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50 Ways to Leave "Some Lumber"

50 Ways to Leave "Some Lumber" by Lisa Disselkamp

Eliminating paper timecards is, after all, about more than saving trees - it's about getting at the root of problems. Most of the problems are people related and the things they do or don't do. In business we have to manage the people. For years the vehicle for recording, reporting and reconciling paying people has been on paper. It's time to change that paradigm and save a tree or two.

The last time I heard "50 Ways to Leave your Lover" - that whimsical 1975 song by Simon and Garfunkel - I had to chuckle as I related it to what we witness every day, the many ways employees tend to sneak around the workplace and surreptitiously manipulate their work day, mislead employers and ultimately inflate their paycheck. All of it made so much easier when the processes are on paper.

So take a "trip" ('70's pun intended) with me and explore how you might save some lumber.

"Just slip out the back Jack"

That's an easy one with paper timecards. Leaving the workplace early and neglecting to report the shortened work day is going to happen in a paper system. Let's face it - paper timesheets are the "ultimate fail" as my teenagers would say, when it comes to validating information and ensuring rules are followed. If you don't want someone to know what you're doing - like the song says - paper is your method of choice.

Oh but "paper is cheap". Not so! Automated timekeeping systems cost more than a ream of paper but the control and savings they harvest give the employer a significant return on investment that paper never can.

"Make a new plan Stan"

That's all about the rules and policies and Stan is out there every day to make certain the plan is in his favor. With paper based processes an employer cannot sufficiently manage the compounded impact of not adhering to policy and regulation. Stan's new plan may be putting your company at significant compliance risk when he tries to meet his budget by refusing to pay overtime to

employees who have actually worked the hours. Many employers are under the gun today for failing to manage meal breaks - as well as overtime - and the penalties will be very high financially. Paper makes it possible.

"You don't need to be coy, Roy"

Oh but he is. A good example is the abuse of rounding rules. To make things easy employers often allow employees to round their time to the nearest quarter hour or ten minutes. Which way do you think the dial is going to point when an employee comes in after the top of the hour? He's going to write down on that paper timecard that he arrived at 8:00 a.m. Paper fails again when it comes to putting down the actual time an employee arrives and departs the workplace. If that late arrival results in an extra 15 minutes of time and it happens a few times throughout the work week - it adds up quickly. If your workers are paid just slightly more than minimum wage, say \$8.00 an hour, that $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour = \$2.00 in added cost. That paper based process starts costing quite a bit.

"Hop on the bus, Gus"

For some employers, not everyone in their employee population is using their automated time and attendance system. Exempt (salaried) employees are often excluded from the perceived bondage of having to swipe in and out at a time clock. After all, these employees are often professionals and feel entitled to not have to record their actual time. It's a modern business myth that requiring exempt employees to clock in and out is "illegal" or prohibited. The Department of Labor has no such ruling. After contacting nearly every state none reported back that they expressly prohibit such a policy (although employers in states like California should be careful).

Managing professional exempt employees is a supervisor issue. It's their job to make certain the work gets done and employees are where they are supposed to be. Including exempts in a real-time labor management system allows the employer to better manage productivity through activity based tracking, sophisticated scheduling, and absence management. Did you know the average employees takes three days of unreported time off? Requiring these employees to report to work via the time clock can tighten down on that unreported time off. That's a real savings. So it's time to get Gus on the bus.

"Just drop off the key, Lee"

Paper gives you very little security or much of an audit trail (unless your payroll department is staff with handwriting experts and forensic scientists checking finger prints and dating ink blots). Timesheets are an extension of your corporate checkbook. They are invoices due upon receipt and ensuring their validity is crucial to avoiding overspending.

Today's time and labor management systems include biometrics which prevent "buddy punching", voice validation for phone reporting, and password security and user identification for anyone who logs into the system. There are reports that log all of the changes and inputs in the system. Employers can see who, what, when and where. Adequate security around labor spending provides visibility and validity you just can get with paper.

"She said it grieves me so to see you in such pain
I wish there was something I could do to make you smile again
I said I appreciate that and would you please explain
About the fifty ways"

Well, we covered just a few of the ways to "leave some lumber" so far. How your company can eliminate the paper associated with workforce management will be unique. Here are just a few of the offending papers that the right time and labor management system should help you eliminate.

- Timesheets
- Time off request forms

- Exception forms
- Adjustment forms
- Premium pay forms
- Time re-allocation forms
- Schedule requests
- Schedule planners
- Schedule rosters
- Calendars
- Attendance cards

It's pretty obvious that paper timecards are as old as that 1975 hit song. And like most old things they aren't as efficient, as earth friendly, or as effective at managing your business. Sometimes it takes a trek down memory lane to remind us of how far things have come.

For assistance or additional information on this topic, email Tony Cook tonyc@datapronw.com or call (888) 658-6881 or (509) 532-3530 ext 315.

Simple Network Support Services

DataPro Solutions has supported customer networks for years and understands that an unstable network can be problematical and slow the workforce. In March 2010, DataPro Solutions announced a new offering, "Simple Network Support Services", an application that provides businesses with assurance of a secure, stable and reliable network.

DataPro Solutions understands the importance of a network that is virus free and crash free for organizations. Simple Network Support Services provides businesses the opportunity to pay a fixed monthly fee for network maintenance and support to keep you ahead of your competitors. DataPro Solutions is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and provides high competence technicians that are trained and qualified to support any network. Every DataPro Solutions employee understands the importance of expedient service with quality care for each customer.

Some of the services covered under a "Simple Network Support Services" agreement include:

- Windows updates on all servers and all applicable client workstations
- Review of Malware and Antivirus defense to ensure proper operation, including periodic maintenance, tuning and review of antivirus logs, Antivirus updates
- Troubleshooting of all network and client workstation hardware related to the network
- Checking Backups and backup logs for proper functionality

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Wage & Hour Enforcement Data Goes Online

The Department of Labor has created an online database that allows the public to search for enforcement actions against employers.

The Enforcement Database includes records from the department's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), and Wage and Hour Division (WHD).

In the case of the WHD, the database includes all concluded WHD compliance actions since fiscal

year 2009. The results show whether any violations were found and the back wage amount, the number of employees due back wages, and the fines assessed. The data is updated quarterly.

The public can search the database by agency, state, zip code, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code, and Standard Industrial Classification code.

The WHD enforces the federal minimum wage, overtime pay, record keeping, and child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The division also enforces the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, the Employee Polygraph Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, wage garnishment provisions of the Consumer Credit Protection Act, and a number of employment standards and worker protections as provided in several immigration related statutes.

For additional information, please visit: <http://ogesdw.dol.gov/index.php>

BIG EASY OFFER 4.0 Expires 4/30/2010

The Big Easy Offer 4.0 gives you choices on Microsoft products and solutions that fit your needs.

Earn money back on your purchase in the form of partner subsidy checks to help make your solutions more complete. Purchase from multiple product groups over the course of the offer to increase the amount of partner subsidy you earn. Partner subsidies can be used for the implementation of your Microsoft solutions including software, hardware and services.

Purchase After: 1/4/2010

Purchase By: 3/31/2010

Redeem By: 4/30/2010

For assistance in finding the right Microsoft products and solutions that fit your needs, please call (888) 658-6881 or (509) 532-3530 ext 315 or email Tony Cook tonyc@datapronw.com