

No Country for Old Construction HR Processes



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Ask just about any company today and they'll likely tell you their strongest asset is its people. Without a thriving, engaged workforce in place, companies tend to sputter. This is especially true in the construction industry, where human resources professionals have their hands full not only with today's complex projects, but with a changing workforce and employee management landscape amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

As economies and businesses cautiously begin to reopen after virtual lockdowns across the globe, the focus is now going to be on keeping employees informed, keeping them safe and keeping them engaged and responsive — all in real time. Depending on their size and the scope of work they take on, contractors can work on anywhere from two or three projects a year up to hundreds of projects. This means potentially cycling anywhere from hundreds to thousands of workers through companies' systems each year. From hiring and onboarding to safety and skills training to benefits to both union and non-union wages — construction HR departments are often buried in work — and workers — and they have to keep track of it all in a timely manner to keep projects moving efficiently.

The Dangers of Paper



Reliance on paper-based processes has long been a challenge for contractors. Now in the midst of a global pandemic, many workers are shunning paper altogether.

Amazingly, contractors have largely had to do this over the years with manual processes like paper forms, emails or spreadsheets. With new workforce dynamics spurred by COVID-19 added to already demanding modern construction needs, these manual processes simply will no longer suffice. While contractors are ready to get back to work, or ramp up the work they were doing, many workers are not going to want to handle paperwork in the field or in the back office. This means digitization of the data that keeps work — and workers — moving could soon be a must-do for contractors to ensure business continuity.

Some contractors have already started down this path. Just within the last 10 years or so contractors began adding new technology solutions to speed up processes like time card collection, payroll or the culling of labor hour data for project job costing. These ranged from full construction ERP solutions to third-party HR software systems and/or mobile applications. While they have certainly helped in some ways, these solutions often still require manual work to enter data between the office and the field or between software solutions.

Perhaps even more amazing is that some contractors, despite the availability of tech-aided HR management solutions, are still reliant solely on paper forms and documents. In today's modern age, this can lead to a number of challenges. Time card capture and payroll, of course, immediately come to mind. An accounting or payroll clerk for a general contractor, for example, might need to process all employees' hours by the end of the week in order to make the next payroll. But the contractor might have multiple jobs going at once, spread out across multiple regions or locales. One project's crew might be working overtime on Friday to finish a particular phase of a project. Once done, the supervisor collects final paper time sheets and drives them to the office, miles away, where the back-office staff is waiting — themselves working overtime — to enter them into the system.

Of course, in a rush, the supervisor misplaces two workers' timecards. Another worker fills out his time card wrong, omitting a full eight-hour shift. And two others didn't want to touch paper so they relayed their hours to the supervisor, who mistakenly swapped their hours. In the back office that

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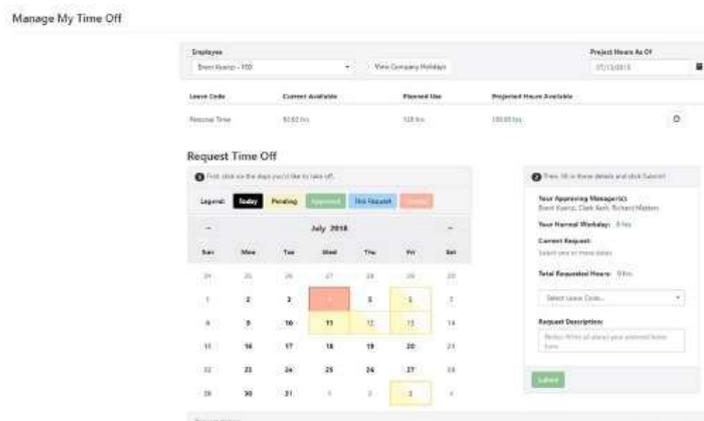
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night, no one notices the two missing time cards, or the incorrect ones. Those five workers all take a hit on their next paycheck. Once the errors are discovered, the back office team needs to chase down the missing paperwork, confirm the correct hours and fast track payments.

This is just one scenario. Navigating paper or email trails can prove challenging when there is a conflict between workers or project teams; they are not ideal for disseminating information like updated safety memos or benefits documents to spread out, disconnected teams; and they can prove problematic in tracking employee certifications, training, performance reviews and more.

Relying on these and other manual processes throughout the construction organization can cost both companies and their workers valuable time and money.

Building a Self-Serve Culture



Viewpoint HR Management provides the tools for employees or supervisors to self-serve their HR needs including facilitating time off requests, reporting labor hours, accessing important HR documents and more.

In this new age of social distancing in the workplace, the only viable path forward is to create a modern, self-service culture that leverages technology rather than paper. This keeps employees safe and takes the burden off already stretched construction HR professionals. To do this effectively, contractors need a cloud-based, integrated construction software suite. This provides a single source of HR data truth that extends out to the workforce in real time.

Trimble Construction One is that connected construction software suite that can meet construction HR professionals' modern needs. As part of the suite, Viewpoint HR

Management provides web-based portals and mobile apps that extend HR Management beyond the back office ERP. This allows employees to self-serve many of their HR needs, saving valuable time for burdened HR teams.

For example, an electrical contractor with technicians spread across a wide geographic region can have a single access point where technicians access a web portal from their mobile device and add their hours, request time off, report overtime, view their time-off balances, view and download their paystubs and W2s and much more. When data is entered, it immediately populates in the back-office systems and is routed to the correct supervisor for approval. And, the information the workers need is at their fingertips, eliminating paper forms and countless calls or emails to HR for updates

or personnel documents.

These connected solutions can also help get new projects up and running quickly. As work resumes and contractors look to hire new workers or rehire those that were furloughed or laid off, streamlining the hiring and onboarding processes become critical.

Take a heavy highway contractor, for instance, setting up a new project for construction of a bridge in a region it has never worked in before. As part of its contract, the contractor is expected to hire local workers to make up part of its on-site crew. Using HR Management, applicants can easily apply via the web portal and their digital applications are automatically tracked and routed to the correct hiring managers. Once hired, these new workers can access the same portal to receive and sign all of their paperwork, access must-read documents and more. This saves HR teams countless hours of handling these processes for each individual worker.

With changes to how construction workforces are managed in the future, having a connected, real-time HR solution is also becoming more important for sharing real-time policy updates, safety information and more. And it's not just pandemics where emergency information needs to be communicated in real time. A weather event, an accident or active external threat are all incidents where contractors should be able to share vital information with their teams in real time via tools like mobile devices and SMS texts.

Trimble Construction One and Viewpoint HR Management provide contractors with the modern tools they need to better manage their teams. Contractors can not only go paperless and relieve the typical HR burdens, they can create an environment where employee communication and collaboration is celebrated.

Connect with Trimble Viewpoint today to find out how your construction HR processes could benefit with Trimble Construction One.

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