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Case Studies



# How 89 Degrees East halved onboarding time and reduced admin by one-third

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## At a glance



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Line

- ✓ You're in a fast-growing PR, marketing, or communications agency
- ✓ You're wasting time on manual HR processes and need to scale
- ✓ You want to refocus HR on engagement, leadership and culture

## Communications and HR with purpose

[89 Degrees East](#) is a national data, strategy and delivery agency that specialises in strategic advice, policy, communications, stakeholder engagement, research, change and transformation, awareness campaigns, digital strategy and design. Over the last three years, the team has grown rapidly, from 20 to 55 employees, which made managing HR through spreadsheets, email chains and Xero increasingly unsustainable.

[Ruth Swinton](#), Business Manager at 89 Degrees East, was at the centre of this change. *"We had a system that wasn't really a system. It was spreadsheets, Google documents, email chains, and Xero for payroll. It was quite clunky and we were finding that it just wasn't sustainable as we grew."*

## The problem with a patchwork HR system

As the team grew, so did the risks and administrative burden.

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contracts or acknowledgements –  
*We'd have to chase people up to  
acknowledged what."*

business long term. *"We just*

## and fewer

mediate.

*"Our [onboarding](#) experience now is really smooth. I'd say it has probably cut our time in half, if not more, by having all employee files in one place. It's saved a significant amount of time, probably a third of the emails that were coming through."*

And it wasn't just about saving time, it was about getting things right the first time.

*"Because everything is so templated and integrated with Employment Hero, there's just way less risk of human error. We've really reduced the number of errors we were seeing in contracts and policy acknowledgments."*

For employees, the experience was a big step forward too.

*"They don't have to download PDFs and fill in forms. They just go through the onboarding flow, enter their details and everything's there. That's a huge improvement."*

## Cutting through the noise with SmartMatch and reference checks

Hiring in a fast-paced communications environment means sifting through dozens – sometimes hundreds – of applications.

*"We've started exploring [SmartMatch](#) for recruitment. It's a great feature to avoid going through hundreds of CVs if you were to hire with Seek or Indeed. It just saves so much time and makes the shortlist more relevant."*

Ruth also praised Employment Hero's reference check feature. *"That's been great. It's a smoother and faster process—we don't have to manually follow up or send out forms separately. It just happens as part of the flow."*

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## out hiring a

employees is non-negotiable, but

*around moving casual staff to  
and the templates are great. It's  
ur legal advice."*

It's allowed Ruth to stay ahead of legislative changes and make confident, informed decisions. *"It just helps clarify things quickly without having to go digging through the Fair*

# From admin to impact: focusing on what matters

By removing manual admin tasks, Employment Hero has created space for strategic HR projects.

*"It's enabled me to actually do the strategic part of HR such as looking at leadership development and engagement instead of just trying to get contracts out the door."*

They've even formalised performance reviews – something that wasn't happening before. *"We never had regular performance reviews. That wasn't part of our process before, but now that we've got the tool, we've set that up and it's been great."*

If you're spending too much time on manual tasks and not enough on strategic people initiatives, Employment Hero can help. [Book a demo](#) today and see how you can transform the way your team works.

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We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

## What we do

Employment Hero is an end-to-end HR, payroll and recruitment solution designed for Australian businesses. Our suite of powerful employment tools help streamline your workday, so you can focus on what matters.

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\* Work email

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