

## Minimising your Festive Frenzy with an effective Time Management System

With the festive season almost upon us, many organisations are beginning to feel the effects of increased pressure and activity. In addition, resourcing challenges, managing multiple requests for annual leave, and allowing for public holidays and penalty rates, can all contribute to high levels of stress within your Operations and HR department!

In this article we will examine the different areas where an effective **Employee Time Management System** can help ensure that you have a hassle free run up to the holidays!

### EMPLOYEE SCHEDULING

First up, is employee scheduling and ensuring you have the staff on hand to meet customer or production demands.

An **automated time and attendance system**, with scheduling capabilities, enables you to roster staff to fixed and flexible shifts according to predefined budgets. Any subsequent roster changes will trigger a notification if the shift is in danger of exceeding budget. By looking back over previous year, you can also schedule staff numbers to mirror forecasted customer numbers over the holiday period, or 'on-the-fly' to meet emergency requirements.

A number of workforce management systems also allow you to create groups or pools of available employees to help with scheduling multiple departments or stores. Casuals or agency staff can nominate themselves as being available to work for certain times of the week, and can be rostered on by supervisors to assist with filling positions or vacant shifts. A notification is then sent direct to the employee so they are aware that they have been included in the shift.

With many organisations (particularly in Retail and Hospitality), relying on casuals to provide the extra manpower required to operate effectively over the holiday period, they will need to be closely monitored to ensure they are serving their purpose. If they are late, taking long breaks or chucking sickies, you run the risk of having to pay permanent employees overtime as they may be required to cover and work extra hours.

An automated Time and Attendance system, provides supervisors with an insight into how their casuals are performing, enabling them to address any issues before it affects your bottom line.

### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND HOLIDAY PAY RATES

In Australia, each State and Territory has slightly different arrangements for public holidays over Christmas and New Year, which can result in much confusion, particularly

for companies with numerous sites across the nation. As a result, **Fair Work Australia (FWA)** have put together a list of the public holidays for each specific State and Territory for the 2011/12 holiday Christmas period – **view list here**.

So now you know the public holiday dates what pay are your staff entitled to?

According to FWA, if a full-time or part-time employee's ordinary hours of work fall on a public holiday, and the employee does not work on the day, the employee is entitled to their base rate of pay for their usual hours of work on the day.

If the employee does not usually work on the public holiday, the employee is not entitled to payment.

If the request is reasonable, an employer may ask their employees to work on a public holiday. If the employee is required to work on a public holiday, their entitlement to penalty rates is determined by their modern award, industrial agreement or contract of employment.

In addition to the specified national public holidays, State and Territory governments can also specify other public holidays. These can apply throughout the State or Territory, or only in a specific region e.g. Melbourne Cup Day.

A State or Territory government can also substitute another day for the public holiday. For example if a public holiday falls on a weekend, a State or Territory government may either declare a 'substitute day' for the public holiday, or declare an 'additional day' to the public holiday.

Regardless of the State or Territory you operate in, **MitreFinch's Time Management System (TMS)** takes the stress out of employee allowances and entitlement calculations via an in-built, fully customisable **Award Interpreter**.

Easily calculate base and overtime pay, weekend and public holiday penalties, as well as leave loading and shift penalties, ensuring consistent application of your business rules. A direct interface to your external payroll application further reduces payroll administration and the potential for costly payroll errors.

## EMPLOYEE SELF SERVICE

Throughout the Christmas and summer holiday season, HR departments across the country are being bombarded with various requests for time off.

How your business deals with these requests can make a big difference to your bottom line - as well as your HR team's wellbeing!

An automated Time and Attendance System, with **Employee Self Service functionality**, empowers your staff to manage their own time and attendance in a controlled, accessible and efficient way.

Employees can also view their accrued leave, entitlements, and request updates to their personal records without having to bother the HR department.

A web-based interface could be customised to suit the needs of your complete workforce, handling remote clocking in from desktop PCs, laptops and the latest smart phones. This would allow staff to clock in/out and on/off tasks, appointments and projects, regardless of their physical location.

**Leave Slots** are an innovative holiday planning feature now available in the latest release of **Mitrefinch's Time Management System (TMS)**.

This new functionality enables managers and supervisors to limit how many employees can be off on a given day or time period - averting potential staffing shortfalls and ensuring you have sufficient staff on hand during times of increased demand – think December 26th for those in the hospitality and retail sector!

Employees can view available Leave Slots online and they will be unable to request leave once the limit has been reached – hence HR won't need to deal with multiple requests from staff on what days are available etc...

In a nut (cracker) shell, **Employee Self Service** is ultimately designed to make your business more profitable and your HR team more efficient – now isn't that something we'd all like to put on our Christmas Wishlist!

## MORE INFORMATION

If you'd like to find out more about how an automated Time and Attendance system can help contain your Festive stress levels contact **Mitrefinch Employee Management** today on 1300 884 831 (Australia) or 09 363 9557 (NZ).

Our Free Guide to Choosing a Time and Attendance system is also available to download online – **click here**.