



Essential Guide:

Choosing a Time and Attendance System

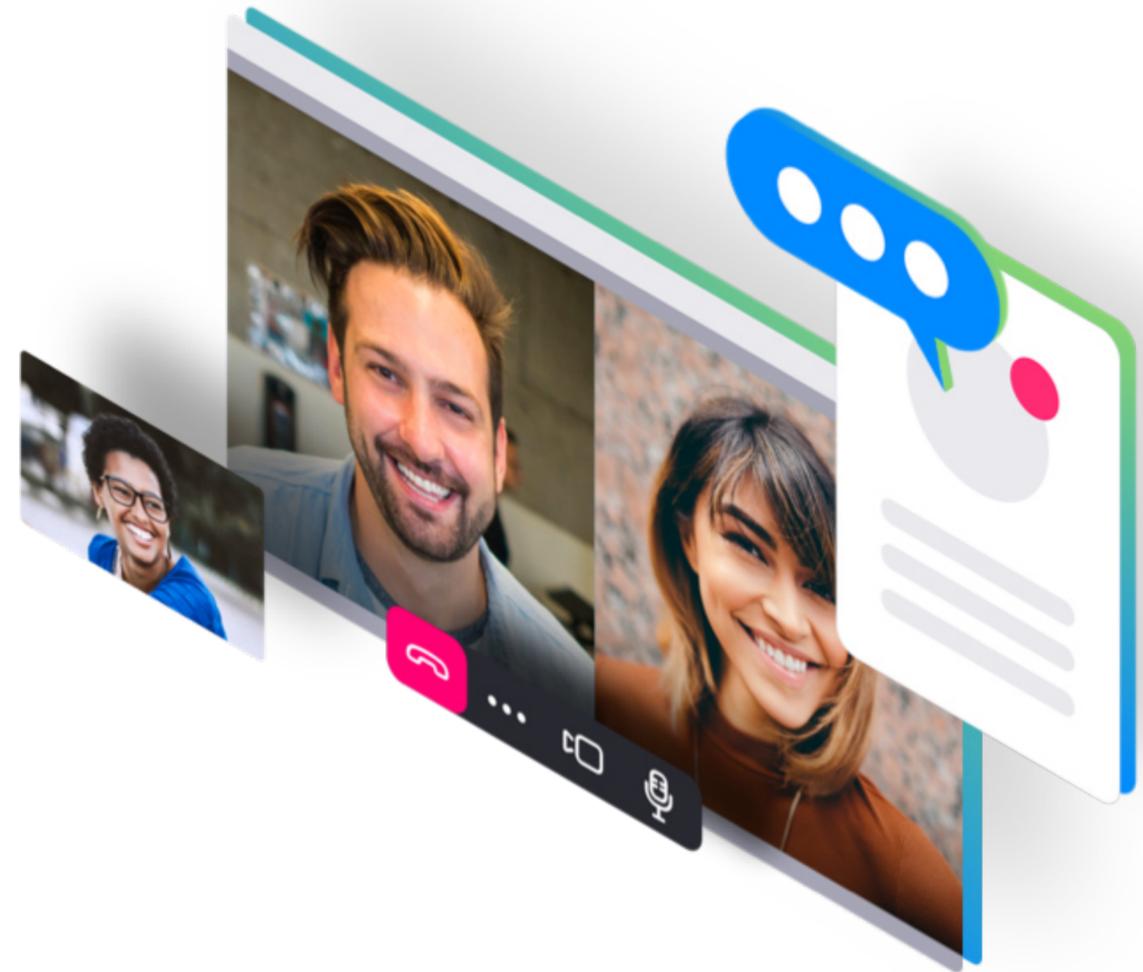
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01 | How this guide will help you

Time and attendance. It's not the sexiest subject in the world, but cracking this very tough nut can make a world of difference to your business, especially your profitability and productivity.

The COVID-19 crisis has forced businesses to operate in new ways, the requirement to have a range of cloud-based technology available to remote workers has never been greater and the need to understand who is working when is critical to ensure business as usual.



Time and Attendance software provides you with an instant snapshot of who clocked in and at what time, meaning there are no more lost hours due to late starting times and no more confusion over hours worked as everything is recorded in one secure place.

No more double-booked annual leave. Time and Attendance software can be the key to all this. Everything running just as it should - now, doesn't that sound nice?

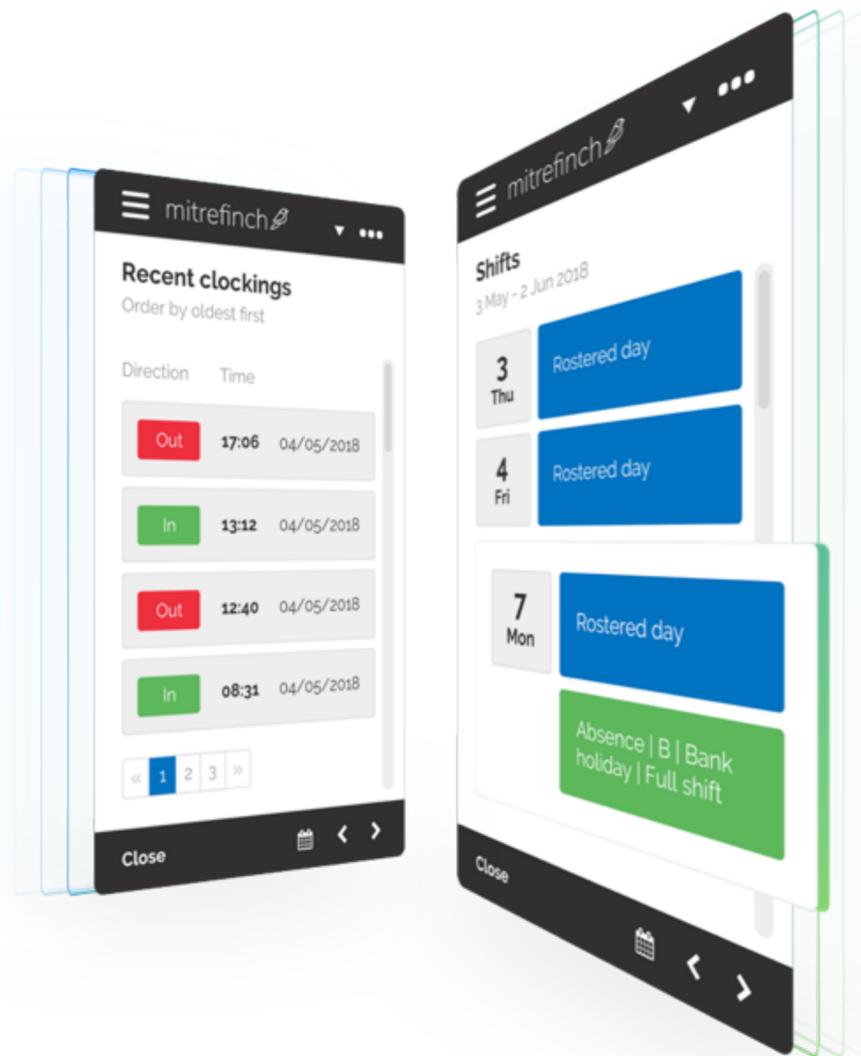
Of course, not all time and attendance systems are the same. And with different types of suppliers and varying requirements, selecting the right system can be a daunting task.

But it doesn't have to be! This guide gives you all the information you need to tackle your time and attendance needs straight on, whether you're:

- 1 Managing it in house and making a simpler solution
- 2 Looking to upgrade to the next level of detail
- 3 Simply wondering whether you're making the most out of the system you already have



02 | Why do you need a time and attendance solution



Saving time, reducing payroll errors and improving workforce productivity. Sounds like a HR dream. The right time and attendance system can build employee trust, drive value within your organisation, and help you navigate these challenging times. But the wrong system can have the opposite effect.

In simple terms, a time and attendance system is used to track working hours.

Employees can clock in and out from electronic terminals (e.g. swipe cards, proximity fobs, biometric terminals) or software accessible through their PC, online portal or mobile.

The ability to log attendance quickly and easily, no matter where employees are based, is particularly important during the current global pandemic, with remote work shifting from a nice-to-have to a necessity in many businesses.

4.4¹

4.4 days per employee is lost to unplanned absence

€570²

Absence costs businesses €570 per employee per year

The data collected from attendance-clocking can then be instantly imported to your payroll solution, providing you and your employees with confidence in the accuracy of their payroll run.

Time and attendance systems can also calculate paid time off and holiday accruals, create individual employee's absence profile, manage team schedules and assist in employee management activities.

Identifying the requirements for a time and attendance system is easy. No more lost hours due to late starting times. No more confusion over shift swaps. No more double-booked annual leave. Plus, employees gain more control over their working life.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2018>

² <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/average-number-of-sick-days-fell-to-5-6-per-employee-last-year/>

03 | Think about what you need and what your business requirements are

Integration with other systems

What existing systems do you have? Does your business use a payroll software or HR management system that you want your time and attendance system to work with? Do you need to find a supplier that offers a suite of workforce management solutions? Identifying these early on will help you identify suppliers that can ensure you get the most out of your current systems and processes.

How employees will access the system

You should choose the clocking in option that is aligned with your business, industry and way of working. Then depending on the option you choose, employees can clock in via a biometric terminal, keyfob, web portal or on their mobile.

On-premise or Cloud

Cloud-based hosting relieves the need for hefty servers and reduces pressure on bandwidth, but for some companies a server-based model may be more appropriate.

How it will be administered

Who will manage it? Empower your workforce with employee self-service access, provide your team and managers with ownership of the system. Allow users to view work rotas, planned shifts, absences and submit leave requests all in one place. Make sure the system presents data clearly to ensure adoption by managers.

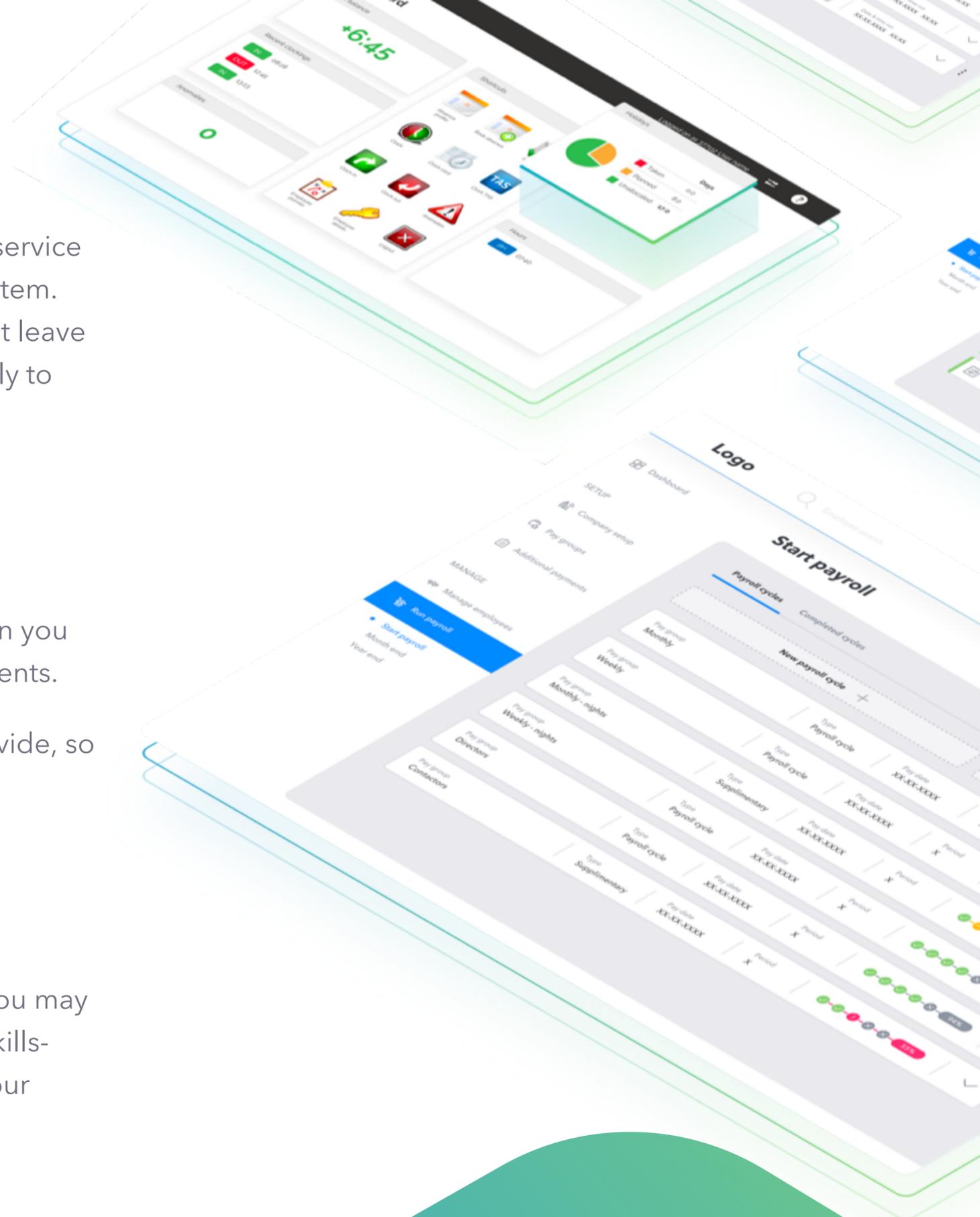
Complex shift patterns or payroll categories

If you have unique shift patterns or different payroll categories, then you may require a system that can be customised to suit your requirements.

Find out what level of customisation any potential supplier can provide, so you can find something to fit around you - not you around it!

How it will support your future growth

What are you and your management team's plans for the future? You may be looking to introduce flexible working hours, remote teams, or skills-based scheduling. Make sure the system you choose grows with your business and supports what you want to provide your employees.



04 | Every software provider is different

Not all time and attendance systems are the same. There are some clear differences, advantages and potential problems to keep in mind when weighing up your options.

Have you considered:

- Who will support your software after you sign on the dotted line?
- Will it be the company who sells the system or those that developed it?
- How knowledgeable are the support staff and do they support only one brand or lots of systems from a range of suppliers?
- Who is responsible for making changes to the system?
- What SLAs can you expect?
- How quickly can software or hardware issues be resolved?
- Do they have a clear roadmap for ongoing and future product development
- What is their software update frequency like?



Be aware:

You may want to check if the supplier you're talking to is a full-service software provider who owns and develops the software themselves, or a reseller.

05 | What to look for in a time and attendance system

With so many time and attendance systems on the market, it can be difficult to know which one is right for your business. We've highlighted some key areas that you should look for in a solution:



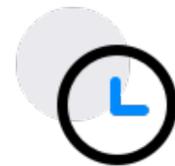
Flexible clocking-in options

A system that allows your staff to clock their time in a variety of ways, such as through a portal, mobile app or hardware device.



Analytics

The ability to turn raw data in your Time and Attendance system into easy-to-understand and stunning visuals, accessible via powerful yet simple dashboards is a must-have.



More than just time

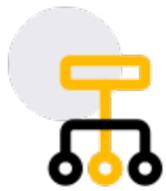
A system that offers more than just clocking in and out will provide added value to your business.

Added value functions can include staff scheduling, holiday requests and also absence management systems.



Accurate

The system allows you to see and report the actual time employees work, not just the hours they're scheduled to work.



Ease of use

If it's not easy to use, just walk away. You want your system to have a high adoption rate by employees and managers.

Look for one that's easy to use, with a simple interface that allows employee self-service.



Mobile compatibility

Find a solution to meet all your staff requirements, including remote workers.

Mobile compatibility gives remote workers the ability to clock in and out, while also allowing you to track their location, ensuring that they're where they're supposed to be.



Audit trail features

Being able to view the original time sheet data along with any changes made by managers can be important in case of an audit.



Security

Security should be top of the agenda for businesses, particularly when handling sensitive and personal data.

Regardless of the system provider, make sure they place as much importance on security as your IT teams do.



Integration options

Look for a system that integrates with your existing applications and software, such as HR and payroll.



Proactive alerts

Some systems can provide notifications when employees are nearing overtime or forget to clock in or out, or when staff are close to exceeding working regulation hours.

This can be helpful in controlling business expenses as well as ensuring the wellbeing of your staff.



Reporting

Monitoring time and attendance is only part of the job - the really important work comes next, through insight and evaluation.

Look for a software solution that will deliver broken-down data, at-a-glance graphics and analysis.



GDPR compatible

Legislation changes, so be prepared. Make sure your system is GDPR compliant, giving you the ability to better manage your data requests and processing.

06 | Questions to ask potential suppliers

So you've found a list of potential suppliers.

How are you going to whittle them down? Our checklist should help you tackle those important initial conversations, so you get the answers you need to know.

- How in-depth is the consultation process?
- Do you have a project management team aligned with an industry-recognised methodology, e.g. PRINCE2, APM, PMI?
- How will the project be implemented?
- How is the initial user training provided?
- What is the on-going support model like? What are your SLAs (Service-level agreements)?
- What reports can I get from the system?
- Who is using the system already and can I get any testimonials?
- What has the system availability been like over the last 6 months?
- What accreditations do they have?

07 | Pay careful attention and avoid common pitfalls

The decision to invest in a time and attendance software is a wise one, but if you rush into it or choose the wrong solution, it could cause more headaches down the road.

We've highlighted a few common pitfalls, so you don't get stuck at the bottom of the heap:



Lack of planning

Reviewing your current processes is always a good idea before considering new software. By planning how you want the system to work with what you already have, adoption will be higher.



Your key requirements

Prioritise the functional requirements you want out of the system - not the potential supplier. These become the rating criteria when evaluating software options to meet your business goals.



Time is money. Wasted time means wasted money

Opting for the cheapest solution may not be the best choice. The decision about which solution is the best for your workforce is a matter of value, not cost.



Don't run before you can walk

Some implementation issues don't appear until you start scaling the system. Allow for the system to scale out gradually so that you can solve problems methodically as they arise along the way.



Get company buy-in

From the board through to managers and employees. What do they want from the system? Make sure you consult everyone about their needs.



Training

Involve your team and take the time to train them on the new software. It takes more time and effort, but the payoff will be worth it. Make sure you find out what training is provided, how it's delivered, and the costs entailed.

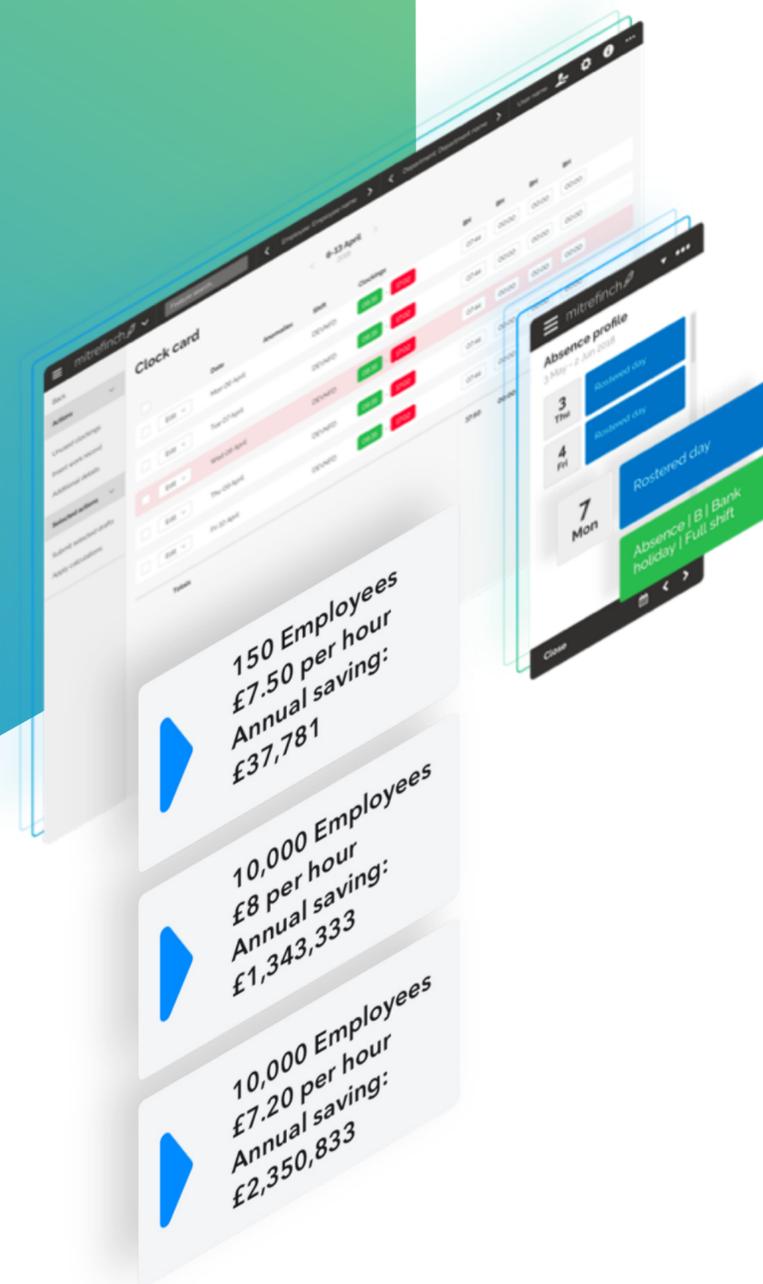
08 | How to measure your return on investment

So you know you want a time and attendance system, you know how to find a supplier, but how do you get buy-in from the board to the staff?

There are multiple benefits that impact organisations, from productivity to empowerment.

We look at some of the benefits and how a time and attendance system can provide ROI (return on investment) to your organisation and staff morale.





Let's consider the financial benefits

To cut a long story short, adding time and attendance software saves money. It really is that simple.

The case has been proven over and over again. Quality breeds quality and drives profitability.

As with anything in life, you get what you pay for. Investing in a superior system from the get-go will pay dividends.

Companies can expect to see a return on investment very quickly as a result of increased punctuality and productivity.

Fewer errors + saved time = increased productivity

Higher productivity = higher profitability

Less absenteeism = fewer lost man hours

These annual savings are conservative estimates based on a 1% increase in attendance, 0.5% decrease in errors and a two minute reduction in manual data entry per employee.

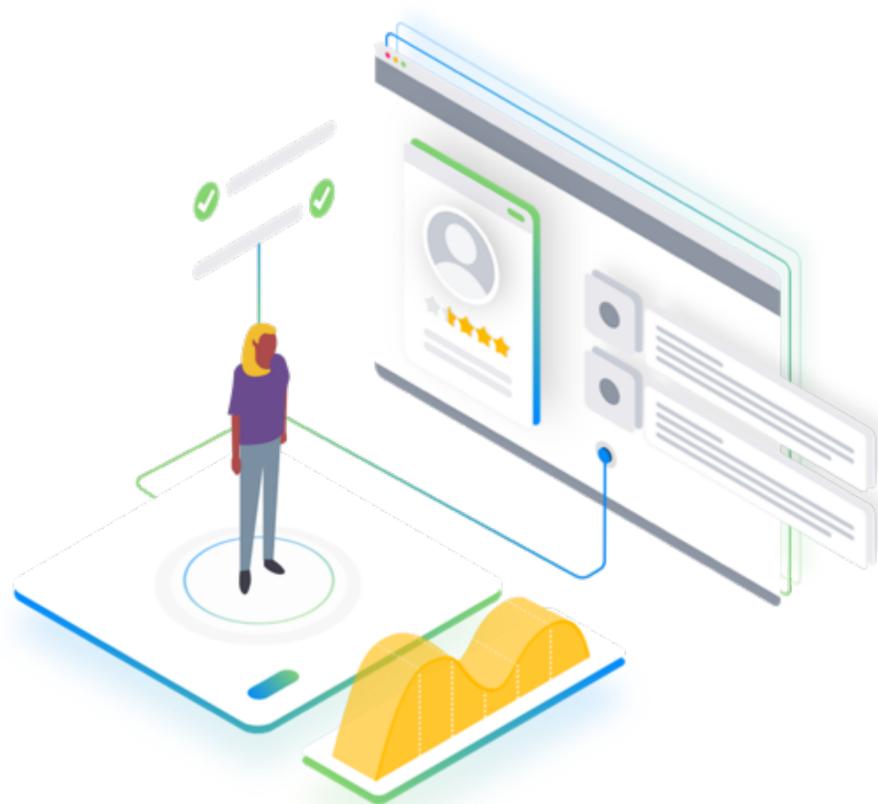
The impact on the company and the HR team

HR teams are often the driving force behind change or implementation of time and attendance software. And they are often the first port of call when an issue arises!

The return on investment of using a time and attendance solution is immeasurable across the business, but is often most visible for HR teams initially. Whether it's getting the basics of time savings sorted or helping HR deliver on its obligation to provide happy, healthy workplaces, T&A software can help.

Automated reporting means that the team can save a huge amount of time compared to manual reporting.

Everything is logged digitally so there's no chance of paperwork going missing.



Swapping shifts becomes much easier for employees, who can sort it among themselves, removing the need for the HR team to be a 'middle man'.

Good systems will be multi-platform so they can be accessed from anywhere, with just an internet connection required.

What your staff get

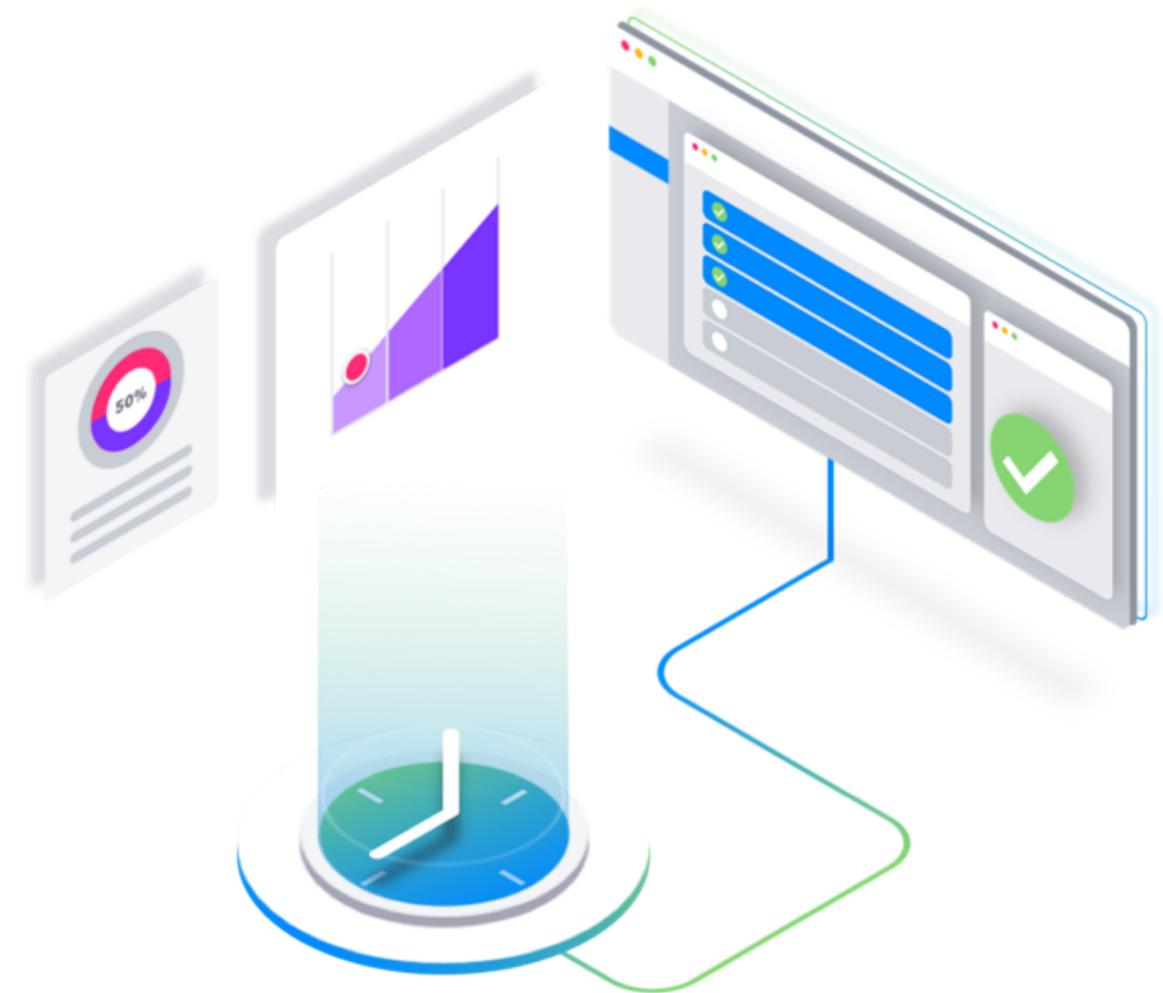
But what will staff get out of the software? Delving below the surface, time and attendance software doesn't just give employees the opportunity to clock in and out easily and book their annual leave.

It also equips them with control over their working lives, gives them autonomy, and shows a level of trust from above.

These are empowering features, and the types of workplace quality factors that come up time and again in reports on employee satisfaction and productivity - something that's high on every HR agenda.

As employees are able to monitor their own absence records, they are more likely to keep track of sick days and adapt their behaviour accordingly.

It's a no-brainer really - investing in decent software delivers a marked, trackable return for HR teams.



Time and attendance systems can often lower the frustration levels not just of employees, but managers, payroll staff, human resources professionals and owners.



My experience in working with Advance Systems has very much been a positive one. Their professionalism is refreshing and I would welcome the opportunity to work with them again.

Mark Gallagher -
IT Director



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09 | Let's round up

The technological benefits of using good time and attendance software are many. Insights can be used and exported directly to your existing HR or payroll system, removing the potential for error and data double entry.

Automated reporting alleviates a job from the to-do list. But as we've covered, not all time and attendance systems are the same.

To make sure you select the best provider, don't forget to:

- Plan
- Breakdown your requirements
- Consider your budget
- Find out the potential ROI
- Hunt down the best fit provider
- Implement the system and get staff trained
- See your profits rise!

10 | How we can help you manage your workforce

Our solutions, modules, services and products are designed to be used in isolation or can be fully integrated; creating a seamless and efficient end to end workforce management process.



Time & attendance

[Learn more →](#)



HR software

[Learn more →](#)



Workforce management

[Learn more →](#)



Flexipay payroll software

[Learn more →](#)



Absence management

[Learn more →](#)



Hardware & Access control

[Learn more →](#)

How Advance Systems can help

Advance Systems is Ireland's leading provider of integrated Time & Attendance, Payroll, HR and Access Control solutions.

Advance Systems have gone from strength to strength and provides a range of customisable workforce management solutions to small, medium and large sized organisations across Ireland.

Time and Attendance software system saves a great deal of time and produces accurate information at the touch of a button, rapidly reducing labour and administrative costs.



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