

## **Before You Buy...**

### **A Guide to Choosing the Right Time and Attendance Solution**

#### **Why should you use a time and attendance system?**

Unfortunately businesses cannot rely on an "honor system" style of keeping track of employee time by using a pen and a sheet of paper. You are at risk of being cheated out of thousands of dollars in lost time and money if you do not keep accurate track of employee time. Time and attendance systems are a wise investment that can save significant time and money.

Time and attendance systems are used by a variety of people, businesses, and organizations to keep track of employee time. They provide a record of an exact amount of hours worked by employees and help assist with payroll. They also create a legal document that cannot be disputed.

Time and attendance systems are easy to use and set up. They can be used in offices, warehouses, and even at on-site locations such as construction sites. Some higher-end time clocks not only stamp time, but also tally up hours worked and make payroll easy. Time clock software allows employees to clock in and out via a computer. Data can then be exported and imported into payroll software programs.

Some of the newest time-tracking systems use biometrics (body features such as fingerprints) to punch in and out of work. Other time clocks use magnetic strip cards, which look like a credit card, to swipe in and out of work.

#### **Things to consider before purchasing a time and attendance system:**

##### **How many employees work for your company?**

You will first want to take into consideration how many hourly employees work for your company. You will also want to estimate how many employees you may have in the years to come. Some time and attendance systems are only capable of handling up to 50 or 100 employees. If you have more or may have more in the future, you may want to invest in a higher-end system. This could save you a lot of money in the long run and prevent you from having to upgrade in the near future.

## **How much time do you want to devote to payroll processing?**

Time and attendance systems vary greatly from manual systems to fully automated solutions. Some add time up as you go, where others require everything to be added up using a calculator or computer at the end of the month. Digital time clocks and time clock software help add up time and many can even export data to other payroll programs. Lower-end/manual time clocks stamp the date and time on a card, but do not keep running totals and cards must be manually calculated. If you have a larger business, you may want to consider a more automated system.

## **What kind of security do you need?**

All time clocks have a degree of built-in security to prevent tampering. Manual punch card time clocks require a key to modify the setup options. This prevents manipulating time card records. Automated time clocks provide an additional level of security by eliminating paper time cards that could be altered. Biometric time and attendance systems feature the highest security levels by utilizing fingerprint scanning technology, which totally eliminates "buddy punching". Employees clocking in for co-workers can severely impact the bottom line for companies both large and small.

## **Where should you put the time clock?**

Location often depends on the type of time clock you will be using. It is recommended that time clocks be placed in convenient areas that are easy to access. Time clocks come with desk or wall-mount options.

## **What are the different styles of time clocks?**

### **Automated Time and Attendance Systems**

Utilizing powerful Windows-based software, Automated Time and Attendance Systems bring time tracking to your computer, making it easy to keep track of employee time for payroll purposes. Employees log in and out via a computer keyboard or other interface. The logged time can be exported to various programs for additional processing. Computers add up time and make time keeping simple.

### **Biometric**

Biometric technology offers one-touch operation, instantly identifying an employee by their unique fingerprint. Employees punch in and out at the terminal with the swipe of a finger for

indisputable time and attendance records. The software records a template of that employee's fingerprint and associates that template with their ID number. Each time an employee attempts to clock in or out, the software verifies that the newly scanned fingerprint matches the stored template for that ID number. The use of biometrics in time and attendance systems makes it more difficult for one employee to clock in or out on behalf of another – preventing the costly practice that's known as "buddy punching." Those lost minutes account for lost dollars.

### **Mechanical Time Recorders**

Eliminate paperwork and the time-consuming guesswork that comes with handwritten time cards. Mechanical Time Recorders allow you to place a time card into the time punch clock where the date, time, month, and year are printed. Punch clocks have been in the time clock market for a long time. They use mechanical means, such as wheels and dials, to print. They are rugged in design, which makes them suitable for offices or even the harshest industrial environments. They can be set up in minutes and offer desk or wall mount options.

### **Electronic Time Recorders**

Electronic Time Recorders are the fast and reliable way to track employee attendance by utilizing the power of electronics with the simplicity of a conventional time clock. Packed with automated features, the systems reduce the time it takes for employees to clock in and out. There is no resetting necessary for short months, leap year, or daylight savings. Some electronic time recorders use traditional time cards, where others use a keypad or magnetic strip card. Depending on the model, some digital time clocks can export data to a computer for processing.

### **Time Stamps**

For easy document tracking and time validation, time stamps can do the job. Simply insert your document for an instantaneous time-date imprint. Date and time stamps are commonly used to validate documents such as contracts, letters, reports and other documents/forms.

### **One More Thing To Consider**

Ensure that adequate training is provided to your staff. Upfront instruction for the users of the more advanced time recorders can be an important motivator for your staff to adapt to these new productivity tools.