



# Hartex rubber proves HR in manufacturing is better processed on cloud.

## About Hartex Rubber Pvt Ltd

A family run business, Hartex rubber's journey started in 1961 in West Bengal. The company opened new production facilities and rapidly augmented production capacity. The Hyderabad plant alone has a capacity of producing 2.4 million Bicycle Tires and 0.6 million Molded Bicycle Tubes per year.

With the product mix focused on Tires, Molded Tubes and Jointed Tubes, the Hartex brand's estimated turnover stands at over US \$40 million per annum. The company exports to countries across Africa, Central and South America and is looking to develop new markets.

The company remains one of the leading manufacturers and exporters of quality bicycle tires and tubes since a decade.

### Industry

Manufacturing

### Head Office

Telangana

### Number of Employees

650+

Hartex stays adaptable to new technology – internally and externally.



Right from inception, Hartex Rubber kept up with and adapted to developments in manufacturing technology in its core areas. The business focus was obviously on maintaining its edge in the market.

Both Directors being progressive thinkers, they evinced similar spirit in upgrading internal processes in the company. While HR automation is not a focus area in most manufacturing organizations, the management exercised foresight and strategic thought in wanting to realize the significant benefits from automating HR.

## Hartex decides to adopt an HRMS Solution

Hartex was growing and employee numbers were expanding as well. Subsequently, the burden on the HR function increased and, error incidence characteristic of an overworked HR system was being experienced. Errors, minor and major, mundane and sensitive were leading to issues piling up on the HR function and the Finance office.

- **Leave and Attendance data issues** — Attendance data at Hartex was to be collated from multiple locations and across shifts manually. Much time was spent on manual attendance data capture and manual cross referencing against leaves. Leave and LOP data again was also manually calculated. Eventually all this data was fraught with human errors and the same was shared to finance for payroll processing.
- **Penalization issues** — Sometimes, attendance data would be muddled in coming from different locations. Clearing up the redundancies used up valuable time and the data gaps affected the penalization mechanism. There were multiple incidences of employees being underpaid or overpaid owing to the disconnect between actual data and the manually collected and computed data.
- **Payroll processing issues** — At Hartex Payroll was a manual task and would take 4-6 working days to prepare. Multiple people were involved in this process and so was management bandwidth. The physical payslips generated manually and were prone to delays and error. Further it wasn't the best utilization of the Finance team's time.
- **Internal payment app related issues** — Hartex Rubber already had an internally built payments app developed by the Director himself. Since manually calculated attendance, leaves and, payroll values were fed into the payments app at the end of each month, the resulting payments weren't always accurate or satisfactory or employees.
- **Employee finance issues** — As a family-run business, Hartex treated all employees as extended family. To this end, taking care of employee's financial needs was valued significantly by both, the company and the employees. The company regularly provided financial assistance to employees in the form of salary advances/loans for important events such as weddings or children's education. However, visibility on outstanding amount, repayment history, etc. was quite poor as this process was manual and could only indicate total outstanding loan amount. This was very important for financial discipline, but it wasn't being accomplished.

- **Productivity tracking issues** — Capturing productivity on an individual basis was not possible given that there were only two HR professionals for 500 odd employees spread across units and shifts. Also, appraisals weren't felt to be transparent.

With all these issues surrounding them, the business functions were under great pressure of redundant work and less engaged in productive work. It was clear to both Directors that a solution to this situation was urgently required. They needed an application to automate leave and attendance management - the data from here was to flow to payroll and salary was to be paid to employee without manual intervention at an individual level.

The Directors assigned Satheesh, the IT person, with the task of searching for a suitable payroll processing application which could bridge the gap between employee attendance tracking and salary disbursement.

A routine online search led Satheesh to a popular payroll software in the market. With the management's nod, this software's fitment within the company was assessed.

### **The priorities clearly were:**

- Automate the repetitive and the mundane
- Reduce errors in critical areas
- Tamper proof the financial process and seal human intervention
- Ensure productivity by measuring performance across functions

While the priorities were clear, Hartex's needs could not be adequately met by the payroll software they chose. The user interface was difficult on the average user. This was only one among many reasons why this solution didn't garner favor. It also couldn't be integrated with the existing in-house payments application. Eventually, the popular payroll software was rejected and the search for a better, more complete HRMS solution started afresh.

## **Hartex meets Keka and the story begins.....**

Hartex again launched a search and the numerous results proved to be baffling. As they kept going through one solution after another online, the name Keka technologies seemed to strike a chord.

Was it the quirky name or the ensemble of features or the stark sincerity the website projected, that engaged them ... one may only guess. Lines such as, 'Keka was born out of frustration from using HR software that sucks.....' were hard to ignore, especially in the context of a frustrating HR experience. Perhaps, it was because it was aiming to be a true Employee Experience platform. All said and done, Keka technologies received a call from Hartex Rubber in 2017 and that's how the story began.

## Keka technologies adds ‘Sulphur and heat’ to the management vision at Hartex Rubber.

In rubber manufacturing parlance, vulcanizing is the process of adding sulphur and heat to improve rubber. That’s perhaps the best metaphor for what Keka tech did to the HR system at Hartex Rubber.

### Keka’s user interface had Hartex Rubber engaged!

Once the call from Hartex happened, Keka’s Cloud HR Advisor offered a product demo to the team at Hartex. Sudheer (Senior Manager – HR), Dileep (Asst. Manager – HR) and the management seemed convinced with the interface. Prateek the techie Director, who built the in-house payments app found the user interface screens particularly engaging.

It is a known fact that the employee pool in manufacturing is a mix of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labor. Considering this, it was important that the interface be intuitive to use so personnel at every skill level find it easy to interact with. Keka’s fluid user interface proved to be a compelling solution for this requirement.

### Keka integrated well with Hartex’s payments application.

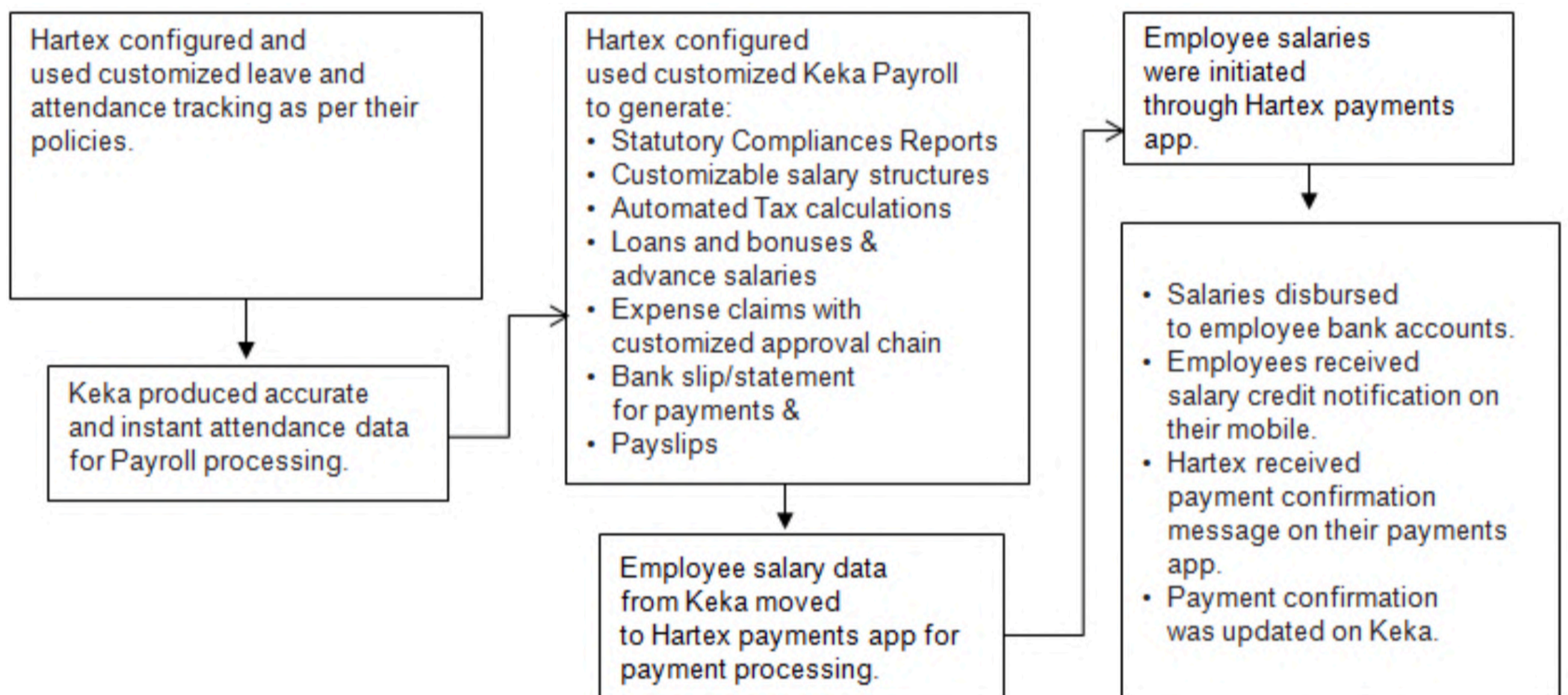
Since Hartex was experiencing issues with visibility in attendance, the penalization mechanism wasn’t effective. This would be sealed if the biometric attendance, **the in-house payments app and salary disbursement could be seamlessly connected through a payroll application.** Hartex wanted salary to be automated to an extent where each month, salary would be credited to employee accounts directly. The requirement in fact clearly stated that there was to be ‘no manual intervention’. Hartex Rubber needed Keka’s solution to integrate with the payment application. This was exactly where Hartex’s earlier payroll software had failed to deliver.

For Keka, this was in fact the first time a manufacturing client required such a complete solution and integration with internal systems. This helped Keka API mature. With Keka’s Payroll module, configuring payroll policy, defining payroll components, customizing and specifying salary structures, processing payroll inputs and statutory deductions, salary payout were all automated. This ensured accuracy, security against tampering and single point disbursement of salary. Along with these Keka’s modules were flexible and customizable for other monetary aspects. With timely and seamless inputs, payroll process bid adieu to errors, time lost in redundancy and supported the HR function in aligning with business goals.

## The elusive APIs fall into place with Keka...

When organizations adopt a new HRMS solution, it is the APIs, Application Programming Interface, which help the new system plug into the existing one. When Keka's APIs were exposed to Hartex's payments app, they integrated well and could bridge the gap between Leave and attendance and salary disbursement.

## How Hartex benefited with the clear and easy payroll processing from Keka:



## Key Benefits

Saving in work hours for HR over attendance capture

**33%**

Accuracy in attendance data capture

**100%**

**Single screen payroll processing**

**Zero time elapsed** between attendance to payroll data movement

**Employee engagement increased** with the Employee Self Service portal

**Advance salary** feature indispensable in a manufacturing company

## Extra miles in satisfying the customer:

The APIs needed to make the payroll process completely automated weren't developed and ready with Keka originally. Keka's CEO, Vijay Yalamanchili, personally intervened and ensured that the necessary development work was carried out to define these APIs. This was quite a challenge for Keka as Hartex didn't want to experience errors right from inception. Making the integration and performance foolproof was a huge development challenge for the developers at Keka which they eventually accomplished.

Alongside the regular salary disbursement, Hartex also wanted to be able to advance salaries and loans with clear visibility. This is a significant employee requirement in manufacturing companies and naturally, Hartex wanted its employees to have access to an advance salary request feature. This feature was developed and integrated as an add-on into the existing Loans feature.

## Keka took expense management in a manufacturing setup to the next level

The finance department at Hartex was regularly occupied with manually scanning, recording, storing and submitting bills and expenses which cost them time and resources. The situation would usually get worse towards month end when payroll and accounts were to be processed by the same department manually.

The Verification and approval process were fraught with redundancies and mapping submitted bills to entitlements took up further time. The process wasn't transparent or organized. Delayed or last-minute bill submissions, missing submissions, and last-minute approval requests often occurred creating a sense of chaos in finance people. To top it, employees whose bills were lost, misplaced, incorrectly claimed (owing to ignorance or incorrect understanding) would usually direct their disgruntlement towards finance people.

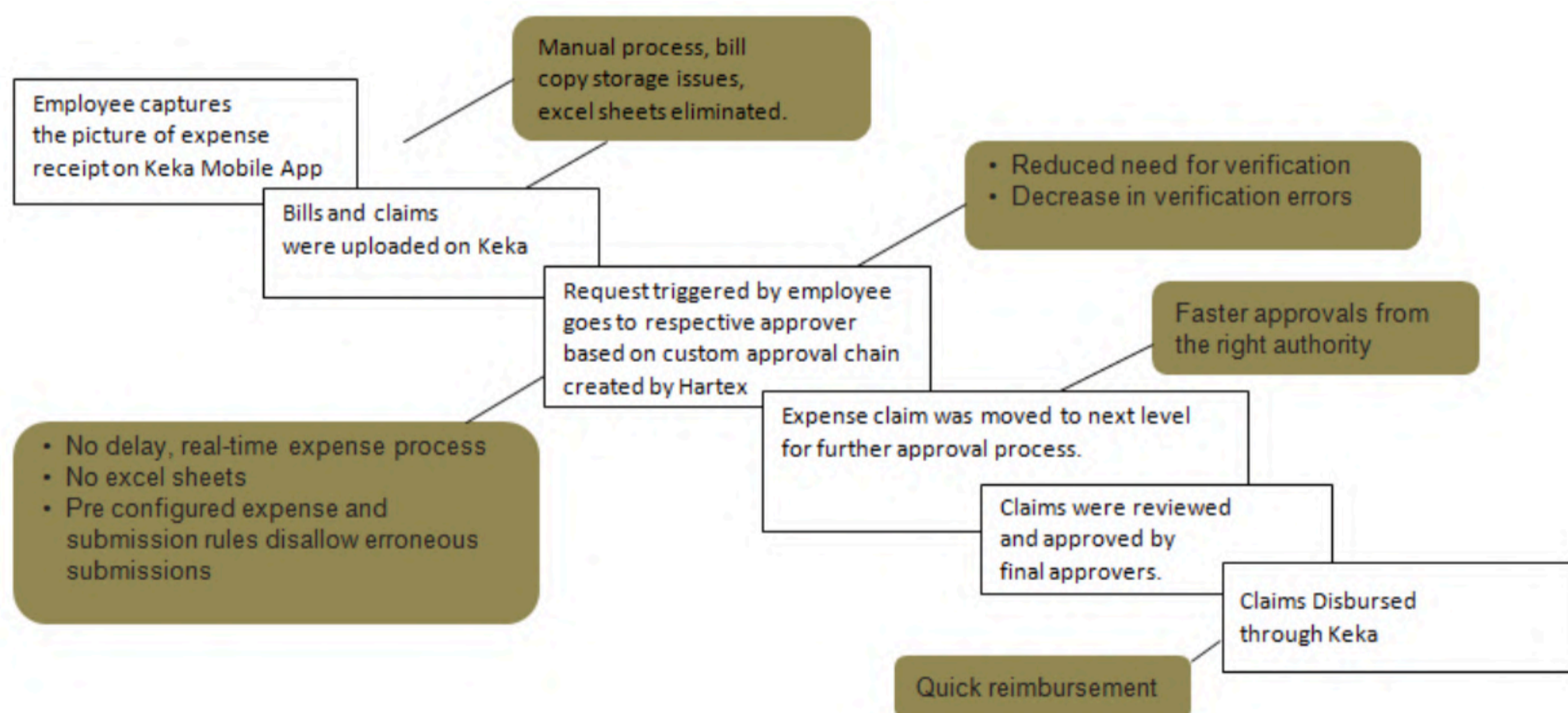
At the hardworking finance department in Hartex, pressure and frustration were increasingly common emotions. They certainly didn't need negative affirmations when crunching those voluminous numbers. And how could they avoid errors?

For these reasons, when Hartex chose Keka, they were also keen on the expense management module.

Keka digitalized the process so the relevant approver would get direct requests from the employees who uploaded bills and claims on to the portal. From here the expense claims would move to the next level for further approval, through pre-configured review and final approval stage to final disbursement.

## Here is how Keka overhauled the manual expense management process with automation:

The finance department at Hartex was regularly occupied with manually scanning, recording, storing and submitting bills and expenses which cost them time and resources. The situation would usually get worse towards month end when payroll and accounts were to be processed by the same department manually.



## Key Benefits

Decrease in incorrect claims

**30%**

Increase in submission and reimbursement speed

**70%**

Reduction in paperwork

**90%**

**Zero delay bill** uploads

**Zero issues** in multi-location bill submission

**All time** accessibility of submitted bills

**Increased transparency** in every stage of expense management

**Increased investment of** time in productive work

**Less harried** finance personnel

Employee grade-based **expense limits**



## Extra miles in satisfying the customer:

Hartex wanted payments to be tracked and processed through an approval level. This was to ensure that the expense management process had the necessary checks included so to seal any possible avenues for tampering. Integrating this feature required an additional layer of development on part of Keka which they accomplished successfully.

## A Performance Management System to slay manually filled forms

Once the leave and attendance module of Keka was successfully integrated with the internal payroll app, Hartex Rubber realized that it wanted more features so other HR functions may be automated.

The Performance Management System was one of the topmost priorities after Salary processing at Hartex Rubber. Seeking to automate Performance review process marked the beginning of the second phase in the interaction between Keka and Hartex Rubber.

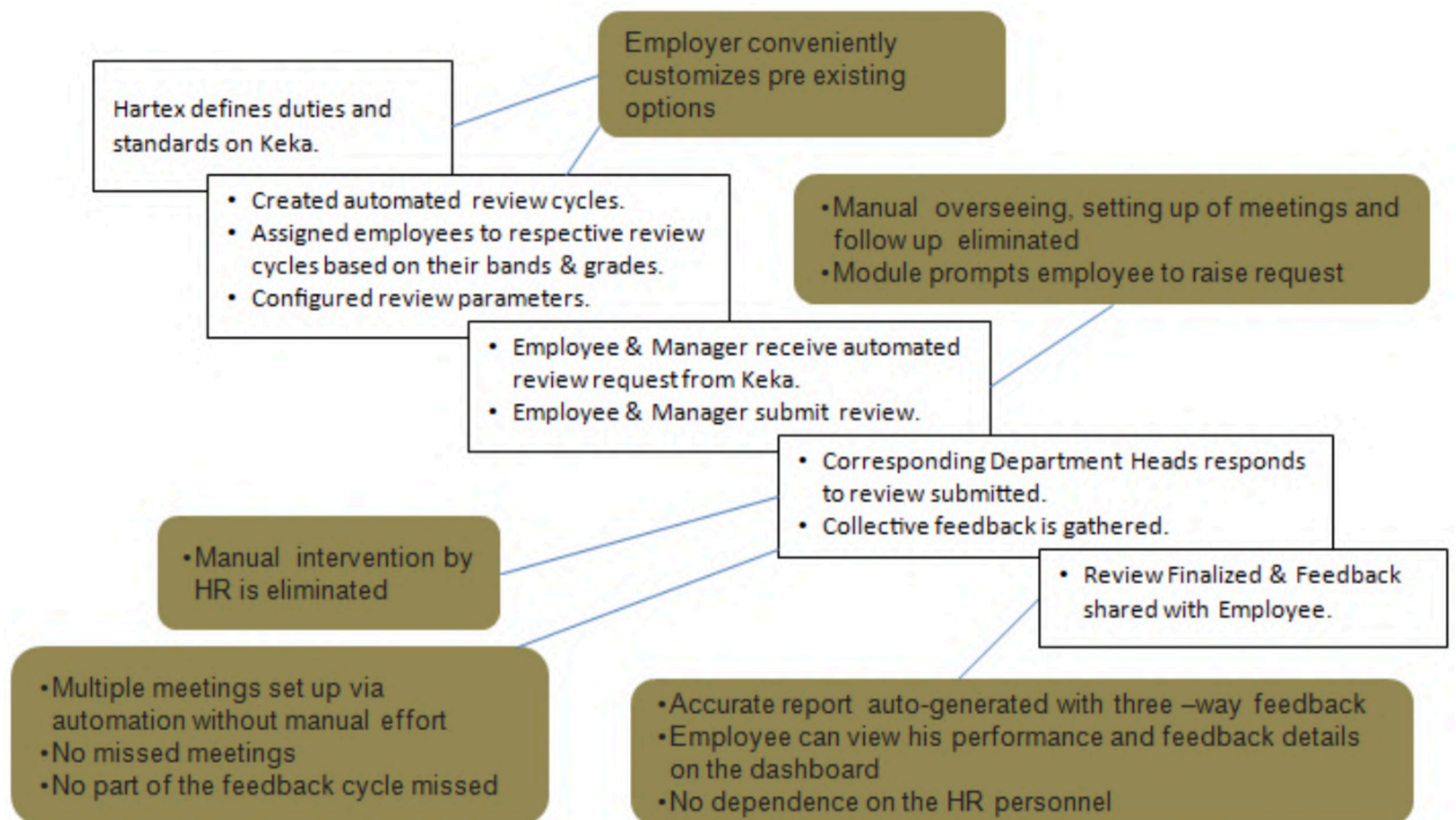
This phase was also driven by Hartex's dynamic HR personnel, Sudheer, the senior Manager and Dileep, the Assistant HR Manager. Since it was just the pair of them for a 1000 strong workforce, both HR people strongly advocated the need for HR automation. Aside of automating the laborious payroll process, they staunchly stood by automating the Performance Management System.

It was not an easy task for HARTEX to manage the reviews of 800 plus employees. The company had a three-way feedback system which contributed to performance reviews. And this was largely dependent on forms which had to be manually filled. Both HR personnel had to compile the three-way feedback manually at each review cycle. The need for creating separate review cycles for different teams and employee levels compounded the problem. As a result, valuable time and effort, better invested in making the performance review process robust were lost to the tedious manual task.

In wanting to beef up this process and make it easier on the HR, the management chose Keka's Performance Management module.

Fully automated Performance reviews ensured that HR personnel never had to run the floors getting forms filled. Keka's PMS offers comprehensive evaluation metrics for every employee typology. Hartex is now capturing employee detail, setting up review meetings and adhering to them, obtaining 360 degree feedback and eventually obtaining the evaluation report per the metrics defined. They are able to speed up and upgrade review effectiveness for more than 800 employees.

Here is how the module helped in establishing a work environment which enabled people to work to the best of their abilities.



## Key Benefits

Decrease in hours fed into performance feedback cycle

**65%**

Productivity increase after the first PMS cycle

**25%**

**Instant feedback** offered to employees, has max impact

**Easy to configure** review groups and review specifications based on performance metrics

**Regular feedback** generation from managers, peers or customers

**Accurate and instant review reports** reduced report related work by 9 hours

**No forms** to be filled by hand

**Automated reminders** to ensure timeliness of the entire process - 6hr saving in follow-ups

## Extra miles in satisfying the customer:

- **Keeping things human centered** - When the PMS was being developed, Dileep, the Assistant HR Manager had an unconventional way of getting things done. Dileep's KRAs require him to set up policies in the company. Towards managing employee performance, he routinely gets employees from various units to fill forms, reviews them, gathers additional reviews from the corresponding manager and department heads and then orchestrates the Performance review.
- Once automated, this system would become employee driven. Irrespective of skill level or digital literacy, employees would have to enter data themselves and raise the performance snapshot. Dileep could foresee that employees on the shop floor may have challenges understanding and interacting with the UI.
- He collaborated with Keka to create a 'usage guide', to help employees understand the PMS modules' steps. He not only used text, but also incorporated snapshots of the process so it could support understanding with visual inputs. Keka tech supported him in creating this artifact as it was crucial to the app being used by employees. The result was 100% usage by Hartex employees!
- On the one or two occasions when the development process experienced glitches, Dileep persisted with Keka and pushed his company to continue with the alliance. On Keka's part, the Customer Success team and the Development team put in full steam on this project. The collaboration made it possible to overcome challenges unique to this manufacturing company.
- **Convincing employees to stay invested in automation** - Employees at Hartex were used to discussing performance in person. They found interacting with a person reassuring and gave them the confidence that their case has been heard.

But would filling a cloud-based form on an unsmiling computer screen offer the same experience, that too for the non-tech savvy employee group? These are important questions for any employee facing function when moving towards automation. Sudheer and Dileep, the HR personnel intervened to good effect here as well.

They convinced employees that the automated system would capture data accurately and ensure that, bias - the much-despised phenomenon which can wreck a performance review would be eliminated. Both the HR professionals then successfully overcame the challenge of employee conviction and got employees to use the Performance Management module. This was a huge upgrade for Hartex and marks the company apart as a thought leader in manufacturing.

## **Keka helped Hartex with a centralized workforce database.**

As with any manufacturing unit, Hartex's workforce was spread across units. Owing to data being scattered, critical data such as attendance had to be pulled from several locations. Errors were incident at the point of entry and in moving data from one unit to another.

Apart from geographic separation challenges, data was also distributed among layers. Employee info was divided by teams, departments, nature of work and so on. In case of emergency, accessing or processing data from separately held worksheets would cost time and effort. HARTEX needed a solution to take care of the database with privacy and accessibility on top of their priorities.

Keka gave them a robust database with which HARTEX was able to see the change in terms of usability and saving time. With this database in place, Hartex was able to perfectly capture leave and attendance. Also included was information like employee credentials, skill level related information, and expertise related info. This would open avenues for future training or resource allocation/utilization. When technical upgrades happen, the best talent fitment of employees is possible. This kind of data allows analytical insights fueling strategic growth

## **Reports with deep insights are dished out instantaneously thanks to Keka.**

With Keka's package, Hartex today has clear insight into organization's workforce, attendance, and projects and can effortlessly draw inferences from critical data. It enables them to build strategies around hiring, reducing attrition, implement or change various policies and tasks and improve overall alignment with business goals.

# Driving retention by moving towards an efficient employee Onboarding process

An employee's initial experience of an organization has a telling effect on employee retention. Onboarding is the organized process of providing employees with a seamless entry experience into the organization.

This involves accepting the joining letter, document submission and, form filling on the employee's part, typically done through the employee dashboard of the company's HR portal. On the employer's part, orientation, asset assigning, and training are involved. In a non-automated scenario, the HR manager has to run behind various teams, trainers and mentors and collate documentation, when a new employee joins the company. In Hartex's case, the manufacturing setup made the process more tiresome.

Keka's Onboarding Workflow facilitated creation of onboarding workflows based on different job profiles. HR would simply assign a new employee to the relevant onboarding workflow, which would trigger updates to corresponding stakeholders. This significantly decreased the time required for the new employee to get acclimatized to the company culture, enhanced employee experience and had an impact on employee retention.

## Onboarding Hartex Rubber onto the Keka platform – an experience as remarkable as the company's attitude!

These phases, beginning with onboarding through adopting PMS and finally the complete HRMS package comprised the onboarding process for Hartex Rubber.

Clearly, Hartex got what they asked for:

- **Performance management with all the artifacts that help employees grow**
- **A payroll system that's fully automated and with easy customizable options**
- **Seamlessly integrated HRMS modules**
- **Employee friendly, intuitive software with a quick learning curve**

Several things stood out for Keka through this process.

Hartex Rubber's zeal for the initiative at all levels was remarkable. It is one thing for top management to issue a mandate, but the HR team took it to the next level.

They owned the initiative and ensured that the solution was successfully onboarded. Subsequently, they also educated employees in responding to the new HRMS solution. Sudheer, the Senior HR Manager later took it upon himself to train the new HR recruits and ensure everyone is on the same page.

Finally, Hartex Rubber stood out in Keka's client history as the customer with the shortest onboarding time.

**In just two months, both Keka and Hartex invested great efforts and successfully implemented the HRMS solution into the company.**

The conversation had started in Month 2018 and Hartex was onboarded well in time for the new financial year.