Summer Forecast: Sunny With a High Probability of Absence

The summer season is here, and that means many employees are out on vacation between Memorial Day and Labor Day. While these folks hit the beaches, pools, and lakes, their coworkers are trying to keep things cool at the office and keep track of who's working when.

A scheduling nightmare

With large numbers of employees out enjoying the lazy days of summer, finding people to hold down the fort in the office can be a challenge for managers and employees who may not have adequate visibility into who will be in and who will be out.

75% perceive employee absences as having a "moderate" to "large" impact on productivity and revenue.[1]

It's not only the weather that's unpredictable

While trying to keep the schedules of planned absences, managers will also be faced with unplanned sick time and a more unpredictable challenge: "seasonal absence syndrome," or when employees call in sick to enjoy a day off. These impromptu days off can have negative effects on the workplace, from lowering productivity and morale to setting an unwelcome precedent.

Employees with supervisory responsibility spent an average of 4.2 hours per week dealing with absences, including obtaining replacements, adjusting workflow, or providing training.[2]

Your employees are missing: Do they have summer fever?

With the arrival of summer, your workforce may call in sick to enjoy a day off. You may get excuses like "I needed a mental health day"; "The weather was great and I wanted to enjoy the day"; or "My workload is heavy, so I spontaneously take time off when I can." Not surprisingly, you may find that the most popular days to call in sick are Friday and Monday.

Unscheduled absences due to seasonal absence syndrome can have a negative effect on all employees in the workplace. When their coworkers use a sick day for something other than illness, the productivity of remaining employees is impacted, since there are fewer people to get the work done. The misuse of sick time also sets a precedent that encourages other employees to call in sick when they are not ill and subsequently has a negative impact on employee engagement.

High impact of absence

Other effects of unplanned absences in addition to productivity loss:[3]

• Adds to workload	**69%**
• Increases stress	**61%**
• Disrupts work of others	**59%**
• Hurts morale	**48%**
• Reduces quality of work	**40%**
• Adds mandatory overtime	**29%**
• Requires additional training	**20%**
• Penalizes or reflects badly on group/team	**19%**

[1] SHRM, *Total Financial Impact of Employee Absences in the U.S.,* (2014), at 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] SHRM, *Total Financial Impact of Employee Absences in the U.S.* (2014).

Did you know?

60% — 80%

Average reduction in time required to manage unexpected employee absence by customers who use our solution[4]

What employers can do to counteract the negative impact of employee absence

There are many strategies that organizations can use to better manage both scheduled and unscheduled employee absences. Organizations can get creative and offer "summer Fridays" that allow employees to take a half or full day off on Fridays during the summer season, or another option is to provide more flexibility at work with telecommuting, compressed workweeks, and flex time. A popular trend eliminates sick time altogether and gives employees a bank of paid time off (PTO) to use at their discretion.

However, plan redesign by itself, like adopting a flexible PTO program, can fall short of delivering the potential value to the organization without automated tools to administer and manage the new program. Automating the process in a single database helps organizations better manage employee time off — no matter how creative the time-off policy. Our human capital management (HCM) solution presents a true picture of the scope of absenteeism and allows managers to track all types of absences — such as partial shift, scheduled, and unscheduled absences — consistently and fairly.

Automation provides significant benefits

Our HCM solution automates the administration and enforcement of employee attendance policies. And because the solution also has powerful time and labor capabilities — timekeeping, accruals, absence management, employee scheduling, self-service, and reporting — it offers complete, real-time visibility into who's in, who's out, and how the work gets done, allowing your organization to reduce the direct and indirect costs of unscheduled employee absences. Consistent policy enforcement can also mean significant reductions in employee grievances and absenteeism.

An effective way to manage absenteeism is with an automated solution that provides a clear understanding of all areas of absenteeism. With a clear understanding, supervisors, finance, HR, and payroll can better manage compliance, recognize absenteeism trends and abuses, and ultimately control the costs associated with absenteeism. In addition, managers will also need these automated absence tracking tools to adequately estimate their accrual liability.

Our HCM solution is a cloud-based platform that provides a full suite of seamlessly integrated applications for recruiting, onboarding, HR, time and attendance, scheduling, absence management, payroll, and more. A single employee record and unified platform allow for ease of use across all stages of the employee lifecycle — from pre-hire to retire.

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[4] SMB Group, *Cloud-Based Workforce Management Powers Midsized Organizations* (December 2015).