

Improving Staff Management In Restaurants through Online Time Attendance System



According to a research done by the National Restaurant Association (NRA) (2013), the largest foodservice association in the world, restaurant-industry sales are projected to total more than USD660 billion in 2013 and will equal 4% of the U.S. gross domestic product.

In the country, the industry's job growth outpaced the nation's overall economy in 13 consecutive years from 2000 to 2012, proving its ability to sustain itself even during periods of economic recession. The restaurant industry is projected to employ 13.1 million people (roughly 10% of the U.S. available workforce) in 2013 and market trends predict that it will continue to rise by 9% over the next decade.

The previous statistics are also indicative of global trends in the food & beverage industry, particularly 'full-service' (conventional) and 'quick-service' (fast-food) restaurants, and managing the large number of employees involved often implicates the same, universal issues that plague other industries. This includes concerns such as buddy-punching, tardiness, absenteeism and payroll calculations. There are also other issues at play, in which some are usually only existent in the restaurant industry as the operations involved are different from most businesses. All of these concerns, however, can be remedied or at least brought down to a minimal level.

This article will continue to discuss the main problems faced when managing these restaurant employees, as well as examine how TimeTec solutions, particularly online time attendance software, can provide relief to management when dealing with these concerns.

EATING UP TIME

Dissecting Main Issues of Restaurant Staff

Just like in any other business operations, tracking staff attendance is necessary for the restaurants industry as it is the only way of assessing if an employee is truly 'putting his time in', or has simply 'played a fool'. This is vital as the calculation of the exact hours that an employee works will give a clear indication of how much remuneration the person deserves, and this is the main underlying concept under efficient payroll management; the company tracks how much work is done by an employee and pays accordingly (Brawley, 2011). However, this is easier said than done as restaurant operations involve industry-specific concerns that may complicate matters for the management.

One of the chief concerns circulating in the industry is often the level of technical expertise present in current restaurant employees that turns implementations of even slightly complicated systems into a monumental exercise of ensuring adherence to the said system. This issue is particularly more prevalent in quick-service restaurants as compared to full-service ones, but it is nevertheless still a major concern in both situations. On average, more than 60% of the staff in the restaurant industry are high school graduates without a college degree, and this group of workers is not normally comfortable to use systems that seem complex to them (Fields, 2007).

Another key issue concerning the management of restaurant staffs is the high number of part-time employees that come in during peak seasons. This is even more so in urban areas, where the difference in customers coming in during peak hours, days or periods can balloon up to more than 3 times as compared to normal operations (Schmidgall, Hayes, & Ninemier, 2002). To accommodate this spike in demand, most restaurants will employ part-timers specifically for those time periods, and these temporary workers are often not included in the restaurant's original staffing schedules that make manually tracking them an inefficient practice.

Thirdly, the variance in staff tasks also makes it hard to track these employees' true amount of work put in. This scenario occurs because, in most establishments, most front-line workers are not task-specific in the sense that they only have one or a few job responsibilities, but instead rotates between having to serve other areas of the business (NPD Group, 2013).

For example, in a quick-service restaurant, a full-time waitress may have to wait tables between 2 pm to 6 pm, answer delivery calls between 6 pm to 10 pm, and clean up shop between 10 pm to 11 pm. This schedule will then be rotated with another waitress for another day. The complexities involved often causes headaches to management, both in trying to ascertain the workers' true amount of hours worked as well as the scheduling of employee tasks.

On top of all these tasks, there are also general and universal issues regarding staff management that can be found in both the restaurants industry as well as most industries at large. This may include tailgating, buddy-punching, and other 'illnesses' for the management to deal with.

The next section of this article will discuss how TimeTec solutions can remedy these issues as well as the previously mentioned ones above, and ultimately improve a restaurant's overall business operations.



TIMETEC SOLUTIONS

A Recipe for Success via Biometrics

Among the key concerns mentioned above, none of them are insurmountable tasks with the help of today's technological advances. There exist various tools that can help alleviate the troubles faced in the restaurants industry in terms of staff management, one of them being biometric time clocks. These devices are used to assist in tracking the hours worked by an employee of a company, but instead of using a key, code or chip to identify the user, they rely on a unique attribute of the user such as fingerprints or facial recognition. The usage of these devices*, along with a proper data management application for tracking and scheduling, will be more than adequate to face the current issues mentioned in the previous section.

*Products from FingerTec Worldwide, a provider of biometric solutions for time attendance and access control, will be used as examples to explain how these issues are solved.

Pertaining to the initial problem of low technical expertise among employees, and their reluctance to use complicated systems, the real trouble lies in finding a system that is both easy-to-use but still holds the adequate features needed for the business. Previously, punch card systems were heavily used as it did its job in recording attendance, but this has given headaches to management when trying to compile those data for payroll calculations. On top of being time-consuming on both fronts (the recording of data as well as its further processing), this system has also led to problems such as buddy-punching, whereby a worker dishonestly clocks in for another worker without the management's knowledge. This is where the biometric solution helps the most.

When implementing biometric time clocks, such as FingerTec's TA100C, the process is simplified at all stages of implementation and usages. This will directly affect the workers involved in the sense that less time will be needed to record attendance, as fingerprint verifications with the device take less than a second. In a sense, front-line workers would benefit the most from this as it saves them a lot of time and hassle when having to clock their attendance.

In terms of processing the data for viewing or payroll calculations, the operations are also made easier to process as all data recorded by the device will be sent to the online software, TimeTec TA Time Attendance, for automated management purposes. Furthermore, the user-interface used in both the device as well as the online software are simple to learn and operate, requiring minimal technical know-how from the restaurant staff.

Moving on to the second major issue in the restaurants industry, there needs to be a way to minimize the operations involved when having to schedule extra workers during peak periods. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that there is a high turnover rate among restaurant staffs, which leads to not just a high number of changes in employee scheduling but also during enrollment and removal of workers from the system. It is simply inefficient for the management to spend significant amounts of time on these operations when there are also other things to worry about in the business. Using TimeTec system helps to relieve this.



Home Company User Schedule Device Attendance Report Support

Manage Terminal Terminal Group

Manage your biometrics terminals in this tab. You can edit the terminals' information, view the details of each terminal, upload, download, delete, reboot, determine time zone and many more in this tab. Webster IP : 50.18.154.245 | Port : 80 (80 for FMM devices)

Skip this if you are not using FingerTec Terminal as your attendance verification method.

Serial No.	Model	Firmware	User Count	Fingerprint	Connection Info		Device Installation Info				
					Activated Since	Connection Status	Terminal ID	Terminal Group	Location	Time	
3205280	TA200 Plus	Ver 6.60 Nov 9 2011	4	1	25/02/2014	All	1	1	Main Entrance	UTC+08:00	
2204653	FaceID2	Ver 8.0.0(build 427-4007-01)	2	2	16/10/2014		2	1	Production Area	UTC+08:00	
7158517	TA100C	Ver 1.0.0-20140512	4	4	05/12/2014		3	3	Packing	UTC+08:00	
7158665	TA100C	Ver 1.0.0-20150323	2	4	04/03/2015		4	2	Branch (Malaysia)	UTC+08:00	
2400636	FaceID3	Ver 6.60 Jul 16 2013	2	0	12/05/2014		5	1	Branch (Germany)	UTC+03:00	
3208546	TA200 Plus/POE	Ver 6.60 Jan 9 2015	4	4	16/03/2015		6	1	总部大门	UTC+08:00	

Manage all biometric terminals in one centralized page.

Home Company User Schedule Device Attendance Report Support

Manage User

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. User Count : 14 / 30 NEED MORE LICENSE?

TimeTec User ID	Name	Company / Branch	Department	Section	Designation	Mobile Contact	TimeTec Account Issuance Date	Last Sign In	Suspended	Edit
1	Qasih	Malaysia	Sales & Marketing		Manager	123-1234567	01/06/2015		No	
2	Jason	Malaysia	Human Resources		Executive		01/06/2015	07/07/2015 23:53:44		
3	Natta	Dubai	Sales & Marketing		Senior Manager		01/06/2015	22/02/2016 11:59:03		
17	Qasim	Malaysia	Human Resources		Senior Executive		01/07/2015			
18	Salma	Dubai	Sales & Marketing		Executive		28/07/2011			
11	Kylie	Dubai	Human Resources		Manager		13/08/2015			
12	Khloe	Dubai	Sales & Marketing		Executive		14/08/2015			
14	Nigel	Malaysia	Technical Support		Technician		08/09/2015			
30	Freddie	Malaysia	Board of Directors		CEO		04/11/2015			

Manage all employees easily; permanent or part time employees.

Restaurants that has installed biometric time clocks, such as FingerTec's AC100C or any other Webster-loaded time attendance devices, can easily enroll users within a few steps at the device itself, saving management precious time that can be used elsewhere.

Scheduling issues are also tackled with the software, as TimeTec TA can support up to 999 schedules that can be easily configured to suit individual business needs, all in a friendly UI that makes everything look easy to the user.

Last but not least is the issue of rotating variable job tasks among workers' schedules. Originally, this practice is done to ensure that all front-line staff will divide their work evenly between tasks such as waiting on tables, answering calls and clean-up duties. Although the intended goal of this practice is admirable, it is nevertheless painful for management to consistently come up with new schedules, especially with the high turnover rates and part-time staffers in the industry. As previously mentioned, these problems are brought to a null with automated data management software such as TimeTec the online time attendance management application that makes it both fast and easy to make scheduling changes.

Monitoring and tracking staff attendance is easy, as all data are automatically updated into TimeTec TA. Administrators can also suspend users for a variety of reasons or durations which make it easier to accommodate peak hour workers.



Trimming the Fat in Your Business Operations

Implementing a time attendance system such as the one from TimeTec TA can prove to be very beneficial to restaurants and is particularly crucial to the industry as it is rather labor-intensive. On the whole, the improvements that can be achieved with the system helps to do more than just reduce the time and effort spent on 'traditional' time & attendance practices, but also to ensure efficient allocation of the company's resources.

At the end of the day, costs go down while profits go up as staff can concentrate on other value-adding tasks for the business. With TimeTec TA, all data is available online, it's transparent, it's accessible from anywhere, and it's ROI measurable. By subscribing to an online time attendance system like TimeTec TA, it will provide customers with more options in terms of data collecting devices like the use of a mobile app on smartphones and PC clock-in through any PC's internet browser.

As the restaurants industry moves ahead in the future, efficiency will be key for all businesses to grow and having a reliable time & attendance system will push any organization in that general direction. Experience TimeTec TA for free at www.timetecta.com

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