



CyberShift Survey Explores Importance of Absence Tracking

BY CLINT HALE

When dealing with workforces of hundreds—or even thousands—proper employee time tracking is of the utmost importance. To help gauge how companies track their employees' time, including absences and FMLA compliance, CyberShift recently polled nearly 1,200 APA members to measure how they collect and monitor employee time. Of these respondents, 39.9% work at organizations employing less than 500 people, while 27.5% employ between 1,001-5,000 employees. Survey respondents work in a variety of industries, including manufacturing (16.7%), health care (10.5%), and banking/finance (7.5%).

Regarding employee time reporting, 38% said all their employees are required to report time each pay period, while 35% of respondents placed that figure between 51-75%. Meanwhile, 14% of respondents said 26-50% of their employees must report pay each period. About 7.1% of respondents placed that figure at closer to 10-25%, while 5.9% said less than 10% of their employees are required to report time each pay period.

TRACKING METHODS

The most widespread method of employee time reporting, according to the survey, was a web-based solution, with 35.1% of respondents indicating it as their most prevalent mode. Others with sizable percentages of "top method" votes were time clocks (32%) and manual/spreadsheets (25.2%). Time reporting methods listed as "second most prevalent" forms were manual/spreadsheets (25.4%) and exception-time only (sick, vacation, etc.), which garnered 30% of the second-most prevalent responses.

TRACKING EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

CyberShift also sought to uncover how employers monitor and track employee absences, both scheduled and unscheduled. According to respondents, most (62%) do so via a web- or PC-

based solution, while others (37.5%) use manual/spreadsheets. The responsibility for handling those spreadsheets is almost evenly split between payroll (56.2%) and managers (43.8%). The web/PC-based solutions, meanwhile, are predominantly part of respondents' commercially available time and attendance software (73.4%).

Regarding a self-service capability that allows employees to request vacation, time off, etc., 43.2% of respondents do not have such a solution in place, while 42.3% do and it is a web-based solution. Another 11.1% do not currently have a self-service solution in place, but plan to add it in the future.

On the topic of unauthorized/unapproved absences, 53.2% of respondents' organizations track these via managerial discretion, while another 24.5% do so via monitoring unpaid time. Nearly 76% of respondents estimated that of their organizations' absences, up to 10% were unauthorized. Meanwhile, 19.5% of those surveyed said 11-20% of their absences were unauthorized. A majority of respondents (73.1%) said 0-5% of their organizations' payroll costs could be attributed to

unauthorized absences, while another 17.2% placed that figure at 6-10%.

Authorized absences, according to survey respondents, account for a much higher percentage of payroll-related costs than unauthorized absences. For instance, 20.4% of respondents listed sick time as accountable for more than 25% of all payroll costs, while 58.3% of respondents say that vacation time accounts for more than 25% of payroll costs. Other authorized absences contributing to various ranges of payroll-related costs included disability, sabbaticals, and maternity/paternity leave.

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