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**Deploying ESS:
Faster, Better, Stronger**

A Guest Series Presented By Accu-Time Systems, Inc.

WORKFORCE AS AN ASSET

by Peter DiMaria, Accu-Time Systems, Inc.

In this final part of my four-part series I look at the convergence that is occurring in the workforce management (WFM) industry. In parts one through three I wrote about employee self-service (ESS) and how both employers and employees will benefit from instituting ESS in both large and medium sized enterprises. The world has been embracing ESS at an ever-increasing rate. But a new trend has been emerging. There is now a convergence of ESS, time and attendance, absence management, recruitment and on-boarding, and talent management.

Today's HR manager is a multi-faceted leader with a seat at the executive table. Companies have recognized that its people are also assets, just like machinery, accounts receivables, inventory, and intellectual property. Like any other asset, human capital requires optimization and close management. The various parts of human resource management like payroll, recruiting, hiring, training, benefits, and scheduling have historically been handled discretely, in a disconnected manner. HR managers and WFM software companies have discovered that in order to maximize the value of each employee there needs to be a holistic way of monitoring and managing their time, activities, and participation in the organizations functions. With this recognition comes convergence.

The ultimate goal of an executive level HR manager is to ensure that their organization has the right people in the right places doing the right things at the right time so that they contribute maximum value to the company. The execution of the tasks required to meet that goal is where complexity lies. Although employees are an asset they must be managed quite differently than non-human capital. Machines, products, and inventory don't call in sick. They don't require dental insurance and 401ks. They don't have the ability to learn and improve. They don't decide to quit. They don't ask for raises. They don't work from home some days and from the office on other days. They don't have personal problems that affect their performance. They also don't have the ability to rise through an organization to leadership roles and raise their value.

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems help managers do a magnificent job of cost accounting, processing orders, materials resource planning, job scheduling, and managing finances. But ERP systems have not adequately addressed the management of human capital. This is where WFM software companies are filling the gap. A comprehensive WFM suite allows HR managers to control and optimize the organizational life of human assets from recruitment to retirement. A WFM suite allows HR managers to have insight into and control over the proper selection of work candidates, the process of hiring them, training them, and bringing them "into the fold" of the organization, the development of their skills throughout their careers, their most efficient utilization throughout the enterprise, their morale, productivity, and how they are paid.

Just a few years ago employers had a standalone system for time and attendance, another one for

scheduling, a payroll package, a separate system for absence management, yet a different one for talent and training management, and still another one for benefits administration. Today, WFM software developers are packaging all of these functions and capabilities into integrated software suites, some of which are delivered via Software as a service (SaaS) models. To these suites they are also providing employee interfaces, allowing workers to access their own information and that of the organization through ESS modules. The more sophisticated WFM companies are also weaving in mobile access and interaction capabilities combined with a seamless connection to employees' social media activities.

If there is an upside to today's economic stasis it is the focus that has been put on workforce optimization. Companies have been doing more with fewer people. This fact has driven demand for WFM tools and a cultural shift toward the recognition that people are often a company's greatest expenditure and its most valuable profit-producing asset.

This recognition has been fostered through the availability of analytics. As WFM suites have become more sophisticated more metrics have become available. HR management has typically been considered a role requiring only "soft" skills. Empathy, emotional quotient, listening, and psychology skills have been prized. HR managers have combined those abilities with an understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, benefits administration, and empowerment initiatives. Today's HR managers, though, must combine those important skills with those of an accountant, statistician, and yield analyst. With

a seat at the executive table saying "there has been an improvement in employee productivity" is not adequate. CEOs are demanding to know how much more productive they are, how much morale has improved, how much the skill set has increased, and how much more qualified their new hires have been.

Although ERP systems have not adequately addressed human capital management that situation is also changing. Oracle is unveiling its Fusion HCM product that is a convergence of time & attendance, scheduling, knowledge base, payroll, benefits, talent management, and workforce optimization, along with analytics.

Oracle recognizes that convergence is happening, and so do the major WFM companies. Comprehensive WFM suites will make it easier for companies to offer employee self service functionality to their workers because HR managers' understanding of their employees' wants and needs will be broader and deeper. As I've demonstrated in parts one through three of this four part series, ESS offers significant financial and morale benefits to both employers and employees. Convergence brings ESS together with other HR and enterprise management functions in a tool that helps organizations manage people holistically.

Companies like Time & Technology, Ceridian, Workforce Software, Empower, Cybershift, Red Prairie, and several others have years of experience in creating and deploying ESS solutions around the world that boost employee morale and engagement. These companies are also offering comprehensive WFM suites that are changing the way HR professionals do business in ways that are just being revealed.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter DiMaria is founder, president, and chief executive officer of Accu-Time Systems Inc., a leader in the design and manufacture of workforce management terminals for time and attendance and employee self service (ESS.)

DiMaria is a recognized industry veteran with 30 years' experience in automatic identification (ID.) From bar codes to biometrics, DiMaria holds numerous international patents for his many technical contributions to the industry. DiMaria holds a B.S. in Mathematics and a Masters in Business Administration.