

MANAGING HOTEL EMPLOYEES EFFECTIVELY

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with FingerTec Biometric Time Clocks and Time Control Management Software, TCMS V2

Human resources are a crucial part of managing the hotel industry. In view of the servicing nature of the industry, 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 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 offence, 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 fool-proof 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 workforce in a hotel business as compared to F&B; the management of it is demanding and critical. Tardiness and non-attendance has 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 FingerTec Biometric time clocks and its bundled powerful Time Control Management Software (TCMS V2) can offer effective automation in hotel labor management system to help reduce costs and strengthen the operation of any hotel chains.

Biometrics

is the Effective Solution to Curb Time Theft

In an environment where different employees work around the clock in different shifts, tracing who comes in and who goes out, who works and who cheats their work hours is 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 labour' component, the associated stress, and lack of adequate management attention either to its causes or effects (Mills and Dalton, 1994).

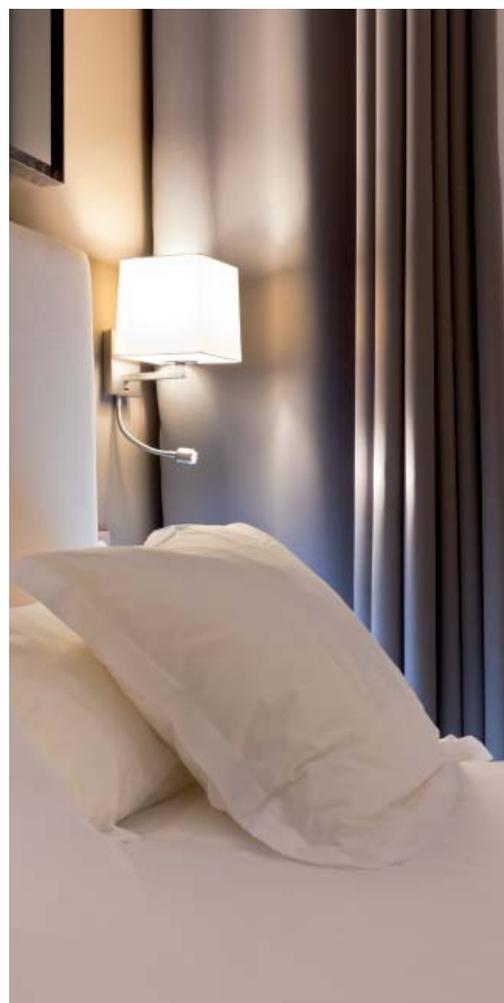
Biometric time clock helps to prevent attempts of escaping from being labeled absent through buddy punching, where one employee knowingly clocks time for another

person who wants to be absent. Biometric time clock 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 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, time stamp 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).

With FingerTec biometric time clock and TCMS V2 software, not one 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 privilege to review their staff's actual worked time through the detailed Attendance Sheet provided by the bundled software, TCMS V2, and the employee could view the attendance via the simplified tool, TCMS V2 Viewer. In case of missed punches or other adjustments being done on the attendance data, the authorized personnel are 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.



A Central Solution for Time Attendance and Access Control

TCMS V2 Helps Standardizing Processes and Reports

Time Control Management Software (TCMS V2) is one of the most powerful time and attendance solutions in the market that can help hotel management to enforce a more strict attendance and paying policies of the company. Hotels can identify policies on being at the work-station, 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.

With hotel management having a clear set of policies, TCMS V2 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 FingerTec TCMS V2 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, TCMS V2 Viewer provides a simple utility to view attendance data and FingerTec Biobridge SDK for integration with other 3rd party solutions.

TCMS V2 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 TCMS V2 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 FingerTec's FREE bundled software, TCMS V2.

With 29 highly sought after types of reports, TCMS V2 can help solve the common labor problems in hotel industry.

TCMS V2 is able to create an employee profile for each employee hired by the hotels. Keeping all employee's data and reports in 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 TCMS V2, hotels would be able to implement their planned policies company-wide.

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.

Biometric time clock is a great, proven way to eradicate buddy punching problems and the clear hotel policies set in the time control management software could help curb the rampant absenteeism and turnover in the service industry.

FingerTec biometrics time clock and its FREE software, TCMS V2, is a great investment for any hotel setup.

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