Absence Management

# 10 ways to stop
## absence making
## your business sick

# A guide to taking control of absence management

**It is hard to envision a scenario where the absence of employees does not require some adjustment by the employer. Resources are critical to businesses during both off-peak and peak periods and absence management is one of the key levers of efficient resource management.**

However, globalisation, evolution of technology, cost pressures and intensified competition are some of the drivers pressuring businesses to adapt faster to change and to be more agile. In a business climate where the emphasis is on being lean and efficient, many are likely to find absence even more disruptive to business.

And the detrimental effects extend beyond just lost productivity. The cost of employee absence manifests itself in multiple ways. This might include paying for resource to provide cover, missing project deadlines, breaking workflow continuity, the impact on time for management and administration to deal with each absence and, ultimately, the effect on revenues and profits.

In this guide we uncover 10 ways that you can improve the process of managing absence and minimise its impact on core business processes.

# 1. Stop using paper based systems and spreadsheets to manage absence

Managing employee absence with manual processes, such as paper based forms or spread sheets, is highly inefficient and time consuming. One major problem here is the unknown cost resulting from cracks in the process that lead to holiday or absence being improperly recorded. In the eyes of some, allowing routine administration to consume time and effort is viewed as poor management. Today, where one of the focal points of skilled management practice is stripping out inefficiency, failing to take control of routine admin like holiday planning simply reflects badly on an organisation, departments and roles.

How much more revenue could be generated if the time and energy is expended on core business or customer facing activities?

# 2. Adopt a system that is easy to use

Avoid a poorly designed solution because it costs you even more. If people avoid using it you are paying for the poorly designed system that people don't use as well as continuing to waste time and effort on the manual process. One of the primary benefits of an intuitive, easy-to-use solution is it is rapidly adopted. There is no requirement for training which enables rapid uptake.

People prefer using a system when it's easy to use, accurate, reliable and saves them time.

## Publicis Group UK

*With some 450 employees, previously used a paper-based holiday and sickness management system that UK Group HR Manager Beckie Akers, described as dated. To book leave, the staff completed a form which was passed to their line manager for authorisation, then the HR department, where annual leave was co-ordinated.*

*Many line managers and PAs kept duplicate records, and staff frequently asked how much leave they had left. This was a huge administrative burden...*

# 3. Obtain access to real time data on absence

As an output from a manual absence management process, you might be able to pull together some form of report. But it takes time to bring the information streams together and the data quality begins to degrade as soon as the report is produced. A good software solution works with real time data, delivering business intelligence dashboards and real time reporting. Dashboards should be tailored to your needs and continually updated with the latest information. Complex data should become easy to read, understand and analyse.

Today's businesses need the agility to deal with fast moving operational situations. A restricted view of employee presence and availability limits your ability to respond quickly.

# 4. Connect remotely with mobile

With manual systems relying on paper forms, unstructured email or messaging communication, usually you need to be in the office to make a request. It's hard to track and mistakes do happen. However, a web-based solution allows managers and employees to use it from a tablet or a mobile. Registering unplanned absence or requesting planned absences and holidays are submitted and approved from anywhere and at any time. The employee or the manager simply needs to be connected to the internet. Today, companies of all sizes operate worldwide and mobility is key to your business. Paper-based absence management is simply not appropriate anymore.

Eliminating paper forms, having access to the system from anywhere, at any time and on any device minimises absence errors, reduces unplanned and unregistered absence as well as holiday refusals and disappointment!

## Altran Benelux

*As a global consultancy group, Altran Benelux has a large employee base spread over many countries. The majority of employees are consultants who work remotely at client sites.*

*The company's paper-based system for holidays was creating a significant drain on time for consultants, managers and the administration team. With no central or individual view of holidays taken or remaining, consultants would frequently call the administration team requesting updates.*

*The process of booking holidays was laborious, inefficient and required input from a number of people within the business...*

## 5. Reduce unplanned absences

Without a robust absence management solution, some staff do develop cavalier attitudes and take advantage of the odd 'sickie'. However, introducing a reliable system ensures that all absences are documented and properly recorded. Moreover, for managers it identifies which employees persist in performing badly in terms of absence. Visibility of the absence history means you can recognise the real team players.

And, of course, the simple fact that staff know their absence is being tracked properly discourages 'sickies' in the first place.

## 6. Cut the cost of absence

Absence management can be a complex and time-consuming process that affects revenue both directly and indirectly. First, absence and holiday admin burdens employees, managers and HR, distracting focus away from core activities that drive your business and revenue. A solution that makes absence request and approval easy and provides visibility on who is in and who is out makes absence management simple and ensures easy adoption across the organisation. Second, with accurate records for tracking unplanned absence and policy for HR process, the impact of holidays or sickness on project management is easier to deal with.

Avoid absence issues such as skills shortages, missed deadlines, unregistered absence and increased project costs for cover impacting on core business activities and denting your bottom line.

**Click here** to find out how much you can save with aCloud Teamseer by using the online calculator

# 7. Cloud-based absence management is more affordable and scalable

Buying software and installing it on your own servers and computers – the 'on-premise' approach - is a well-established practice. Today, cloud solutions complement and enhance existing IT infrastructure. They make the IT experience richer and more user-friendly and are better able to respond to the needs of the business. Cloud-based applications offer significant advantages and enable a 'PAYG' approach, where you only pay for 'consuming' the software you use. This eliminates the sundries that escalate cost such as hardware, installation, maintenance, upgrades and training.

Scalability is an important aspect providing full flexibility with the ability to rapidly add or remove employees to meet changing business needs. For example, your business could potentially grow organically overnight as a result of M&A. A cloud-based solution scales up almost instantly. The principle of only paying for what you use means you do not have 'dead' money invested in licensing or other upgrade expenditure that you may have purchased 'in case' but are not actually using.

Quite simply, the best cloud-based absence management solutions offer reduced costs that sit in OPEX budgets rather than CAPEX. It is the most affordable option for keeping in step with the demands of a growing business.

# 8. Give your leaders the resource intelligence to make better decisions

Real-time visibility of absence is one information strand. However, being able to see the far horizon of planned absence is equally important, enabling management to take better resource decisions. Identifying key metrics through business intelligence dashboards such as the average absence rates, the core sickness reasons or general comparisons and trends across the organisation, provides leaders with evidence on which to act, if necessary. Often, simply introducing an absence management solution drives an almost instant reduction in unplanned absence.

You improve productivity and the ability to achieve milestones and hit deadlines when you are able to better plan around absence.

## Cheyne Capital

*Cheyne Capital had no formal means of managing team absence, resulting in individual teams creating wall planners or spreadsheets of their own.*

*Tracking and approving holidays was carried out informally via email, with no reliable way for managers to avoid holiday clashes between individuals, check holiday entitlement, or monitor the number of days spent on activities such as client networking.*

*All too often, managers would find themselves stranded, with several key staff out of the office at the same time, meaning staff either had to cancel business trips and holidays or work unnecessary overtime...*

## 9. Safe and secure HR data with absence management

An online solution maintains a secure, centralised store and requires username and password combinations to enable authorised access. It means that absence records do not get lost and ensures that the data is managed from a centralised point by authorised users only. As security is a number one priority for users, the solution needs to be operated, supported and maintained in line with ITIL, the system of best practice for delivering high quality IT services. Nowadays, it is an absolute must for cloud-based vendors to conform to ISO27001, the quality management system and accepted standard that governs IT security. When picking your solution provider, you need to ensure that you take no risks and that you will be in safe hands. Software as a Service (SaaS) is not only a solution, it is also about the service. You can secure your success by making sure that your provider is strong enough to help you along the way from development, implementation to support, on-boarding, training and engaging users.

Long-established software businesses with widely deployed solutions for companies of different sizes and in different sectors, including some of the world's biggest, have the best security credentials.

## 10. Pick a solution that integrates with existing admin tools

One major drawback of software is it that it can be seen as a point solution and may lead to the development of isolated silos of information which cannot be shared with other applications. The best cloud-based HR management solutions need to have the ability to integrate with other software that is widely used. Whether it's synchronising with Microsoft Outlook or Google Calendar, integrating with back office systems like payroll, or collaboration tools such as Microsoft SharePoint, an absence management solution needs to integrate and bring value to the existing IT infrastructure.

Integration with other applications is a major factor in increasing efficiency through software automation. The need for a manual data exchange process is eliminated, saving time and boosting productivity.

## Blackadders

*Blackadders is one of the leading legal firms in Scotland. With its size and success came the increasing need to manage absences clearly and efficiently.*

*Before using aCloud TeamSeer, absence procedures had been separated between holiday planning carried out by the local Administration Managers, and sickness, tracked by HR at Head Office. Managers were also using a variety of methods, including spreadsheets and manual documentation, to administer absence.*

*These complications made absence management and recording difficult.*

*Managers lacked a comprehensive picture of staffing levels, often leaving them vulnerable to unpredictable fluctuations...*

# Sickness absence: This document could save you over £100,000

aCloud TeamSeer is a leading absence management software solution used by organisations around the world. It is proven to reduce the admin burden, with HR teams, employees and managers all seeing a reduction in admin time of up to 85%. TeamSeer drastically simplifies absence management and many of our customers see a reduction in employee absence of up to 25%.

### What is Access aCloud?

Access aCloud is a suite of integrated cloud-based applications developed and provided by the Access Group. We have over 10,000 UK business customers spanning various sectors, including well-known brands such as Sainsbury's, Legal & General and KPMG.

Founded in 1991, Access has over 20 years' experience in providing vertically focused industry specific software solutions. Proud recipients of 'The Sunday Times Best Companies to Work For 2016' award, our team of over 1000 employees provide an outstanding service with a personal touch.

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