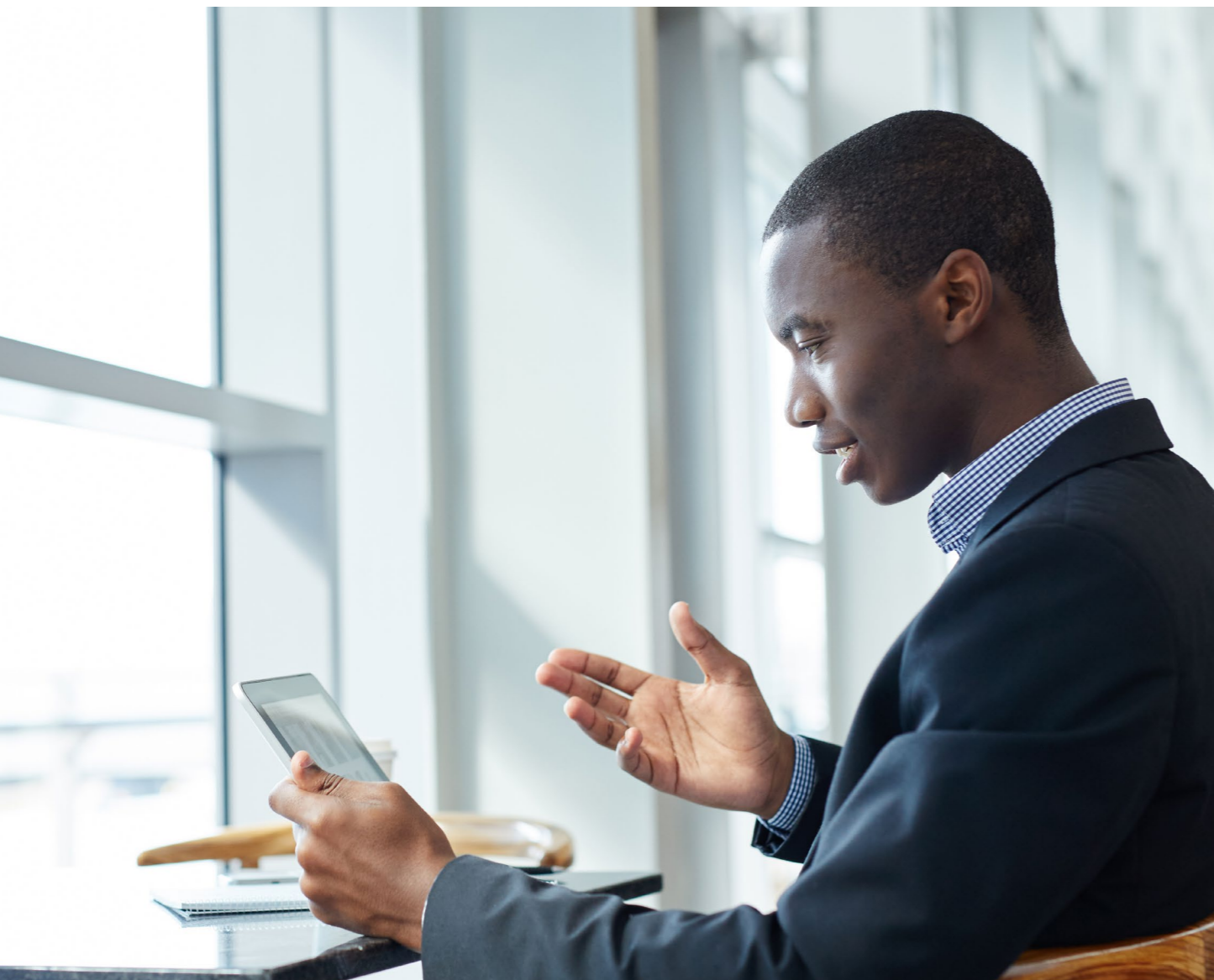
Data at your fingertips: the metrics that matter

A global cloud HR system helps HR and People leaders easily measure, monitor and understand People data across your whole organisation. Get up-to-the-minute insights on the following:

- Turnover
- Absence rate
- Total time to hire
- Employee pending annual leave
- Connecting turnover to pay awards
- Employee to HR staff or line manager ratio

- Survey metrics to measure employee engagement and job satisfaction
- Employee tenure
- Diversity metrics
- Employee performance metrics

Better digital employee experiences

Your people are your biggest asset, so building great employee experiences that keep employees engaged, motivated and enhances their wellbeing, is crucial.

With one central HR and People system that brings to life a company's brand and culture, you have the ability to create regional-specific portals that can be accessed on any device at any time, and create a positive, consistent experience for employees and managers across your business globally.

In fact, 40% of HR leaders told PwC that cloud HR has been 'very effective' at improving employee experiences. And 48% plan to focus on using HR technology to drive employee experience over the next 12-24 months.

With so much change and increasing expectations in the workplace, building great employee experiences is more important than ever.

Having one system of record also enables better employee engagement as it helps your disparate and diverse workforce feel like they are part of one company. They get the same user experience no matter where in the world they are located, and no matter if they are a remote worker or office based. Alternatively, a highly configurable global cloud HR system will enable you to tailor experiences for different groups of employees by, for example, region.

Ultimately, a global cloud HR and People system helps you understand your workforce better, while creating unmatched employee experiences that improve engagement, productivity and retention.

Create workforce experiences your people will love with one global cloud HR system:

- Enhance company communication with tailored messages for specific groups and teams, with the ability to send global and regional messaging.
- Establish multi-locational working relationships through the ability to share and track joint goals and objectives for collaborative working across your global workforce.
- Design better ways of working: leverage the power of global pulse surveys and employee feedback to improve and personalise employee experiences by region.
- Keep employees better informed through a workforce experience portal, so you have one place for employees to access all of your content, communications, videos, policies and more.
- Enable colleague recognition and enhance relationships across borders through real-time feedback and the ability to call out great work using peer-to-peer recognition.
- Give employees everywhere a consistent experience for requesting leave and managing their own data through an employee self-service portal.
- Make it easy for multi-national teams and colleagues to collaborate through a global searchable people directory and customisable org structure.

Global HR in action: what HR leaders say

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"Sage People has given the company a global overview, especially important given our rate of expansion. We can now see what's happening in every office, which roles are available, and where we have performance or training requirements. This information helps ensure we retain the best people who can help Expereo grow even more."

Cecile Van der Hulst,
HR Manager
Expereo

"The big achievement has been taking different rules and regulations for 51 countries and building that into one consolidated system. Before, we had multiple methods; now we have one system with a global process and localised rules where required."

Jessica Davies,
IT Manager for HR applications
Wescon-Comstor

"The Sage People system definitely makes it easier for us to grow. When looking to open our new office in Asia, it really helped us contact those employees, assisted with communications, and helped us build our company culture out there."

Eleanor Simmons,
HR Business Partner
CRU

"The employee self-service portal is an important feature; our employees in different regions can maintain their personnel data themselves and also enter vacation dates. It means that we now have complete transparency and it frees up HR."

Fabienne Riener,
Director of HR
Spark Networks Services

"We wanted the HR teams to have more time to listen to problems, talk to employees, think, use their experience and recommend actions. With Sage People we let the system do the boring jobs, and we focus on what's really value-add."

Azhar (Kurtis) Bakerally,
HR Specialist and HRIS Administrator
EcoVadis

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Your essential checklist
What to look for in a global cloud HR solution

You now know what a global HR strategy can deliver, but how do you choose the right HR technology to meet your requirements? Our essential checklist recaps the five benefits of a global HR strategy and highlights the key functions and features to look for in a global cloud HR system.

1. Automation and consistency

Built-in automation helps free up HR and People teams from time-consuming HR admin, streamlining HR processes across the organisation. Ask for:

Different levels of access, whether role-based, team-based or location-based.

Dynamic org charts that update automatically as people join.

Easy application of global and local workflows and policies.

Automated approvals process for managers to sign off things like leave requests.

Automated resume parsing, reference checks and screening processes.

2. Flexibility for local variation

You need the power to help you scale easily, but with the flexibility and configurability to adapt to local policies and procedures. Look for a system that offers:

Multiple languages, currencies and date formats.

Configurable global policy settings to adapt for local legislation.

Localised user profiles, workflows and permissions.

Ability to make changes without the need for technical support.

Secure access for employees from any device anywhere.

3. Manage local compliance from one, global system

Transform how you manage and embed global policies while enforcing local regulations and rules, as well as:

Predefined policy rules to quickly set up global and local compliance requirements.

Track and manage planned and unplanned absences by team or individual, including jury service, sabbaticals and other leave types.

Sophisticated permissions and profiles to ensure sensitive HR data is visible to only those who need it.

Ability to collate and securely store employee records for salary, bonus, commission and other information.

Built-in compliance with security standards like GDPR, Privacy Shield, ISO 27001, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and more.

Your essential checklist

4. Comprehensive reporting and analytics

Get total visibility of your global workforce with global analytics and interactive dashboards, providing up-to-the-minute people data. You require:

Real-time insights in minutes: pre-built global reports and dashboards on-demand with one click refresh.

Customisable dashboards so managers can easily see data that is most relevant to them.

Leave management reporting: complete visibility of attendance and leave through integrated metrics.

Customised diagnostic insights to establish trends and identify potential problems before they occur.

Embedded surveys and polls, tailored for different groups and functions.

5. Better digital employee experiences

Understand your workforce better and create world class employee experiences, improving engagement, productivity and retention. Look for a global cloud HR system with:

A company branded workforce experience portal with tailored hubs for everyone to access company information.

Performance management metrics with standardised performance data.

Employee self-service tools such as timesheets, absence requests, employee profiles and more.

Talent finder and skills search abilities.

Paperless contracts and digital signatures.

For global companies who put their people first

Built for your multinational workforce, **Sage People** is a global cloud HR and People system that delivers all this and more. Whether you have 200 employees in one country, or 5,000 in several, boost engagement and productivity by creating great employee experiences that engage and inspire your entire global workforce, and use actionable insights to drive agility and business resilience across the organisation. Take a self-guided interactive tour of Sage People today.

Conclusion

Business beyond borders

Globalisation is changing the business landscape fast, and your employees of the future could be based anywhere in the world, if they're not already. The door is open to more countries than ever before, with developing markets materialising overnight and business rapidly being conducted across multiple continents by smaller, newer and emerging companies.

For HR and People leaders, this is your chance to be an even more essential growth partner in the business, making sure the right structure and organisational design are in place to support the business on its global journey.

Now is the time to look at how you operate globally and put in place a strategy that enables you to grow and flex more easily, while cutting down the paperwork and headache that comes with not having a consistent global approach. It's time to look at aligning your HR strategy with the global business strategy and demonstrate how to operate even more efficiently to retain your top performers and impact your bottom line.

A successful global HR strategy combines scale and agility to help you manage your most important asset—your people. It combines consistency and flexibility to make sure you deliver a standardised global approach with the flex to accommodate local procedures.

Adopting a global HR strategy comes hand-in-hand with implementing a modern global cloud HR system, bringing all your people information together into one trusted reliable system of record.

Investing in a global cloud HR system will boost workforce visibility, deliver great employee experiences, provide actionable insights to make more informed decisions, and most importantly—will cut HR admin by a third, to free you up to spend more time on strategic and people matters.

Make life easier for you and your employees with an HR system that supports the whole business and can grow and evolve with you. Help your organisation manage its global footprint, all while driving agility and business resilience on your home turf. After all, international success is built on the strength of home success.

"The global headcount report that used to take me a week, now takes 10 seconds flat with Sage People."

Donna Bain, SVP, International HR, Westcon-Comstor.

Your next steps

## Discover the savings Sage People can deliver to your business

Based on interviews with Sage People customers, Forrester set out the costs and ROI of deploying and using Sage's HR and People system—revealing payback of investment in 6 months. Forrester created a composite organisation, called Acme, to illustrate the quantifiable benefits and costs of investing in Sage People.
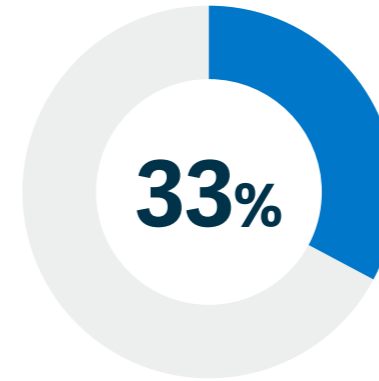
£1.7m

90%

33%

18%

Over £2million in savings

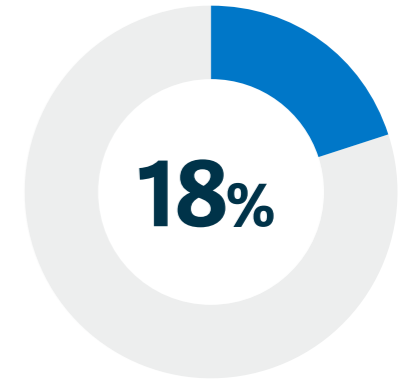Acme experienced a three-year risk-adjusted savings, totaling £1,702,458.
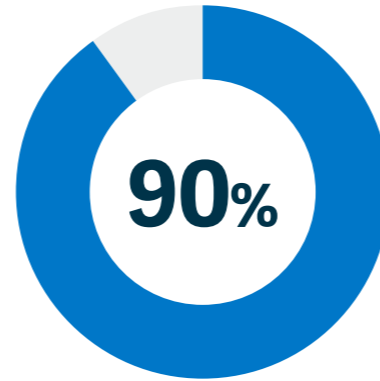
90% ROI over three years

Acme experienced an ROI of 90% over three years.

33% reduction in time-to-hire

Acme saves about four hours of labour per candidate, resulting in a 33% reduction in time with Sage People.

18% reduction in HR admin annually

Acme was able to reduce time spent on repetitive admin by 18% annually.

Take the next steps in your global HR journey

Take the next steps in your global HR journey and download our eBook '10 ways to make a compelling business case for a global HR solution'. Or, if you're ready to explore Sage People, take an interactive tour and discover how our global cloud HR system can transform the way you manage your international workforce.

Make the business case

Take a tour