



Making Work Easy

How the latest workforce management trends will impact organizations around the world

Hello, leaders.

Once again, WorkForce Software and *Workforce* magazine teamed up to do some research, creating a “Workforce Management Trends” survey that was taken by almost 400 HR, finance, IT, and operations professionals.

Our findings taught us plenty about how to make work easier for everyone, managers and employees alike.

This report is a summary of what we’ve learned, a compilation of takeaways designed to help organizations retain happy, loyal, and incredibly engaged people.

Here are the key takeaways:

- 1. An organization’s structure shapes its workforce management approach.**
- 2. On-the-job autonomy increases employee engagement and retention.**
- 3. Moving forward, employers will need to focus on employee engagement and retention as well as data integration.**

That’s the 30,000-foot view.

[Now, let’s dive a little deeper...](#)



How are employers making work easy?

The *manual* days are dwindling ...

The days when managers record time & attendance (T&A), scheduling, and labor analytics using Excel — or even pen and paper — are numbered.

Moving forward, tasks like schedule creation and time tracking will be automated, engineered to execute even the most complicated workforce management functions in seconds, not hours.

Employers that haven't yet transitioned to an automated solution are hurting themselves and their people. After all, technical processes not only make work easy, they raise employee engagement and retention levels, too.

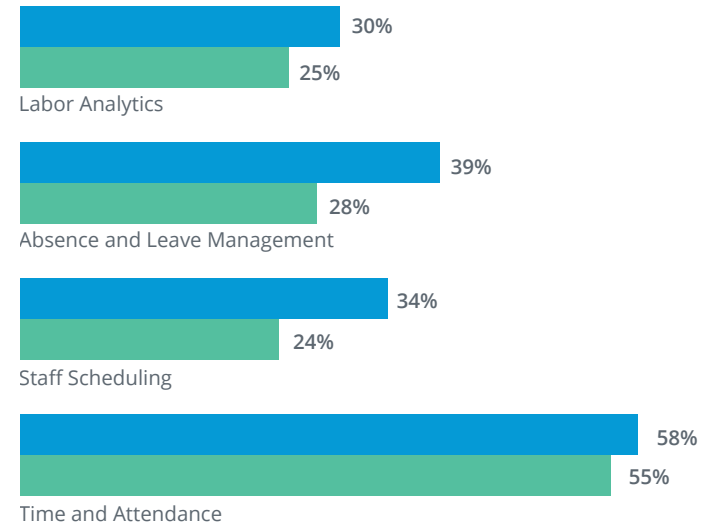
And business leaders are catching on: From 2015 to 2016, more organizations reported using vendor solutions over manual processes (Figure 1).

Over 50% of our respondents said that manual errors are a top T&A challenge, while 20% cited manual processes as a top scheduling challenge.

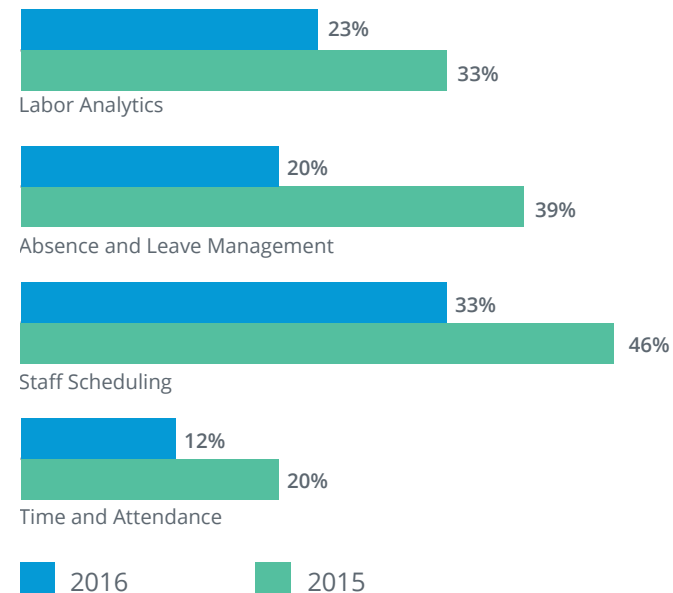
Automated systems eliminate these and other challenges by catching errors in their infancy, alerting managers when something is wrong in *real time*, rather than after the fact when it's already too late.

FIGURE 1

Organizations using vendor solutions for workforce management functions



Organizations using manual processes for workforce management functions



Organizational structure shapes every employer's WFM approach.

For example, organizations with mostly **hourly employees** report greater use of labor analytics.

Meanwhile, organizations with mostly **salaried employees** report higher use of absence & leave management functions.

The takeaway here is clear: Employee composition (i.e., salaried vs. hourly) will categorically inform how a workforce management solution should be structured for peak efficiency.

We also learned how managers might approach extended leaves of absence. (Figure 7)

If the worker is salaried: Managers are more likely to reduce the workload of remaining team members.

If the worker is hourly: Managers may opt to bring in outside labor to fill in the gaps.

"At our organization, there are no set schedules. We have hours of operation and, as long as employees are getting their work done and supporting their teammates, they can make their own schedules. This flex approach allows us to promote healthy work/life balances for everyone."

- Director, [survey open comments]

FIGURE 2

Organizations using vendor solutions for workforce management functions (by structure)

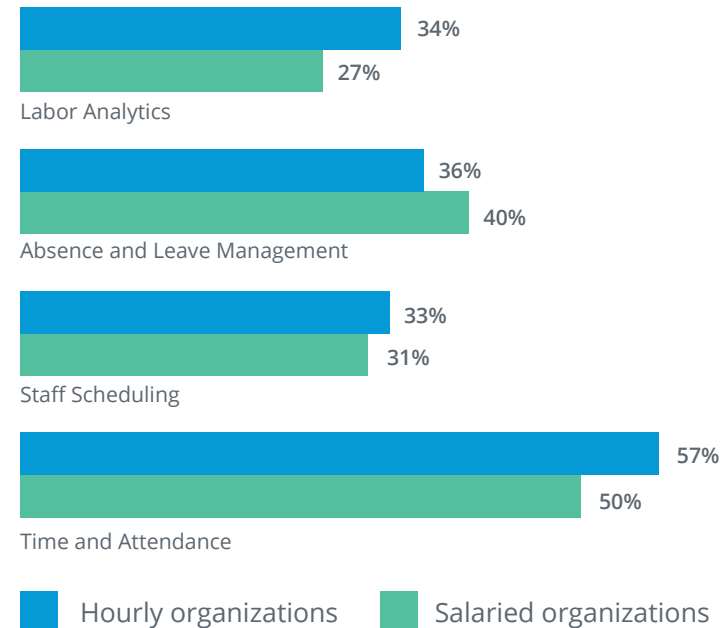
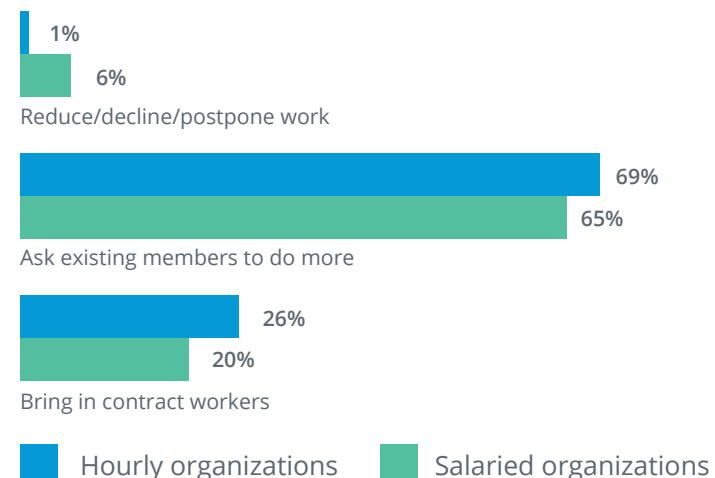


FIGURE 3

How organizations address extended leaves of absence (by structure)



How can employers make work easier?

Technology. *Software.*

Specifically, *workforce management software* that takes every employee's shift preferences into account before creating a weekly schedule. Software that also lets employees remotely give away, pick up, or swap shifts.

Plenty of employers give their people a modicum of control, using systems that let workers remotely view their schedules or request time off. But that's where the control typically stops:

In fact, *a quarter of all organizations still use paper and pen to manage schedules*, keeping employees from so much of the functionality that promotes a healthy work/life balance. A balance that drives down attrition rates while increasing employee engagement.

Speaking of work/life balance, here are several abilities every organization needs to consider giving its staff moving forward:

How are organizations giving employees a say in their scheduling?

Our research shows some fundamental differences between how salaried and hourly organizations approach this employment factor:

Salaried employees are more likely to be able to request flexible work schedules.

Hourly employees are more likely to be able to bid on shifts.

FIGURE 4

How employees interact with current workforce software tools

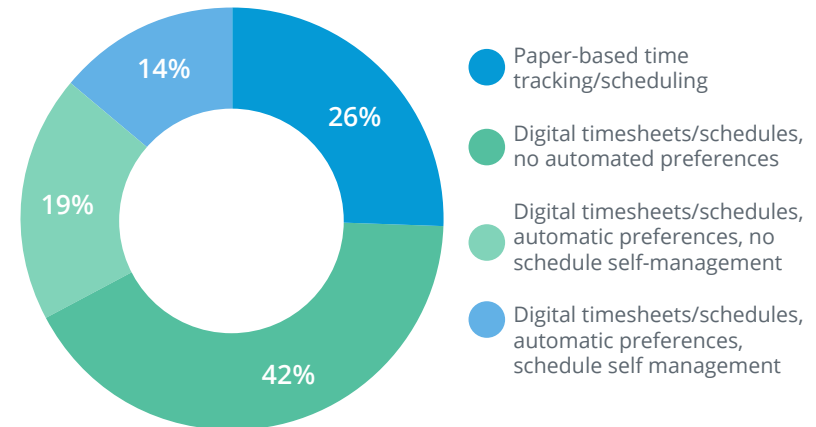
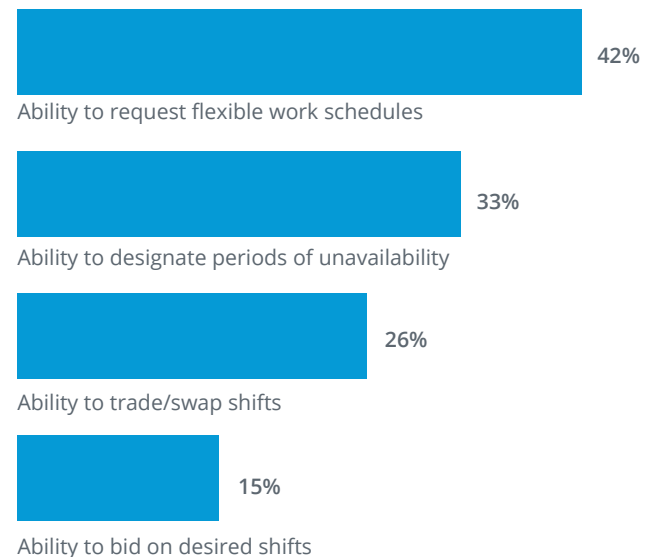


FIGURE 5

Tools to improve work/life balance



As far as *mobile workforce management* goes, hourly employees continue to enjoy certain T&A functionality. That said, the most popular task hourly workers can complete with their mobile device is checking their time-off balance, followed by the ability to enter time and access their schedules (Figure 7).

What holds organizations back from making work easy?

Moving forward, **engagement**, **retention**, and **data integration** will be top concerns for organizations whose goal it is to streamline and simplify workforce processes — and there are a couple things they should know before getting started:

1. **Technical adoption can create challenges.** For example: New software requires seamless data integration across multiple platforms, as organizations that start using workforce management software will need those solutions to work with existing systems.
2. **Embracing new technology carries tremendous benefits.** For example: The ability to catch time and payroll errors as they happen leads to cost savings as well as happier, more engaged, more loyal employees.

Moving forward, these will be the top concerns for HR departments ...

Human resources is the department that owns workforce management at 67 percent of organizations.

Over the next 12-18 months, HR leaders around the globe will seek to address a number of workforce management issues, from employee engagement to data security (Figure 8, p. 7).

FIGURE 6

Giving employees a say in their scheduling (by structure)

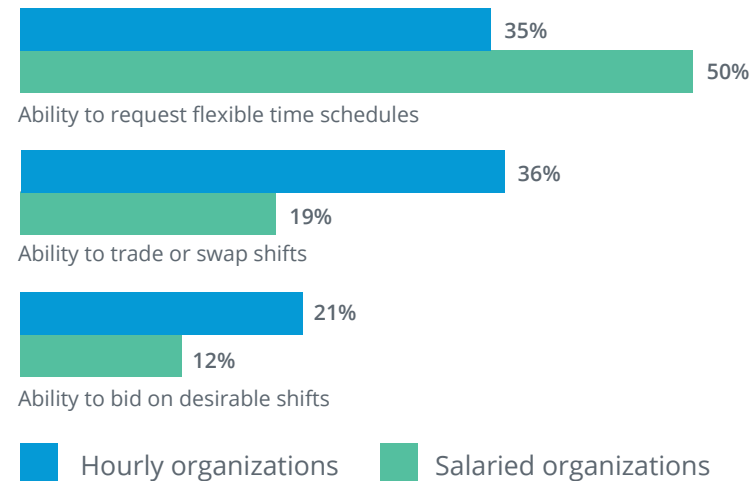
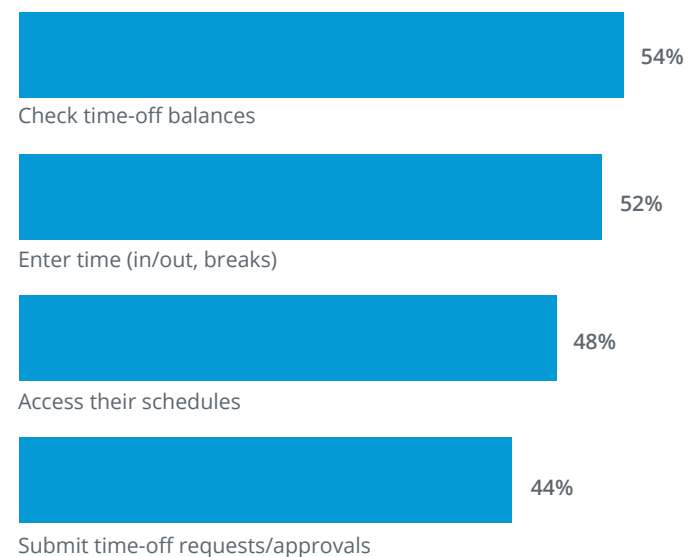


FIGURE 7

Workers can perform the following functions on a mobile device



What are the top benefits organizations offer their employees?

Our survey revealed that employers are giving their people more autonomy with their schedules, improving work/life balance and boosting morale in the process. We also learned that having a generous T&A policy can help employers retain top performers.

More recently, organizations have begun offering time off for life events, like childbirth and adoption. The vast majority of employers also offer a bereavement policy, among other benefits (Figure 9).

We also learned that many organizations, in an attempt to better comply with labor regulations, are instituting policies and procedures designed to prevent 1) fines and 2) the decline in employee morale that results from non-compliance (Figure 10).

FIGURE 8

Critical workforce management issues for the next 12-18 months

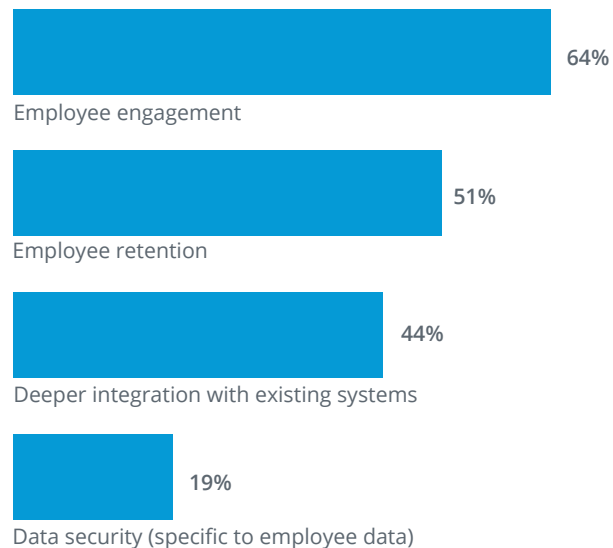


FIGURE 9

Top benefits offered to employees

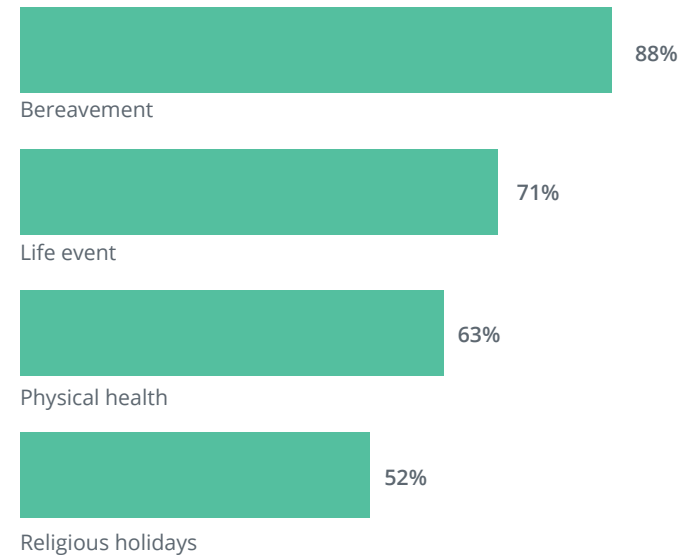
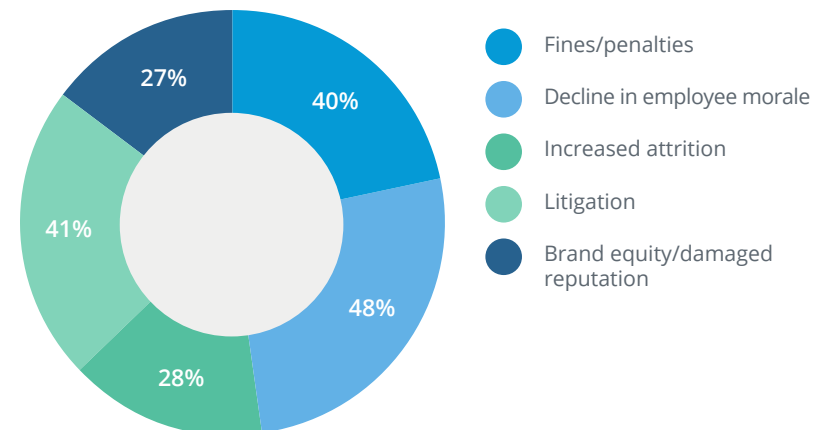


FIGURE 10

Our organization is concerned about the following aspects of noncompliance with labor regulations



Salaried and hourly organizations have different workforce management challenges ...

Salaried organizations are mostly concerned about employee engagement and data integration.

Hourly organizations, on the other hand, report that keeping employees is their greatest challenge.

Our research shows that extended leaves of absence are also handled differently depending on employee structure:

- **Salaried organizations** are more likely to reduce work.
- **Hourly organizations** often bring in outside workers.

Survey respondents at hourly organizations also reported more concerns over “leave abuse” than those at salaried organizations (Figure 12).

FIGURE 11

Critical workforce management issues for the next 12-18 months (by organizational structure)

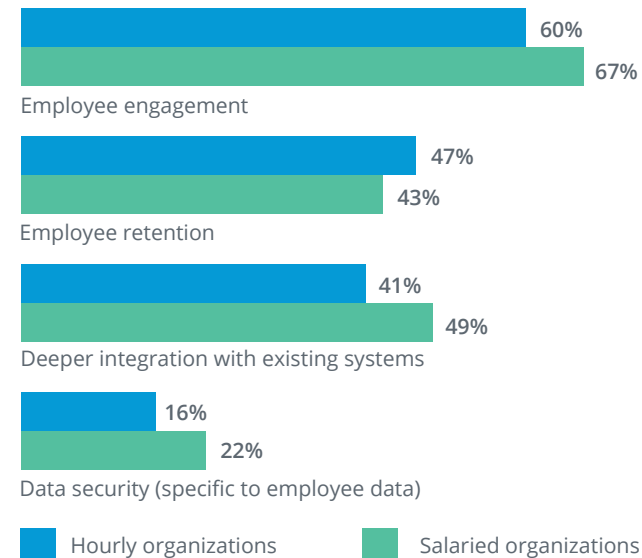


FIGURE 12

Organizational challenges regarding leaves of absence (by structure)



In Summary:

Employers that want happy, engaged, loyal employees must constantly be working to improve processes, to *make work easy*.

But it's a big task, one that can be difficult to conceptualize ...

These three key takeaways from our "WorkForce Management Trends" survey should make this hefty goal easier to digest.

1. An organization's structure shapes its workforce management approach.

Every HR leader needs to be aware of the unique concerns facing their specific organization, as their workforce structure (i.e., salaried vs. hourly) will impact how their workforce management solution is configured.

2. On-the-job autonomy increases employee engagement and retention.

The more control workers have, the happier they'll be.

3. Moving forward, employers will need to focus on employee engagement, retention, and data integration.

As employers adopt technical solutions, they'll need to ensure that their systems can seamlessly integrate the data, making it easier to review, evaluate, and learn from. In turn, they'll have the information necessary to positively impact their employees' work/life balance.



About

WorkForce Software

WorkForce Software is making work easy for the connected workforce around the globe. We provide enterprise and mid-sized organizations with real-time insights backed by pre-packaged domain expertise and proven flexibility.

Our cloud workforce management solutions empower employees and managers to digitize time and labor processes, optimize demand-driven scheduling, simplify absence management and enable strategic business insight. With complete visibility across all employee groups and locations, WorkForce Software equips organizations to reduce labor costs, demonstrate compliance and boost employee engagement, all while maximizing operational efficiencies.

For more information, visit workforcesoftware.com.

Workforce

Workforce is a multimedia publication that covers the intersection of people management and business strategy. Our content helps HR professionals approach their jobs from a more strategic, big-picture, business-results perspective.

Human Capital Media

The Human Capital Media (HCM) Research and Advisory Group is the research division of Human Capital Media, publisher of *Chief Learning Officer*, *Talent Economy* and *Workforce* magazines. The Research and Advisory Group specializes in partnered custom content solutions — customizable and proprietary deliverables that integrate seamlessly with existing marketing programs. Our proprietary Talent Tracker data tool gives practitioners point-of-need data analytics access to inform strategic HR decisions. By leveraging access to senior-level decision-makers and identifying industry trends, the HCM Research and Advisory Group can deliver keen insight into all areas of L&D, talent and HR.

Copyright © 2017 WorkForce Software, LLC. All Rights Reserved. WorkForce Software, WFS, and Making Work Easy are trademarks registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Appendix

Survey Dates

August-October 2016

Demographic Information

- Total number of respondents: 395
- Organizational level of respondents: 84% are manager level or higher

Company Size

- 1,000–2,499 employees: 47%
- 2,500–9,999 employees: 28%
- More than 10,000 employees: 25%

Geographic Distribution

- Mostly located in one country in one location: 31%
- Mostly located in one country with multiple locations: 41%
- Mostly located in one country with some global distribution: 12%
- Highly distributed with multiple locations across the globe: 17%

Workforce Composition

- Mostly salaried: 49%
- Mostly hourly: 46%
- Mostly contingent: 5%
- Shift work:

Yes: 85%

No: 15%

Industry

- Business/professional services: 10%
- Energy/utilities: 5%
- Finance/insurance: 9%
- Health care: 13%
- Manufacturing: 12%
- Public sector/education: 15%
- Retail/hospitality: 10%
- Other: 26%

**Note: Figures may not total 100% due to rounding*