



Ohio University

EmpCenter Software Eliminates Manual Workforce Processes

Customer Since
August 2002

No. of Employees:
10,000

Industry:
Higher Education

EmpCenter® Modules:
Time & Attendance Base
Activity Based Costing
Accruals & Absence
Manager
Multiple Assignments
Reporting

Platform:
Windows

Other ERP Systems:
Oracle HRMS
Oracle Project Accounting
Oracle Payroll

Established in 1802, Ohio University is the oldest public institution of higher learning in the state and it is the first in the northwest territory. The university has been cited for academic quality and value by the following publications: U.S. News & World Report, America's 100 Best College Buys, Princeton Review's Best Colleges and Peterson's Guide to Competitive Colleges. Ohio University ranks first in the state of Ohio for nationally competitive awards won by its students.

Ohio University has a reputation of being in the forefront of technology. The payroll department was the only one lacking advanced technology. Prior to implementing the WorkForce Software solution for higher education, the university manually processed time collection, including applying pay rules and re-entering data into an in-house payroll system for more than 10,000 employees.

Workforce Challenges & Issues

Processing more than 200,000 timesheets annually, the Ohio University payroll department manually prepared and calculated each timesheet. A minimum of four university employees performed a task on a single timesheet before it reached the payroll department. The following process took place:

- Employee totaled his/her own timesheet
- Supervisor checked the math and approved the time
- Another person prepared a time summary sheet for all employees within a specific department
- The payroll department manually entered each employee's time into the in-house system
- Data was converted in the Oracle Element Entries and transferred into the Oracle HRMS and Project Accounting modules

As the university's population increased, there were more inaccuracies and additional costs associated to the timekeeping process. In addition to the long, tedious process, the paperwork made it difficult to provide an easily accessible and accurate audit trail. These issues were a growing burden on the payroll and IT departments.

Selecting WorkForce Software

A project team, comprised of the vice president of finance, the enterprise project director, assistant director and several department heads and union leaders across campus, began evaluating timekeeping processes of other universities and looked at several software vendors. The team evaluated Oracle Time & Labor, Kronos and WorkForce Software. After extensive research, including a proposal, software demonstrations, customer references, etc., the team chose WorkForce. The project team felt that the flexibility of EmpCenter®, the technology platform, and the company's industry expertise would give them the solution they needed to effectively automate processes.

“Several factors led to a unanimous vote for WorkForce,” said Debbie Brown of Ohio University. Brown also stated:

“Other vendors told us we had to work within the confines of their packaged product. By selecting WorkForce, we could get the software configured to meet our needs for a fraction of the costs estimated by other vendors without limitation.”

WorkForce was able to provide integration to Oracle HRMS and Project Accounting, which completely eliminating the university’s manual process.

WorkForce offered a sophisticated solution with the capabilities to meet the complex demands in a university setting. A key feature required by Ohio University was the ability to track multiple job assignments for an individual employee. In this environment, it is common for an employee to hold more than one position concurrently with each position having unique pay rates, pay rules, time collection methods, and approval supervisor. This could cause issues with overtime pay, either not paying enough or paying too much, which is a liability for any organization. A key differentiator of the WorkForce solution was that EmpCenter’s multiple assignments feature would meet Ohio University’s requirements as is, unlike the other time and attendance vendors.

Implementation

WorkForce Software consultants provided expertise on product features, labor law compliance and best practices, offering a sophisticated solution with the ability to meet the complex demands present in a university setting. During the requirement gathering process, four unique employee groups were identified, each having different rules and requirements to accurately track time and to comply with state, federal and union labor laws. WorkForce supported the ability to configure and automate complex business policies that required manual calculations or custom programming in other systems.

Data Collection

The university chose two methods of employee data collection based on the responsibilities of the four employee groups and the work environments—badge readers and employee self-service. Badge readers offer hourly employees a convenient way to record start and end times with a simple card swipe. Salary employees have online access to the system through a self-service web interface into the system, allowing employees to report their time, submit requests for FMLA and time-off, and also view accruals and schedules. By empowering employees, the university reduced the number of phone inquiries into HR and payroll, providing a more productive environment.

Testing & Rollout

Prior to rolling out the system to all employees, numerous tests were conducted to ensure calculations were accurate and response times were adequate. The university provided test scripts for common timesheet occurrences to be tested. Each script was documented with expected and actual results; and, any changes that were necessary were forwarded to the WorkForce implementation consultant.

The university selected employees from each policy group and ran several parallel payroll processes. Training included classroom sessions at WorkForce headquarters, an in-house training lab at Ohio University for managers, guide sheets for students, and online tutorials.

“When Ohio University went live it marked a historic date in the history of WorkForce Software as our first higher education client,” said Kathy Cannon, director of operations, WorkForce Software. “We strive to provide organizations with the highest level of success but this cannot be done without proper preparation and testing. When our clients consistently fulfill their objectives we know we are providing a solution that works.”

Results

Ohio University recognized a number of tangible benefits and cost savings by implementing WorkForce’s EmpCenter. The most noteworthy benefit was a significant reduction in the amount of time it took to process payroll. Moreover, calculation errors and the time required to correct those errors have been eliminated. Overtime and FLSA calculations are performed within the EmpCenter software, preventing the chance of non-compliance or overpayment of overtime. Elimination of manual preparation, calculation, and entry of up to 6,000 timesheets per pay period has resulted in cost savings to the university of multiple full-time employees.

“Ohio University is a great example of how WorkForce’s EmpCenter software for higher education enables organizations to streamline workforce management processes, resulting in significant, measurable returns,” said Cannon. “Our unique product features, such as multiple assignments, proven methodologies, and industry experience continue to advance our success in this market space.”

