



## Is Employee Engagement Really That Important?

Fortunately, the days of staff clocking in and out with punch cards and time clocks are long gone. Old-fashioned time and attendance systems not only treated employees simply as numbers on a payroll, but implied their honesty was suspect. As a result, shop floor and management were poles apart; employee engagement was unheard of so it's hardly surprising that increasing productivity was challenging.

### Part of the family

Employee engagement is not just another of those 'buzzwords' used by management consultants, but an important business concept which has a direct impact of a company's



profitability. Communication, trust and mutual respect are key to effective employee engagement. In combination, these make staff feel valued and lead to greater motivation, higher staff retention and improved productivity.

Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin, summed it up when he said *"Our first priority should be the people who work for the companies, then the customers, then the shareholders. Because if the staff are motivated then the customers will be happy, and the shareholders will then benefit through the company's success."*

### Welcome to work



The advent of modern IT-based systems has revolutionised time and attendance not only by simplifying and automating clocking in, but also by incorporating interactive communication channels to enhance employee engagement.

Imagine arriving at work every morning and simply placing your finger into a smart terminal. This immediately identifies you, greets you with a personalised

message and automatically advises payroll that you are on site and ready to start work. It then opens a wealth of direct communication channels between you and your manager, central admin and even head office.

Maybe there's a change to work schedules, a new contract, new staff, somebody's retiring. It's good to know what's happening and a personalised message as they clock in really makes employees feel they are a valued part of the organisation, and overcomes the feeling that big brother is watching.

### Your flexible friend

It may seem a paradox that monitoring attendance actually provides greater freedom to employees. In the modern working environment, not everybody works in an office or a factory. Staff may be out on site, or working from home, and that can also apply to managers.

Time and attendance systems can integrate with smart phones, tablets or virtual networks. This means staff can clock in wherever they may be and at the same time provide information about their location. It also means managers can be fully updated with real time staff reports, even when they are working remotely



### Help yourself

As the lines of communication are two-way, it provides a further opportunity for employee empowerment. It's so much better for employees to interrogate their own attendance record, see how much leave they are due, and even make requests for holiday or leave instead of bombarding HR and admin staff for information. It gives employees a feeling of greater control over their own personnel data as well as reducing the workload for admin staff and line management.



### Staff support

One of the real benefits of modern time and attendance systems are the additional employee support functions they can offer. An absence management module can be a really valuable management tool. Not only will it allow you to monitor

employee attendance levels in real time and create alerts when pre-defined thresholds are breached, it can calculate the Bradford Factor, a KPI for attendance levels. This can help identify absence patterns and aid in the early recognition of causes, such as stress, before they become serious.

## **Everybody wins**

Engagement is making sure all staff members feel they are an integral part of the company, crucial to its success and not just another number on the payroll. It's about trust and fairness, and this has to be reciprocal. Employees should feel that the organisation is treating them fairly, with respect, and appreciates their role in the business's success, while employers must be confident that employees take ownership of their job, work effectively and provide real value to the business.



The latest time and attendance systems with their modular software and complementary apps are in a prime position to improve efficiency, productivity and support an effective employee engagement strategy.

Surveys have shown that businesses with engaged employees have markedly higher productivity, and highly engaged employees have a significantly lower absence rate compared to non-engaged employees. It should therefore be no surprise that engaged employees enjoy their job more and are more productive, which leads to future success for both employer and employee.

Richard Manby is managing director of Bodet Ltd, the British subsidiary of the Bodet Group, which have been leading the market in time measurement products since the 1860s. The Group have five subsidiaries across Europe exporting to 60 countries and have expanded from clock-making into IT-based time and attendance, access control, school class change systems and sports scoreboards.

The Bodet Group has over 35,000 clients including Fedex, Serco, TalkTalk and the European Parliament as well as state and independent schools and individual public sector institutions such as DVLA and NHS.

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