Selecting the Right Time and Attendance Software:

A Buyer's Guide
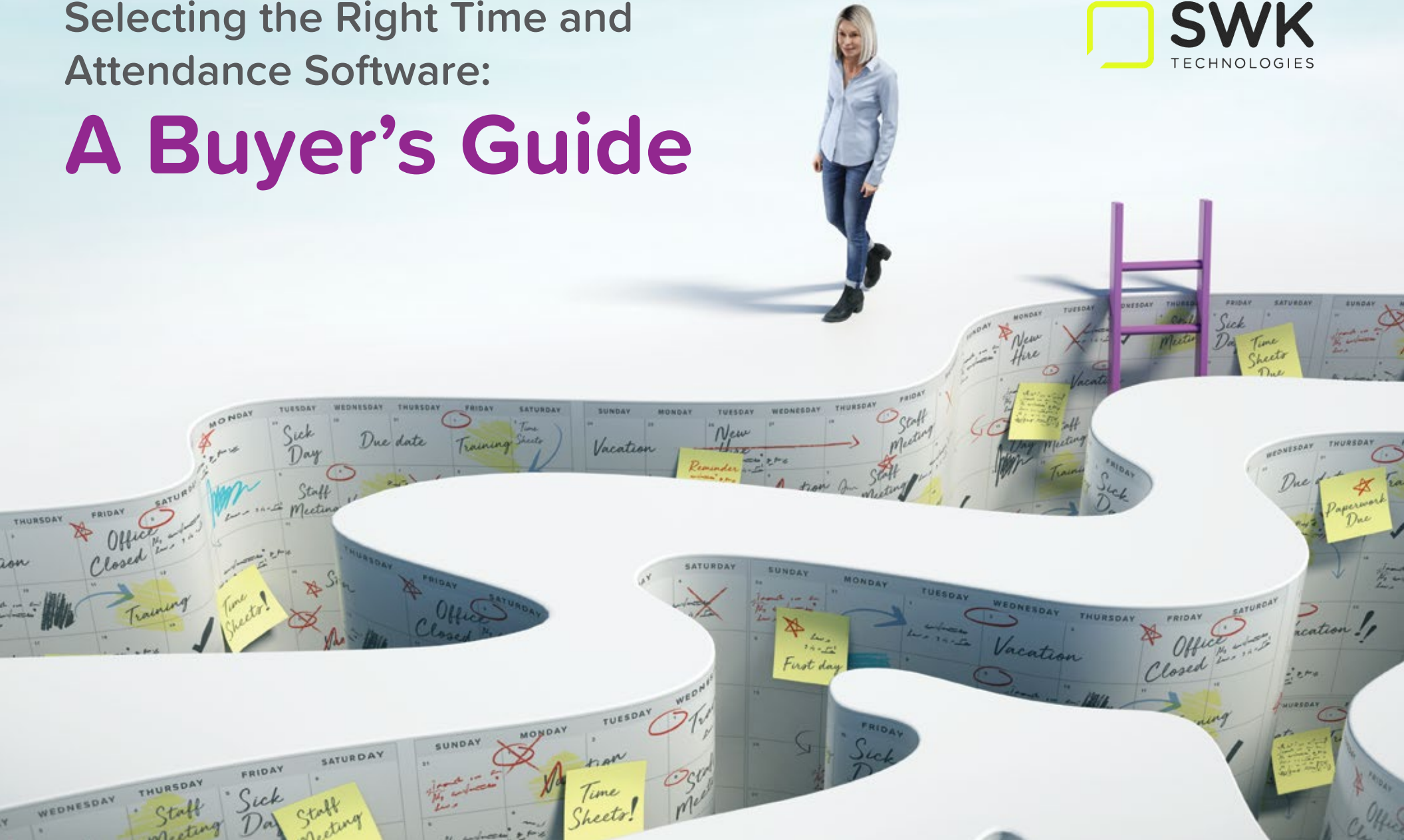
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Organize. Humanize. Maximize.

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Table of Contents

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1. Introduction

You don't get up and go to work every day hoping to spend long hours tracking down paperwork and entering data. You're in the business of workforce management. You're energized when you can maximize the potential of people and the companies they work for. So when it comes to managing the time and attendance of those who power your organization, why is "good enough" still good enough?

When it comes down to it, relying on inefficient, manual processes and outdated workforce management systems:

- Puts you at risk for compliance issues

- Negatively impacts employee engagement

- Costs your company money in both time and dollars

    ✓ Time: The company wastes money when the duration of processing payroll is multiple hours or multiple days; the length of time to complete simple tasks is daunting when manual.

    ✓ Dollars: The company ends up paying people for hours they didn't work, paying out unauthorized overtime, etc.

2–3.5% of total gross payroll is lost if using a manual system

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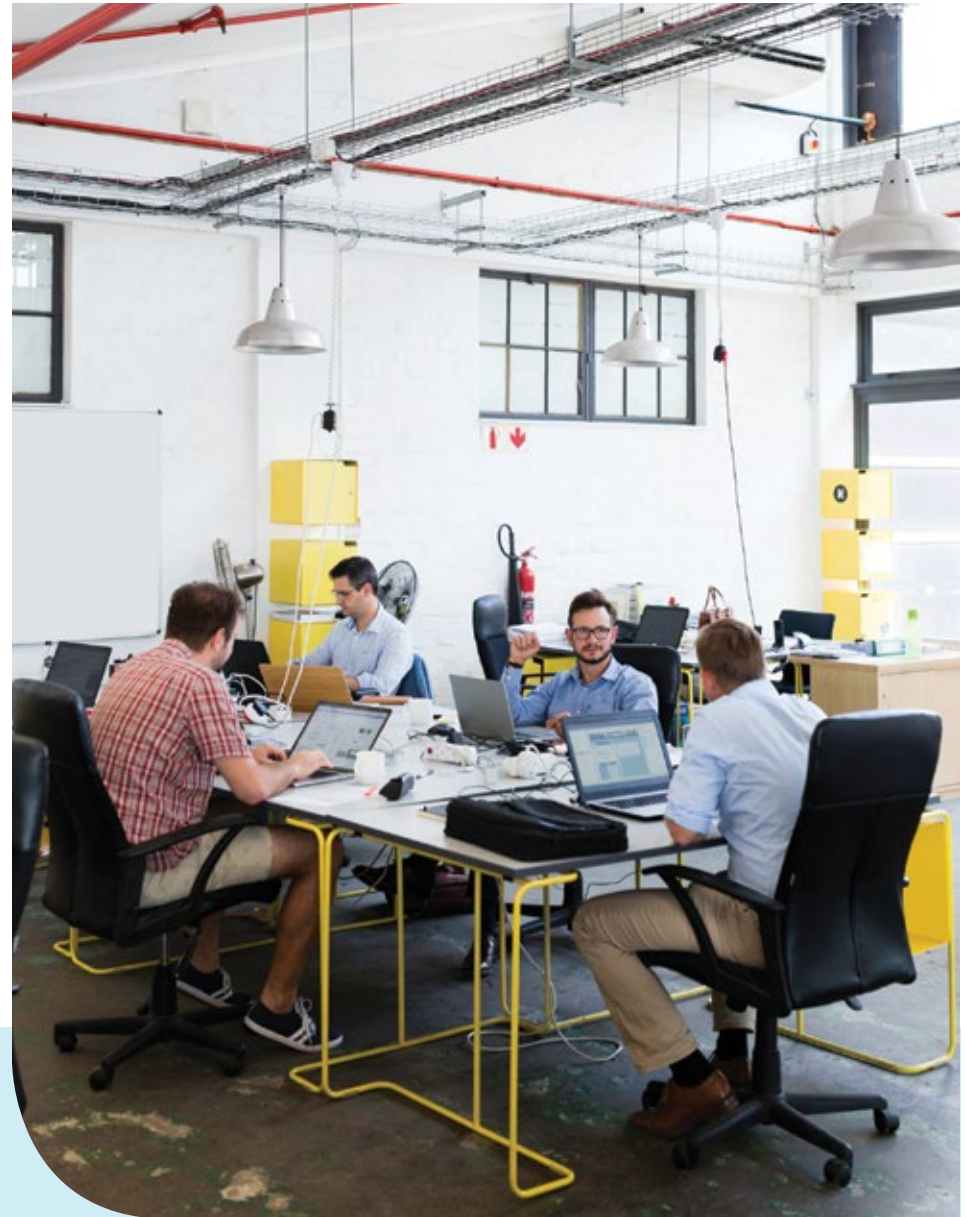
Inefficient processes lead to high administrative costs, employee frustration and costly errors as a result of duplicate data entry and calculation errors. Unacceptable payroll error rates and wasted hours are creating a leaky bottom line, and it's up to you to stem the flow.

36.8% of employees believe their company's technology is outdated

Subjective pay policies can lead to workforce management compliance issues, a major liability for companies in today's complex landscape of constantly changing regulations. Manual processes lead to pay policy discrepancies. Furthermore, intricate pay rules can be difficult to understand, especially when there is a different interpretation from department to department and communication fails between teams.

About 33% of employers make payroll errors costing them billions of dollars annually in penalties

Maybe you've implemented some resource management software, but are cobbling a solution together using a variety of systems, creating a hassle for you and your employees, as well as creating more down time. This means less production, missed goals and missed deadlines. Collating data from multiple sources takes more work to synthesize and digest, or worse, isn't useful. Outdated systems make it easy for employees to "hack" the system with buddy punching and timecard falsification.

Buddy punching costs U.S. employers more than $373 million every year

It's time to retire old, outdated workforce management processes and systems that are holding your company, and people, back.

Workers spend an average of 520 hours a year on repetitive services and tasks that could be easily automated

If you're ready to realize what's possible, this workforce management software guide is for you. From the latest features in time and attendance to tips for ensuring seamless adoption throughout your organization, we'll help you see the vision of what's possible with a new solution that empowers you and your people. Let's get started!

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2. What You're Looking For

An automated workforce management system that makes your job easier while allowing you to focus on making the biggest impact on your company is out there! The key is finding the right one that meets your needs. And that shouldn't be too much to ask, right? We don't think so either. Chances are you're looking for a software solution that checks some, if not all, of these boxes:

Affordability

You don't want to break the bank on a time and attendance tool, but you want it to have all the useful features your employees are looking for while being easy to use. You don't want a never-ending goose chase, but you're not going to sign on the dotted line without shopping around a bit. If you understand the needs of your organization and the key features required in a workforce management software, you can feel confident that you're getting the best fit for your budget and people.

Visibility and Control

Finding the right workforce management software can be a bit of a puzzle, but it shouldn't be puzzling. You're looking for total integration, so you can find everything you need and perform all the critical tasks, from time-off approval to labor costing and monthly reports, in one place. You're not looking for anything but what you need, so a tool must be customizable to your company's unique workflow.

Manageable to Learn and Easy to Use

Maybe you enjoy micromanaging and babysitting. If so, move along to the next section. But if that doesn't describe your ideal 9-to-5, then you're one of the many who demands a software that offers effective time and attendance management while also empowering your employees to act for themselves. Actionable notifications augment ease of use to ensure company-wide adoption.

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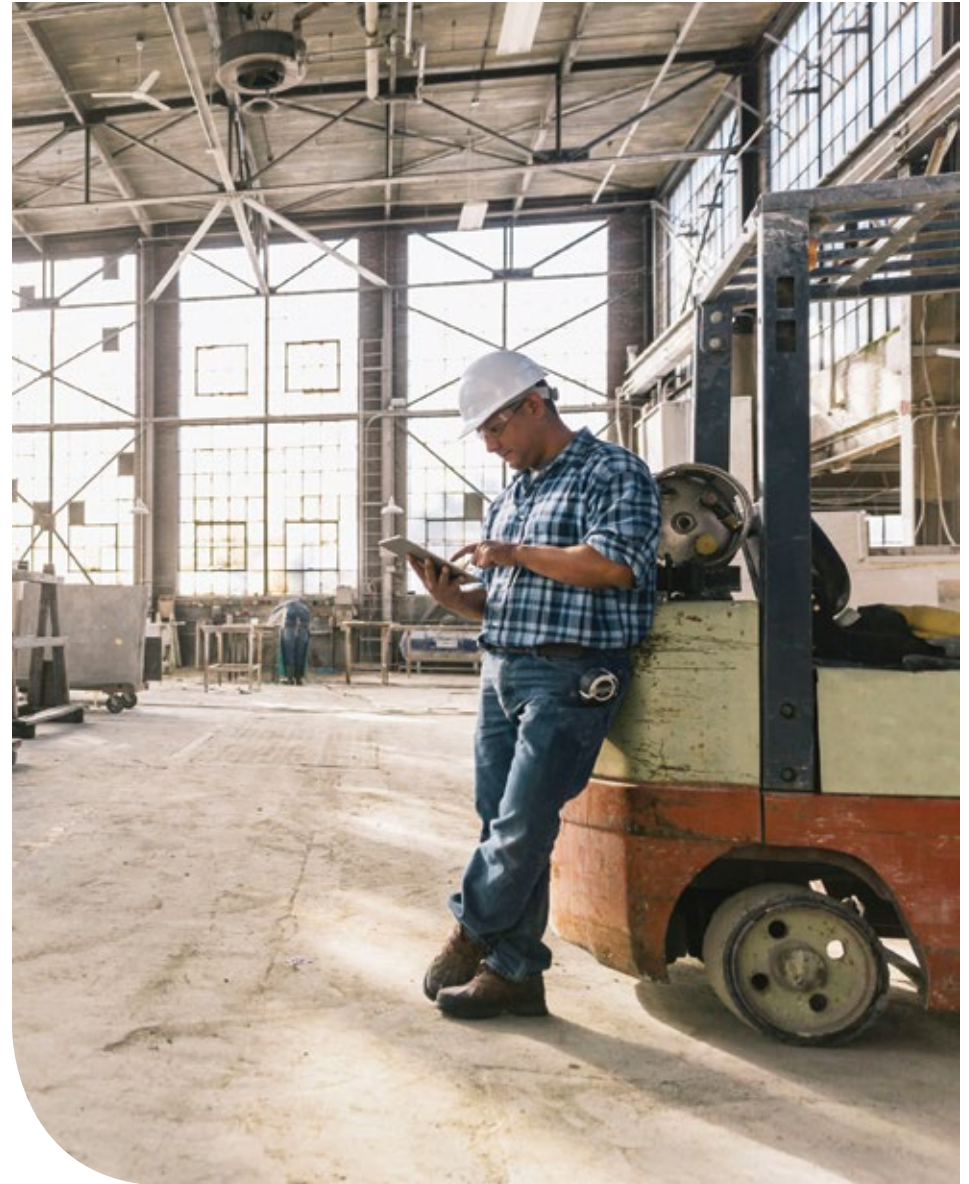
Access to More Accurate and Meaningful Real-Time Data

When your business is growing or every dollar is being scrutinized, it's key to have accurate payroll software that minimizes errors and maintains compliance, so you can be more accurate and efficient. Also important? A helping hand in holding staff accountable for accurate timekeeping, including overtime hours.

Security

As human resource management processes become more automated, more is happening in the cloud. This has you worried about how secure your employee's data really is. You need a software with lock-tight privacy control to reduce odds of data breaches.

Jurisdiction Compliance Automation

You're driving a delicate balance between improving workforce productivity and keeping employees engaged while also staying compliant with a world of ever-changing rules and regulations. Your time and attendance software should serve as your chief compliance officer, especially with complicated issues like workplace or patient safety. Complying to municipal, state and federal rules shouldn't keep you up at night!

Operating in different cities, let alone a range of states, brings varying rules regarding areas such as breaks, overtime and incentive pay. Upholding federal rules may be easier to keep track of if you have multiple offices across the country, but complying means staying up to date on changes.

High Level of Client Service

Top-notch client service is a must throughout the entire client lifecycle, including a team of knowledgeable experts from sales all the way through the support team. You want a sales person who doesn't just walk the walk. They need to know the workforce management software inside and out and be able to prove that the tool will work for your company. After you've signed on the dotted line,

you want to feel supported with an onboarding team that makes training and transition feel like a breeze. Once the ship has left the dock, you want to feel confident knowing there's a team of dedicated associates that have your back come rain or shine.

3. Life With a Modern Workforce Management System

Still not sure if making the transition to a more up-to-date time and attendance software is the right move for you? Just imagine what your day would be like if you could focus more on the big picture and less on the everyday minutiae.

	Outdated Software	Modern Solution
Hours	Uncertainty over hours employees have worked; downtime as a result of system updates	Accurate calculations of hours worked; eliminate unauthorized overtime
Scheduling	Reduced visibility into comprehensive schedule increases risk for over- or understaffing.	Right number of people for each shift; also ensures you have certified and qualified people for each shift
Payroll	Frequent payroll errors due to manual systems and inaccurate formulas	Fewer payroll errors thanks to automated systems
Time Fraud	Higher likelihood of time fraud	Fewer system gaming incidents
Reporting	Time-consuming reporting using multiple sources of information	Streamlined reporting and delivery of real-time data
Compliance	Unintentional labor law violations	Automatic compliance with the latest rule and regulation changes
Autonomy	Manual entry and approval needed for all requests off, etc.	Leave management
Software Upgrades	Laborious updates leading to inaccurate data and calculations	Seamless, ongoing software upgrades reflecting the latest compliance updates
User Experience	Clunky functionality minimizes adoption and drives costly shortcuts	Intuitive features make it easy to navigate tools quickly
Compatibility	Systems can't "talk" to one another, leading to time-consuming workflow and errors	Plug into other software and tools seamlessly

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4. Your Workforce Management Roadmap

Congratulations! You've decided to make the leap to an updated workforce management system. Here you'll find your roadmap from pre-plan to implementation and beyond, so you can move forward confidently.

Build a Team

Bring stakeholders along for the entire ride to save yourself headaches along the way. Early buy in and participation throughout makes decision-making and implementation go smoothly, so your project will be a success. Set up an internal dream team to:

- Evaluate existing processes
- Find pain points that need solutions
- Establish goals for a new service
- Evaluate available tools
- Get buy-in from organization
- Train appropriate team members
- Leverage real-time reporting

Assembling the Right Squad

1. **Operations:**
   Often forgotten in the research process, their early involvement ensures that end users adopt the new tool successfully

2. **IT:**
   By involving IT in your search, they can help anticipate and avoid key implementation challenges

3. **Payroll:**
   Often the researcher but not the decision-maker, payroll will be able to identify gaps and ask clarifying questions to find the best solution for your company

4. **HR:**
   Will be able to identify issues with legacy system integration and confirm compliance requirements

5. **CFO:**
   Including the CFO throughout the process means they'll be able to move forward with confidence, making sure their questions are answered and concerns squelched along the way

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Paint a Picture for Success

To best set your organization up for success, you need a clear idea of what the final result looks like. Address and define the goals of your teams, along with the goals of your organization. Do you seek improved compliance? Reduced labor costs? Higher efficiency?

Then, review current timekeeping and pay policies to define what's working and what's not, relative to achieving your goals.

Next, prioritize the features you need in a solution. With so many options and features, we've narrowed it down to a list of some key capabilities of today's top automated time and attendance software:

✓ **Provides Cost Savings**

You should be able to measure both direct and indirect savings with the right workforce management tool. Directly, fewer errors, more efficient processes, less inaccurate data entry and better scheduling insight mean each automated moment is calculated and accounted for. Indirectly, automation means the payroll staff can focus less on data entry, scheduling and compliance and more on higher-value tasks that will advance the company and its people.

✓ **Seamlessly Integrated**

You need a holistic view of the organization to have a meaningful impact on the business. Take stock of all existing systems, including internal solutions, business partners or third-party services. Identify what needs to integrate with a new automated workforce management software.

> **"When we went with Ascentis, it wasn't a question, because we wanted that full integration."**
>
> Amy Ulrich
> Benefits Specialist, LaForce, Inc.

✓ **Scalable**

Not every company has 100+ employees or a single location. So why get a workforce management system that's built for someone else's business? What you need is fully customizable, meaning you get all the bells and whistles that matter to you — and nothing else.

> **"One of the reasons we went with Ascentis is we can make it our own. We've done a few things in relation to safety. We've brought incident reporting into the system. I've created custom tabs that weigh different tracking for different safety programs we have."**
>
> Ashley Jernigan
> Human Resources Manager, Cogent, Inc.

✓ **Easy to Learn and Train**

Keep the end user in mind by selecting an easy-to-learn tool that will keep them engaged throughout the training process. Also consider that at some point you, or others on your team, will be the ones doing the training of new employees.

> **"The implementation team is excellent. They really walked us through every step of the way. You don't feel like you're just left floundering. They really do want to make sure that you succeed. From the tax person to the 401(k) person to HR, they really want you to succeed and they want to work with you and your deadlines."**
>
> Debbie Ballard
> Controller, Crews & Associates

✓ **Easy to Implement**

A new workforce management software can easily upset work flow, and you don't have time for that. Get a clear idea of the implementation process and timeline for a new tool. Shorter doesn't always mean better.

✓ **Ability to Empower Employees**

What functions should employees be able to perform with a timekeeping and attendance software? Should they be able to request time off? Look at up-to-date vacation availability? Keep in mind that the more empowered they are, the less you have to enter manually.

✓ **Variety of Data Collection Options**

Employees can interact with the system with robust features like wall-mounted time clocks, biometrics, PIN entry, card swipe, computers and mobile. GPS tracking and geofencing can increase authentication.

✓ **Worthwhile Analytics**

Numbers without meaning are just numbers. You need data that you can understand and use to positively impact business. Understand what type of reporting is possible and how easy it is to pull out key insights to drive business decisions with real-time access to data.

✓ Automatic Policy Compliance

Staying up-to-date on policies could be a position in and of itself, so a workforce management software that keeps track of those changes for you is indispensable. Gain understanding of a tool's capabilities for staying compliant, so you can stay notified of compliance changes.

> **"With Ascentis, I don't really have any worries about compliance ... I'm confident that Ascentis has everything up-to-date that we need."**
>
> **Nicole Shanenko**
> Senior HR Generalist, Forum Communications

✓ High Level of Customer Service

Questions don't stop after you choose and implement a workforce management tool, and no software is perfect all the time, so a top-notch customer service team that has your back is key to ongoing success. Learn what tools and resources will be available to you before, during and after implementation.

> **"There is constant support. The online videos, training and tutorials, all just a phone call away, and for every product that is offered."**
>
> **Tiffany Lewis**
> HR Manager, Mountain Valley Express

> **"It's really critical — whatever system you have — to be able to reach out to someone and they can help you resolve it or customize it to the needs of your organization. Ascentis shines when it comes to that type of service."**
>
> **Dr. Sherrie Artman**
> VP of Human Resources
> CenterPoint Behavioral Health Systems

> **"Other software companies tend to be like, well, in order to do that we're going to have to charge you this. None of that happens with Ascentis. You call, you get your support person or they transfer you to whoever can help you and get your issues resolved."**
>
> **Community Credit Union of FL**

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Prioritize Your Software Features

Use the checklist to the right to determine and document which features your organization must have versus features that are nice to have in a time and attendance software.

	Must-Have	Nice-to-Have
Affordable	☐	☐
Fully integrated	☐	☐
Customizable	☐	☐
Easy to implement	☐	☐
Easy to learn/train	☐	☐
Ability to empower employees	☐	☐
Type of data provided/ in what way	☐	☐
Automatic policy compliance	☐	☐
High level of customer service	☐	☐

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Begin Vendor Research

Find a vendor that will work closely with you through implementation of your workforce management system, guiding you along each step of the way.

Questions to ask:

☐ **How do you fix my top five to 10 critical workforce management issues?**

Get a clear picture of how a new partner would address the top issues you're dealing with today.

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☐ **What is the implementation process?**

Get a soup-to-nuts look at what you can expect in terms of possible changes to your current workflow.

Use your top pain points as focus areas for a demonstration.

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☐ **Is this configurable with current systems?**

Some processes and systems aren't broken, so there's no need to fix them. But you need to make sure the tool you select can communicate easily with them.

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☐ **Will we have a dedicated account manager?**

Having one person you can reach out to when an issue arises helps you feel supported.

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☐ **Can I easily run reports?**

If you have a new software, you want to make sure you know how to use it. Ensure you feel empowered by the reporting capabilities.

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☐ **What is the value compared to the investment?**

When every dollar counts, you need to be confident that the ROI will fit the costs.

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☐ **How do I ensure implementation is successful?**

Establish what "done" looks like for this project, so expectations are clear.

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☐ **How do I show the value of a new tool to stakeholders?**

You'll need buy-in to move forward with a new tool, so arm yourself with proof points for key stakeholders who will make the final call.

_____

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> **"I know with Ascentis I don't have to worry that there's something I haven't completed because I get alerts that remind me. And I can run very easy reports."**
> **Juliette Burns**
> **General Counsel, Smartrise Engineering**

☐ **How will this solution benefit our business?**

The flashiest tool isn't always the most effective. Tie capabilities and results back to solving critical issues for the business.

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☐ **When should I begin implementation to reach a specific go-live?**

Work backward from a go-live date to make sure there's enough time to tackle each of the steps in the process.

_____

_____

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> **"Ascentis just seemed like the right fit. They were the perfect size for us. We didn't seem to be too big for them or too small for them. And the price was right. I feel like it's a big family. Everybody knows each other. It's amazing how personable and friendly and knowledgeable everybody is."**
> **Beth Miller**
> **Director of Human Resources**
> **Carriage Healthcare Companies**

Implementation

A thorough yet easy to follow implementation process will ease anxiety and increase confidence in a smooth transition throughout your organization. You and your vendor partner should outline clear expectations with key milestones in advance of beginning the project.

Step 1: Assess

In this initial phase, teams will be established and the scope of the project defined. Internal and vendor kickoff meetings ensure everyone is on the same page.

Selling teams on making the transition to a new way of doing things can be tricky and a little intimidating. Each team will have its own set of obstacles. Identify those along with your opportunity to show them how the software can make their job easier before setting up an introductory meeting.

Example (See addendum for additional positions.)

Operations	
Their Challenge	Ensure software addresses business critical issues and anything implemented is user-friendly and easy to use. Getting internal buy-in across departments is critical.
Your Opportunity	Show them how the product can be easily implemented without disruption to their workflow and how it supports core business needs.
Next Steps	Schedule a meeting to walk through the features of the product and collect their wish-fors from an end-user perspective.

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Step 2: Plan

During planning, a gap analysis should be completed to unveil the right workforce management configuration for your organization. Define what a "crawl, walk, run" approach looks like for your organization. It may not mean launching everything on day one. At Ascentis, we recommend starting with basic functions and expanding as comfort and adoption grow.

Step 3: Design and Build

This is when your workforce management software partner will get into the nitty gritty, determining how data should be collected, what jobs data should perform, and configuring system and pay rules, all based on your organization's needs.

Step 4: Test

It's OK to start getting excited during testing. If you've been slogging along with an outdated process, this development could be years in the making. But put on your critical thinking cap as you test and evaluate the software. Identify issues and take note of any areas that may require additional testing. As a best practice, we recommend testing for a minimum of two full pay periods.

Step 5: Launch

As the time comes to migrate the system from staging to live, determine what "launch" looks like in your organization — do you want to introduce the tool to everyone or start with a smaller beta test? Get all users trained on the new system, and begin the process of sunsetting your legacy system.

Step 6: Ongoing Support

A communicative software vendor is worth its weight in gold. In this phase, it should be arming you with documentation and providing ongoing support, should any questions arise.

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Implementation Process

| Assess	Plan	Design & Build	Test	Deploy	Support
• Project Teams Identified • Initial Scope Development • Draft Detailed Work Plan • Project Kickoff Meeting • Project Control Tools Established • Steering Committee/ Team Review	• Functional Gap Analysis • Application and Technical Design Documentation • Draft Detailed Work Plan • Update Detailed Work Plan • Infrastructure Procurement Prototype/ Baseline Install • Training Requirements	• Data Mapping • Application Setup • Workflow Design • Data Collection Requirements • Configure System and Pay Rules • Configure User Access • Interface Requirements	• Unit Testing • User Acceptance Testing (UAT) • Pilot/Parallel Pay Period Testing • Issue Remediation/ Configuration Updates • End User Communication and Training • Application Staging	• System Migration From Staging • Data Collection Device Deployment • Ongoing User Training • Proactive Issue Support • Legacy System Decommission • Support Process Documentation	• Support Documentation Updates • Client Deliverables Workbook • Transition Checklist Completed • Management Acceptance • Transition to Ongoing Support Model

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5. About Ascentis

Ascentis ignites your capacity to maximize your organization's potential. With a suite of customizable workforce management solutions with flexible capabilities that allow you to integrate with existing systems, we're an invested partner in getting the to-do done. Start with what you need and expand as your needs grow and your confidence in the tool increases. One point of data entry means employee information is accurate, up-to-date and reportable, so you can get back to the bigger picture. Our unsurpassed service puts you first, so nothing stands in the way of getting things done the way you want them done.

Contact us today to discover how our automated time management solutions can help you maximize your workforce.

info@ascentis.com
1.800.229.2713

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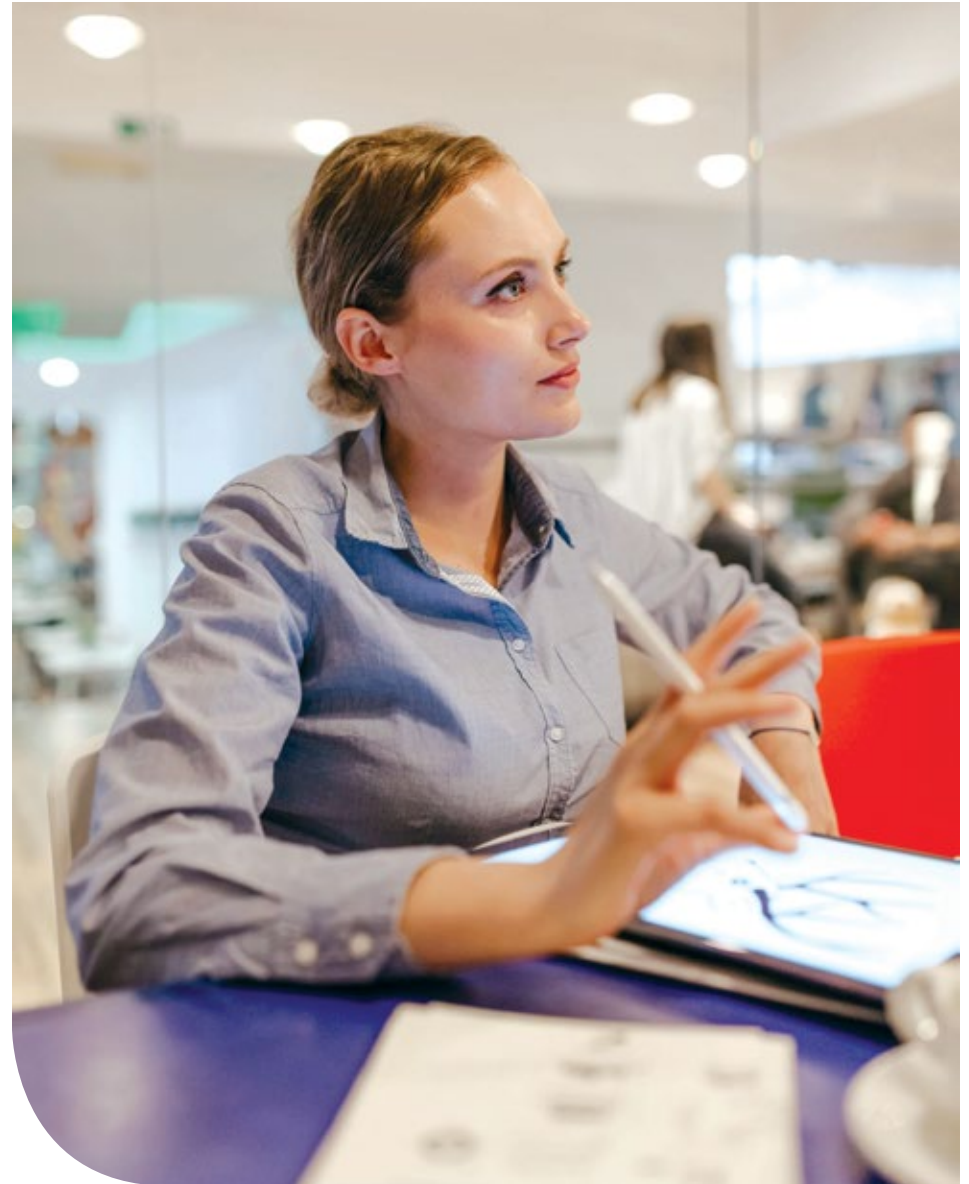
Addendum

Gaining the support of stakeholders across your organization is key to success. While titles and responsibilities may shift based on your company, the following can help you involve the right people at the right time as you navigate your time and attendance solution.

Operations	
Their Challenge	Ensure software addresses business critical issues and anything implemented is user-friendly and easy to use. Getting internal buy-in across departments is critical.
Your Opportunity	Show them how the product can be easily implemented without disruption to their workflow.
Next Steps	Schedule a meeting to walk through the features of the product and collect their wish-fors from an end-user perspective.

Payroll	
Their Challenge	Often triggering the search for time and attendance software, they will be a champion in moving toward a solution and have great insight into end user habits and preferences. Their main challenge during implementation is avoiding a disruption in payroll.
Your Opportunity	Show them how easy it is to create easy-to-understand reports with meaningful, actionable data and automatic policy updates that ensure compliance.
Next Steps	Schedule a meeting to walk through the features of the product and collect their wish-fors from a reporting and compliance perspective.

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Stakeholder Grid, continued

Fellow HR Colleagues	
Their Challenge	The changing of HR policies can be cumbersome and complicated, making these make-or-break influencers hesitant to change tools, especially if it doesn't work with other legacy systems or isn't clear on compliance.
Your Opportunity	Show them a clear benefit of increased accuracy and efficiency and let them see how simple implementation can be.
Next Steps	Schedule a meeting to walk through the features of the product and collect their wish-fors from a compliance, implementation and training perspective.

CFO	
Their Challenge	The decision-maker who owns the budget and cares about cost is also concerned about mitigating risk of non-compliance or fraud but also wants to increase operational efficiency.
Your Opportunity	Show them a clear benefit of increased accuracy and efficiency and let them see how simple implementation can be.
Next Steps	Prove ROI for the business through increased accuracy and efficiency, and how the tool decreases risk by automating compliance.

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Stakeholder Grid, continued

IT	
Their Challenge	A highly knowledgeable influencer who can make implementation run smoothly, they also need to be in the know with integrations and ongoing maintenance.
Your Opportunity	Show them the clear implementation plan and outline expectations and how this change benefits the business.
Next Steps	Schedule a meeting to walk through the features of the product and collect their wish-fors from an implementation, integration and maintenance perspective.

Working closely with all these stakeholders is key to the success of your implementation, so involving them from the very beginning and through the entire process is crucial.

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