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9 Steps to Mastering Remote Workforce Management



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Chapter 1. Benefits of Remote Time and Labor Software for Mobile Employees

Companies that depend on virtual employees could not exist without smart tech. Employers who aren't using smart tech for offsite time and labor are missing key advantages.

If you are an employer with a virtual team, it takes some planning and effort to stay productive. The right time tracking software can help you create an efficient system so you are better able to optimize your workforce. Optimizing your staff puts you in a position to take on more work.

Let's look at the benefits:

1. Pay Employees Accurately



This is the bedrock of the employer-employee relationship. Knowing when each team member clocks in and clocks out is critical. This is true whether they are in the cubicle next door or on another continent.

Since your entire business can't operate without paying your employees, you need to track time correctly.

If you have several clients and bill employee time per job, you need a system with that capability. If your contractors do the same, it makes things easy on their end as well. If you have contractors who work by the hour and send you an invoice, you need to verify their billable hours.

Business owners have many reasons to allow all or part of their staff to work remotely. [Lower overhead](#) is one of the oft-cited advantages of employing telecommuters. But if you are paying them for time they didn't work, you are negating the savings in overhead.

2. Help Employees Get in Work Mode



One of the challenges for remote employees is staying focused on their work. There are plenty of distractions in a home office, coffee shop, or wherever the employee chooses to park their laptop.

An onsite worker has the morning commute to transition to work mode. The physical journey helps them get down to business when they arrive at work.

A telecommuter needs to make the transition also—mentally if not physically. This is difficult when the commute only requires navigating a basket of laundry in the hall. For the at-home worker, clocking in says “I am at work now.”

3. Accountability for Everyone



Using a good time tracking app is essential for keeping employees accountable. You don't want a haphazard time and labor system where the employee fills out a paper timecard at the end of the pay period. It doesn't keep the employee or the employer accountable. And it fails the accuracy test from the get-go.

You trust your remote employees or you would not have hired them. But even if you believe them to be completely trustworthy, you want to make it easy for them to track their hours. Any cumbersome system—for time tracking or otherwise—makes life harder for everyone. It hampers the employees, managers, Human Resources staff, and ultimately the business owner.

You want to be accountable to them, as well. An easy to use time tracking app assures that both you and your team members agree on the time worked each pay period. You are also accountable to the Department of Labor for every employee and every shift. A good mobile time tracking app that everyone uses is your number one tool for labor law compliance.

4. Uncomplicated Collaboration



When a virtual worker clocks in, it lets all team members know that he or she is available. If workers are spread around the globe, sometimes there are only a few hours of overlap. The two hours when the Filipino techs can talk to the London-based design team are critical. Time tracking apps with centralized employee portals keep everyone on the same page. All players know who is available without sending a text or email.

5. Improved Managerial Oversight



Companies can't be productive if managers don't know what's going on with their teams. This is especially important if there are no standard shifts. Time tracking apps with well-designed manager portals make it easy. Supervisors can see at a glance who is on duty and where they are located.

6. Optimum Shift Coverage



This is especially important for live customer service or tech support teams. When there is shift confusion there is a risk of understaffing. When there is understaffing, the team can't serve your clients well. Customer frustration intensifies with each minute they wait in the phone or live chat queue. Not surprisingly, coverage gaps are also hard on employees. If you can't schedule enough employees to handle the workload, morale will plummet.

7. Affordable and Efficient Administration



Paying for excessive administrative time (either in-house or outsourced) is a way to lose some of the cost savings of having a virtual staff. Good remote management software allows your Human Resources team to handle a relatively large workforce. Importing time and attendance data directly into the payroll system is especially cost-effective. When the app does the heavy lifting, it handles the work of several employees.

8. Insightful Human Resource Allocation



Good time and labor apps capture data for your human capital optimization strategy.

Don't have a human capital optimization strategy? Maybe that's because your HR software is sub-par. *Good* remote workforce management software helps you make strategic decisions about schedules, team assignments, and project workflow. *Great* software has reports that represent workforce data graphically for easy comprehension. It also has simulation capabilities that remove the trial-and-error of shift schedule forecasting.

9. Engaged Employees



Engagement is a broad term that incorporates many elements. Engaged employees enjoy their job, but it goes beyond that. They are proactively committed to the company's mission and success. That means they take initiative. In addition, they believe they are treated well by their supervisors and business owners. They make choices that benefit the organization, even when they don't have to.

Engaged employees care about their performance and are eager to improve their skills. They don't watch the clock, eager for the day to end. They try to do as much as possible during their workday, and they are committed to doing it well.

In some companies, 20% of the employees accomplish 90% of the work. This core group drives the success of the business. These employees aren't necessarily more experienced or skilled—but you can bet that they are more engaged.

Engaged employees have better attendance. On average, they miss six fewer days per year. They take vacations to recharge their battery and return ready to dive back in. Reduced absenteeism benefits everyone on the team, even the employees who are not as enthusiastic.

It's important to understand that engaged employees have a lower risk of turnover. Consider the cost of high attrition. Increased engagement translates directly to lower recruitment, training, and administrative costs.

Lastly, engaged employees drive innovation regardless of their job role. Those who are hired to innovate are usually engaged by nature. They are also the types most likely to expect advanced time and labor apps. But any employee can figure out better ways to do things.

Chapter 2. Remote Workforce Management in a Nutshell

Remote workforce management is also called mobile workforce management. It can be used by everyone in your organization.

1. Managers and admin staff who manage Human Resources tasks with a mobile device
2. Employees who manage HR transactions from a mobile device

Remote workers include traditional W-2 employees, temp staff, contractors, and interns.

Here are a few examples of mobile employees and reasons why mobile time and labor software benefits each specific type.

The Road Warrior



There are many types of mobile sales reps. The primary attribute they share is visiting customers in person. For road warriors, you'll want to provide remote punch-in and punch-out. It's also important to allow interactions with scheduling and self-service. You don't want to tie your sales reps to a desk when they need to be on the road.

Service Technicians



Service techs are also in your road warrior group—employees who travel to customer locations to perform work onsite. These include cable repair, yard care, appliance or HVAC maintenance. The more features you can provide in a mobile time and labor solution, the more time they can spend on the job.

Offsite Workers



Sometimes remote doesn't mean "on the go." It can characterize employees who work at a remote location for a long period of time. A good example of this would be a construction worker. There are also employees who work offsite for a short period of time such as an event coordinator.

Floating Shift Work



Some employees float from location to location to fill shifts. For example, a network of long term care centers may share a nurse. School districts often have floating workers as well.

To complicate this mobile workforce, you may have around-the-clock shift schedules. Scheduling employees at multiple locations with shifts of varying lengths is a logistical challenge. Remote workforce management software can help reduce complexity and improve efficiency.

Work From Home



Finally, you may have employees that telecommute from home some or all of the time.

Bottom line; there are many types of mobile employment. Even if you don't consider your entire workforce to be mobile, you may have employees who fall into one of these categories we've described.

Chapter 3. Five Must-Have Features of Remote Workforce Management Software

There are many features you need in a remote workforce management software solution. The more robust your solution, the more you can get done without connecting to a desktop.

Here is a list of five must-have features of mobile and remote workforce management software. These are the essentials you can't do without:

1. Mobile Time Tracking



Shift clocking is at the heart of remote workforce management. Without it, you are missing the primary interaction with your employees. There would be little reason for mobile workforce management software without it.

Accurate time tracking ensures that employers don't pay more for labor than they need to. Intelligent clocks reinforce correct clocking, so employees don't check the wrong box. These time savers are worth their weight in payroll.

GPS location management helps confirm that the employee is working where they are supposed to be working. GPS location management can help you avoid expensive buddy punching. This is a form of time theft where an employee clocks in for a coworker who isn't working. It also helps ensure you have the right staffing resources at the right location. In addition to location-specific clock in, employers can use it for mileage tracking.

You are also protected from inadvertent time theft. This is where a well-meaning employee enters incorrect punch times when they fill out a paper timesheet at the end of the pay period. Most of us have too many things on our mind to remember exact punch times after the fact. Work schedule apps with location management create virtual timecards. This improves payroll integrity because punch times are entered by a computer synced with a time clock and they aren't dependent on fallible human memory.

Labor savings translate directly to a more robust bottom line. Plus, it frees up capital for marketing or hiring another employee. Each dollar saved can be used to grow your company or pay off a business loan more quickly.

2. Scheduling



Remote scheduling is essential for companies with mobile employees. The fewer times each employee has to visit a terminal, the more time you will save. This is especially important for large organizations with multiple shifts of varying lengths.

Mobile scheduling allows your employees to check their schedule from their smartphone. They don't need to visit a specific terminal or call in to an old-school telephone system. You and your team members use the app bidirectionally for all schedule processes and communication.

The system should also let employees submit scheduling modifications such as time-off requests. PTO tracking and absence management are indispensable as well. Scheduling goes hand-in-hand with time tracking and is an essential feature of remote workforce management.

3. Virtual Swap Board



Your remote workforce management software should include a virtual swap board. A virtual swap board takes a lot of work away from managers. It also allows employees extra freedom in managing their own schedules.

Virtual trade boards allow employees to post shifts they don't want. They can also volunteer for extra shifts that become available. Managers can retain the ability to oversee and approve all shift trades. Managers who trust their teams can let them work out shift coverage amongst themselves.

This is all done in a mobile employee self-service portal. Employees help reduce manager workload and fill empty gaps in the schedule. Managers always have control to monitor and approve changes. Schedule flexibility has never been more important to employees.

4. Alerts and Threshold Warnings



Managers can configure scheduling and timekeeping systems to send an alert when an employee is approaching unplanned overtime. Alerts help managers maintain productivity—but not at the expense of out-of-control labor costs. Warnings can help managers spot gaps in the schedule.

Both of these problems can cause havoc with tight budgets. There are also compliance issues such as predictive scheduling laws, union contracts, and hours limits for workers under eighteen years of age. Alerts keep your budget safe and your workforce running in compliance.

5. Remote Management Oversight Tools



Managers are mobile as well. Remote workforce management software helps mobile managers keep an eye on their teams. Communication is key when managers and employees are working remotely. Mobile workforce management can help managers work efficiently with comprehensive oversight.

Building schedules is one of the most important managerial responsibilities. Employee scheduling tools let managers create schedules quickly with templates. Easy, graphical interfaces color code employees, shifts, and locations. Pull employees into shifts. Refine the template to create your own master schedule. Then copy forward and adjust as necessary. View schedules for multiple teams or locations at once. Employee scheduling software is light-years ahead of spreadsheets and Google Calendar.

WorkforceHub Remote Workforce Management

Swipeclock offers affordable, easy to use solutions for remote and mobile employee management. WorkforceHub is a unified HR solution tailored to and specifically designed for the mission critical needs of small businesses.

[WorkforceHub](#) includes the following:

- [Time and Attendance](#)
- [Employee Scheduling](#)
- [Hiring and Applicant Tracking](#)
- [Onboarding](#)
- [Time Clock Hardware Integration](#)
- [Payroll Integration](#)

WorkforceHub simplifies remote and mobile employee management for private and public sector organizations. Over one million people use Swipeclock solutions every day in [healthcare](#), [manufacturing](#), hospitality and many other industries. With WorkforceHub, your business will grow faster and HR will be as efficient as possible. More importantly, your employees will be happier, more engaged, and more likely to stay with your company.



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