



Manage Hotel Human Resources Dynamically through Online Time Attendance System



Human resources are a crucial part of managing the hotel industry. In view of the servicing nature of the industry, a majority of the hotel staff have direct relationships with the guests. Therefore, the employees must exhibit measures such as competence, work ethic, attendance, and acceptance of organizational standards and values.

In 1987, the CBI estimated that the cost of non-attendance and sickness in Britain was five billion pounds, a figure which had risen to 11 billion by 1993 (Lucas, 1995). In Human Resources Management for Hospitality Services, it is reported that absenteeism exists to a greater extent in the hospitality industry than in many other sectors (Alistair P. Goldsmith, Dennis P. Nickson, Donald H. Sloan, 2002). The fact is rather ironic since late coming is prohibited in this industry. The presence of employees or “warm-bodies” in the service industry, as opposed to the computerized system in other industries, is imperative that its absence could jeopardize the quality of service tremendously. Human Resources could resort to incurring legal penalties on the staff through wage deduction to emphasize on the importance of attendance, and it’s also a punishable offense, which can lead to dismissal (Andrews, 2009). Despite the scale of absenteeism and tardiness, many hotels are still using distributed manual attendance system to keep track of the attendance records of its employees.

The main resolution to the problem is to adopt automated foolproof attendance systems, which streamline the process in one centralized center. By having all employee data at one consolidated server, employee scheduling and relevant data and reports can easily be produced to help hotels streamline the labor management to achieve better performance. For example, housekeeping constitutes the largest proportion of the workforce in a hotel business as compared to F&B; the management of it is demanding and critical. Tardiness and non-attendance have a detrimental impact on the overall performance of a hotel brand. In *Hotel Housekeeping: A Training Manual*, housekeeping is viewed as a cost center and one of the considerations in employee scheduling is the use of software to make scheduling easier. (Andrews, 2009)

This article talks about how the use of **TimeTec TA, Online Time Attendance Management System** can offer effective automation in hotel labor management system to help reduce costs and strengthen the operation of any hotel chains.



Time Tracking is the Effective Solution to Curb Time Theft

In an environment where different employees work around the clock in different shifts, tracking who comes in and who goes out, who works and who cheats their work hours are not an easy task for any party.

In a typical company, about 10% of the total employee population at any given time is troubled and it is estimated that a troubled employee costs the employer at least 5% of the employee's annual salary

Many companies have to initiate company-sponsored Employee Assistance Programme to enhance a company's profitability by reducing absenteeism, turnover, and tardiness amongst other main factors.

Hotels are one of the many service sectors characterized by being prone to high levels of employee absence and turnover due to their comparatively lower salaries, high levels of stress associated with customer service ('emotional labor'), the relative insecurity of many jobs based on casual and part-time contracts, and lack of career development opportunities (Nankervis, 2005). Absenteeism is defined as "... any failure of an employee to report for, or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of the reason, as well as authorized leave (for example, long lunches, long weekends, 'mental health' days)."

Employee absenteeism (either authorized or unauthorized) is up to 20% higher in services than in other industries due to its 'emotional labor' component, the associated stress, and lack of adequate management attention either to its causes or effects (Mills and Dalton, 1994).

Ways to Time Track Biometrics is The Trick

Currently, there are many methods that can be adopted to eradicate this problem. Biometric time clock, for example, can help preventing attempts of escaping from being labeled absent through buddy punching, where one employee knowingly clocks time for another person who wants to be absent. The effectiveness of biometric time clock stamps from the fact that it requires the owner himself to verify in person. There are a few biometric technologies available in the market e.g., fingerprint, face, iris, signature, voice and a few more. Research has found that the most acceptable biometrics technology worldwide is fingerprint due to its convenience and non-intrusive nature. Face recognition is another technology that has been gaining acceptance from the market for similar reasons as the fingerprint.

The way fingerprint technology works is that the capturing device analyzes the fingerprint image to determine the location of the fingerprint core, the pattern type (i.e., right loop, left arch, etc.), estimates the quality of the ridgelines and extracts the point in which the ridges split, intersect or end. These points are called minutia. The technology compares the points of the verifying finger with the fingerprint template stored in the system. When the points match up to a certain preferred percentage, verification and authorization to access will be provided and the time clock keeps the data including the ID, timestamp, and location before it is sent to a central server for further analysis. Face recognition works the same way where it identifies focal points of a face, which are detected and verified against the template of the same person. The advantage of face against fingerprint is the fact that it is contactless, addressing hygienic issues raised by some concern parties and the fact that it is a novelty technology.



“The usage of biometric technologies have been proven to reduce time theft significantly” and when they are deployed in any labor-intensive industry, the impact it has on cost reduction is potentially significant. Absenteeism is identified as a cost center because even though the employee is not present, the pay is still on. Hence, it must be managed by tracking and documenting the costs and trying to minimize the expense because firms that incur lower absenteeism costs do have a competitive advantage (McAfee, R. Bruce, Champagne, J. Paul, 1994).

BYOD to Master Mobility

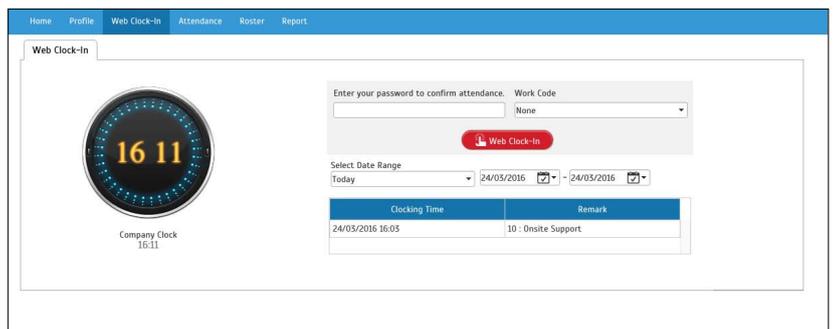
Bring Your Own Device concept or acronym BYOD is another option, which employers could adopt to time track their employees that have been assigned to work outside of the office. By using the readily available employees’ own smartphones, the employer can impose them to download time tracking app such as TimeTec Mobile to track their activities while they are on company’s hours. TimeTec Mobile comes with a GPS geolocation tag to determine the employee’s whereabouts at the time of the clocking and employee can also choose the activities for that time clocking through their mobile. For example, Ms. Apple has to go to a meeting at the hotel chain in CBD, so when she arrives at the location, she opens her mobile, access TimeTec Mobile, go to Clock-In,



press the thumbprint image and select the activity for that clock-in and she’s done. All her data will be online in real-time. The mobility of employee is something companies need to embrace and find ways to manage effectively and when it comes to mobile workers, time tracking is essential.

Track with your PC

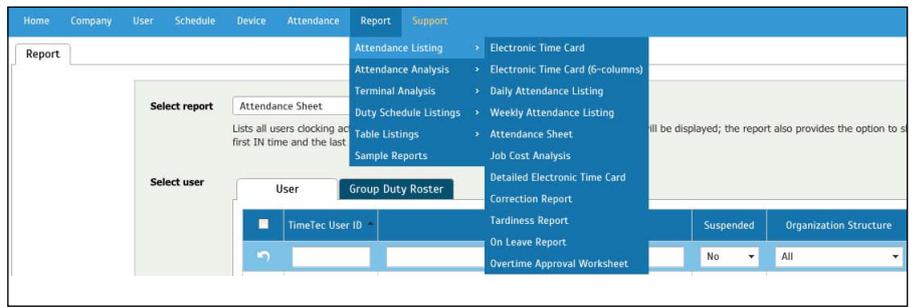
For hotels with only stationary workers and are not willing to budget for hi-tech devices, time track through PC is also another option to choose. In TimeTec TA, for example, attendance can be recorded through PC Clock-in, and the clock-in times come complete with employee’s activity. An employee can open any web browser, access to TimeTec TA, and clock-in the time along with his assigned activity such as a meeting or just a clock-in. The password is requisite for all clock-in through PC.



Not only biometrics, mobile, PC; the latest of the technology is the use of NFC through mobile devices for time tracking purposes will also be available before you know it.

With all the different options for time tracking devices and having a reliable online solution like TimeTec TA to store all the time activities, not a single employee could claim work hours that they don't deserve when their time is traced to the minute. To administer the system, supervisors or managers are given privileges to review their staff's actual worked time through the detailed Attendance Sheet online at any time, and the employee could view the attendance through their account in TimeTec TA. In case there are missed punches or other adjustments being done on the attendance data, the authorized personnel is allowed to make the adjustment in the Attendance Sheet, which creates an audit trail. All of the historical attendance reports are available for any pay period in the system to aid in employee performance reviews.

By having the reports in hand, the hotel can resort to dealing with absenteeism the way it sees fit. Some organizations use punitive methods that enforce strict disciplinary procedures and others take a more positive approach and reward employees that come to work. Amongst ways to be considered include a year-end review, personal recognition, paid bonuses for good attendance, buyback program for employees who did not use the allotted sick leave and etc (McAfee, R. Bruce, Champagne, J. Paul, 1994). The data can also help hotels set up an absenteeism policy, communicating it to all employees and taking action accordingly.



TimeTec TA Helps Standardizing Processes and Reports

TimeTec TA (www.timetecta.com) is an online time and attendance solutions that can help hotel management to enforce a more strict attendance and paying policies of the company. Taking more than 15 years of experience in time and attendance management, TimeTec TA comes to fruition, utilizing the latest cloud technology and bringing the data straight to where you are through the Internet. Using TimeTec TA, hotels can identify policies on being at the workstation, illness at work, absence notification, attendance records, and disciplinary penalties. In *Effectively Managing Troublesome Employees*, the authors provided an example of a hotel that stresses on Absence Notification. Failure to report absence for at least two hours in advance of your duty will result in the forfeit of the employee's right to claim sick pay while another hotel adds another policy on top of a similar one stating that two unexcused absences (not calling in, not reporting to work) are grounds for immediate dismissal (McAfee, R. Bruce, Champagne, J. Paul, 1994). Attendance policies could also be set whereby an employer is responsible for maintaining a record of your work hour; without any attendance data, an employee is entitled to a wage. TimeTec Mobile has an alert feature to notify the employer and the employee if lateness occurs and notify again when the employee reports working.

With hotel management having a clear set of policies, TimeTec TA could be manipulated to act based on the predetermined rules of the employee's attendance and policies.

While the biometric time clock records the time-stamps of all ins and outs by each employee, the software will produce data according to the rules set earlier and generate reports according to the management's requirements. According to Williams (1993), a CBI Survey found absence levels to be

"16% higher in companies that kept minimal records of absenteeism rather than a more precise centralized computer system" (Alistair P. Goldsmith, Dennis P. Nickson, Donald H. Sloan, Roy C. Wood, 2002).

Reporting is another area that needs greater transparency and data access, and TimeTec TA offers various standard sets of reports and tools to be used by the hotel. For example, the software provides an effective tool for the importing of raw data for payroll purposes. For various employee work cycles and pay periods, TimeTec TA provides viewing of attendance data and FingerTec Bio-bridge SDK for integration with other 3rd party solutions.



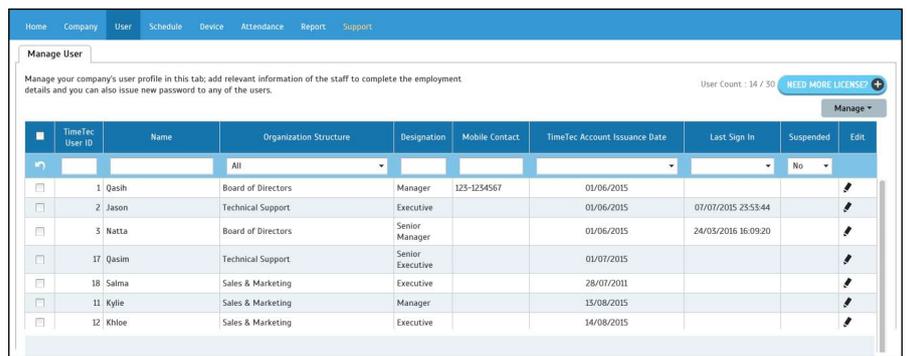
TimeTec TA Managing Employee Data From Headquarters

The turnover level in the tourism industry is high. Employee turnover/wastage refers to the rate (or ratio) of employees who leave their organizations through resignation, retirement or death (Nankervis, 2005). Based on L.K. Singh's book, *Fundamentals of Tourism and Travel*, in UK hotels, employee turnover was tougher than other European countries, with 3 to 4-star hotels having 33% labor turnover, compared to 19% in French hotels and 16% in German hotels (2008). Staff turnover is highest at the lowest levels in the occupational ladder, turnover at operative level is over 33% and management requires measurements of both absenteeism and turnover rates to address the unhealthy levels and to act upon it in the best way possible.

Data of each employee in each hotel property can be inputted into TimeTec TA and consolidated in one central server or headquarter for reference and analysis when employee data is required. All records and reports of employee profiles, absenteeism, tardiness, employee attendance sheet, employee scheduling, holidays and leave, overtime approval, duty calendar, job cost analysis and many more can be produced by TimeTec TA.

With 31 highly sought after types of reports and listings, TimeTec TA can definitely solve the common time-management related labor problems in the hotel industry.

Create an employee profile for each employee hired by the hotels straight through TimeTec TA, and centralize the data online, accessible by authorized personnel. Keeping all employee's data and reports on their individual employment record derived from one standard system, the data can be easily evaluated and is less biased. With the convenience of a controlled rollout of tools and reports provided by TimeTec TA, hotels would be able to implement their planned policies company-wide.



The screenshot shows the 'Manage User' interface in TimeTec TA. It features a navigation menu at the top with options: Home, Company, User, Schedule, Device, Attendance, Report, and Support. Below the menu, there is a 'Manage User' section with a sub-header: 'Manage your company's user profile in this tab; add relevant information of the staff to complete the employment details and you can also issue new password to any of the users.' The interface includes a 'User Count: 14 / 30' and a 'NEED MORE LICENSES' button. A table lists employee details with columns for TimeTec User ID, Name, Organization Structure, Designation, Mobile Contact, TimeTec Account Issuance Date, Last Sign In, Suspended, and Edit. The table contains 7 rows of data.

TimeTec User ID	Name	Organization Structure	Designation	Mobile Contact	TimeTec Account Issuance Date	Last Sign In	Suspended	Edit
1	Qasih	Board of Directors	Manager	123-1234567	01/06/2015			
2	Jason	Technical Support	Executive		01/06/2015	07/07/2015 25:53:44		
3	Natta	Board of Directors	Senior Manager		01/06/2015	24/03/2016 16:09:20		
17	Qasim	Technical Support	Senior Executive		01/07/2015			
18	Salma	Sales & Marketing	Executive		28/07/2011			
11	Kylie	Sales & Marketing	Manager		13/08/2015			
12	Khloe	Sales & Marketing	Executive		14/08/2015			

A Great Investment for Continuous Improvement

The objectives of hotel management are always to obtain operational efficiency and company-wide transparency. With the service industry relying heavily on human resources, the management of employees is crucial to ensure smooth operation.

Time tracking devices such as biometrics time clock, mobile app, and PC clock-in are some of the great and proven ways to eradicate buddy punching problems and when it is coupled with comprehensive yet user-friendly TimeTec TA online solution that centralizes all time attendance data and provides comprehensive reports of the usage of Company's time from each employee, the solution can curb rampant absenteeism and turnover in the service industry.

TimeTec TA is a great investment for any hotel setup, with measurable ROI; all minutes taken by the staff are accounted for. Go to www.timetec.com to find out more.

References

- Alistair P. Goldsmith, Dennis P. Nickson, Donald H. Sloam, Roy C. Wood, 2002, *Human Resources Management for Hospitality Services*, London: Thomson Learning
- Andrews, Sudhir, 2009, *Hotel Housekeeping: A Training Manual*, New Delhi: Tata McCraw-Hill Publishing Company Ltd.
- Grobler, Peter A., Warwick Surette, Michael R. Carell, Norbert F. Elbert, Robert D. Halfeld, 2006, *Human Resource Management in South Africa 3rd Edition*, London: Thomson Learning
- McAfee R. Bruce, Champagne J. Paul, 1994, *Effectively Managing Troublesome Employees*, CT: Quorum Books
- Nankervis, Alan, 2005, *Managing Services*, NY: Cambridge University Press
- Singh, L.K., 2008, *Fundamentals of Tourism and Travel*, Delhi: ISHA Book