

The Top 7 Trends in Modern Workforce Management

The workforce has evolved, and workforce management needs to keep pace. Here are seven trends organizations should consider when examining—and updating—their workforce management strategies and systems.

1. Employees expect self-service technologies.

On-demand service has become the new norm. Online banking, shopping, and information available 24/7 have reset expectations: employees want the same independence at work that they have as consumers. Best-in-class organizations are empowering their employees by giving them access to manage their schedules when and where they want. Employees can manage everything from bidding for open shifts, disclosing availability and requesting time off directly through a company-specific web portal, data collection device or mobile application. These self-service capabilities not only empower the employee—they help managers streamline processes and free up time to focus on strategic goals.

2. Working 9-5 is no longer standard.

The Industrial Revolution may have brought about the eight-hour workday, but the technological revolution makes the idea of 9-5 obsolete. Your people are responding to emails before bed, taking calls on their commutes and getting tasks done at home—all of which constitute 'time worked.' Organizations must now track this evolving concept of time worked, rather than simply tracking hours spent at the office, while taking into account legislative and regulatory requirements. The U.S. government is changing FLSA laws for the first time in over a decade to reclassify employees eligible for overtime protection—this update will impact more than 4 million workers and force many organizations to revisit the way they track time worked.

3. Compliance must be simple and easily achieved.

Failure to comply with legislative and regulatory mandates has serious and expensive consequences. But complex, frequently evolving requirements can present a challenge to maintaining consistent compliance. Organizations with modern workforce management systems can automate processes to reduce the risk of noncompliance. Simple automated rules, learning alerts and a full audit trail ensure that your people are properly compensated based on time worked, accurately trained and certified, and your organization has fully adhered to all applicable laws and regulations.

4. Visibility matters—especially when it comes to infractions.

Organizations have rules around showing up on time, when employees can take breaks and hours regularly worked. But how are these rules enforced? Does every manager apply the rules equitably or does one play favorites? Organizations are looking for tools that can help apply time and attendance rules evenly—and fairly—across the workforce. These tools eliminate inconsistencies which can lead to employee dissatisfaction, turn-over or even litigation. With occurrence tracking, companies have the data managers need to efficiently and consistently enforce time and attendance policies.

5. Global operations rely on increased interaction and integration.

As offices and workers in locations around the world strive to stay connected, the demand grows for global workforce management. In the past, organizations with world-wide operations often functioned in regional siloes, rather than as unified enterprises. Now companies want a single global system, with its myriad benefits: one vendor, one common interface, international consistency and integrated talent and learning applications. The ability to deploy the system to any new business units easily, with minor modifications to accommodate new local requirements, makes this option especially attractive to growing companies.

6. Agile and flexible workforce management solutions are key.

Organizations want to offer their end users simple solutions: easy to use systems that meet the business' unique rules and requirements. This often translates into standardizing in order to simplify systems and procedures. However, unique union, trade association or collective bargaining requirements governing employees' time, accruals, scheduling and absences can pose challenges to simplification. Modern workforce management demands flexibility—a solution that can adapt easily to changing and varied needs while maintaining its core structure.

7. Scheduling is personalized with skill- or role-based “fit” per the task at hand

Scheduling is difficult. Making sure that you have the best employee in the correct position is even more difficult. Organizations that understand their employees' skills and competencies, then apply this knowledge when scheduling, see a tremendous impact on productivity and profitability. Forward-thinking organizations build even more efficiency by requiring employees to meet certain prerequisites (such as training or certification) to be eligible for particular shifts or tasks. This allows supervisors and HR departments to plan training to better staff required positions or provide replacement coverage at peak vacation times.

Companies that embrace these trends set themselves up to operate more efficiently and effectively, improving the employee experience—and performance—as the business evolves.

