



Distributed Workforce Management Systems

Windows vs. Web-enabled

April 2008

36141 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150
(877) 493-6723

info@workforcesoftware.com
www.workforcesoftware.com

Table of Contents

Distributed Workforce Management Systems: Windows vs. Web Enabled.....	3
High Cost of Software Deployment.....	3
Solution to Workforce Management Software Deployment.....	3
Summary	4

Distributed Workforce Management Systems: Windows vs. Web Enabled

When organizations automate the time and attendance process, they see an immediate return on investment (ROI), from saving time to saving money. However, there are many factors involved when evaluating enterprise software solutions. This white paper reviews the issues involved with deploying time & attendance software via a Windows platform versus Web-enabled interfaces.

High Cost of Software Deployment

Over the years, technology managers have recognized that deploying software to desktop computers yields high costs. Time & attendance software presents a challenging issue, because it requires a wide distribution – your labor force. The traditional approach to installing Windows software incurs the following maintenance:

- Requires an administrator to install software on each desktop unless an automated system or networked-based installation is used
- Upgrades are cumbersome because the software must be reinstalled on each desktop
- Network-based installations can be difficult to upgrade if users are running the software on a 24x7 basis
- Conflicts between software systems are common and installing a new package can prevent another system from running
- Desktop installation can require substantial resources on each machine in terms of disk space
- Software failure can occur because desktop configurations are subject to errant modifications by the end user
- Traditional Windows-based client/server software requires an additional database layer of software to be installed on each desktop
- Requires each end user to make a separate connection to the database, which has a detrimental affect on the scalability of the software

Industry vendors such as Microsoft® have announced various solutions such as network profiles and the Microsoft Zero Administration Kit to help resolve some of these issues. When looking at deploying software solutions, employers consider the total cost of ownership, which includes hardware, software, maintenance, etc.

Solution to Workforce Management Software Deployment

Windows-based time & attendance software faces all of the potential problems mentioned above. Because the software is used by most, if not all employees, the cost involved is typically significant.

The solution to the above issues lies in using Web-based technologies and your intranet. With web-based solutions, the end user accesses the time & attendance software through a web browser. Since all desktops now come standard with Microsoft Internet Explorer and/or Netscape Navigator browsers, each desktop already has the tools necessary to access a variety of applications.

Traditionally, web-based applications have multiple components. The user interface or front-end component executes within the browser as HTML, Java, Active-X or JavaScript. The server side applications can be developed and executed in a variety of ways, but Java, C++, Visual Basic along with an application server, servlet, and/or active server pages are the most common back-end solutions.

This approach has many advantages. The client component is typically a thin component. The front-end handles the data presentation and user interface. This thin client model means that the desktop does not require any database software installed for proper execution. Typically, the only requirement is a compatible browser (with a compatible Java Virtual Machine installed if the client is a Java client).

The server side also has many advantages over a traditional two-tiered client/server system. Typically, the server side utilizes a multi-threaded design to maximize performance on a multi-processor server. The server side generally uses an application server and database connection pooling to gain high availability and scalability required to support hundreds or thousands of users.

This multi-tiered web-based design is ideally suited for time & attendance software. Time & attendance software that is widely distributed throughout an organization needs to run on a variety of desktops. The time & attendance software needs to support a very large user population. This is especially true in environments where many employees may access the time & attendance software in a short period, such as the end of the week.

Summary

Although the HR/Payroll system has been the traditional system to calculate accruals, retroactive adjustments and gross pay, it may not be the best practice for some organizations. The time & attendance system is probably the best choice for handling both accrual calculations and retroactive pay calculations. For simple pay calculations, gross pay can be calculated in the payroll system. The time & attendance system easily supports complex pay calculations. The implementation of a new time & attendance or HR/Payroll system may be the opportunity to examine these decisions and put best practices into place.

LEGAL NOTICES

Copyright © 2000-2008 WorkForce Software. All Rights Reserved.

WorkForce Software
36141 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48154
www.workforcesoftware.com
info@workforcesoftware.com
877.4WFORCE
877.493.6723

Copyright and trade secret laws protect the information in this manual. Access to this material is provided only under license or as part of an evaluation of the WorkForce Software solution specifically authorized by WorkForce Software. In no other case are you permitted access to this information. Nor are you permitted to disclose this information to any third party. If you have been provided this manual under any other circumstances, you must contact WorkForce Software at 877-4WFORCE (877-493-6723) to arrange to have this material returned immediately.