

SALT LAKE VALLEY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Solution Overview

Industry

Emergency Dispatch

Scenario

In the past, employees punched in and out of a time clock producing a file that was uploaded to the accounting system. It took two full days to verify the accuracy of time clock files for sick time, overtime and other adjustments.

Solution

Microsoft Business Solutions eTimesheets provides more detailed time recording and error-checking functionality while eliminating most of the manual work. The application also automates the process of charging time to cost centers, allowing the organization to more accurately allocate expenses.

Software Used

Microsoft Business Solutions—Great Plains

Financials

Human Resource Management

Customization Tools

Analytics and Reporting

Microsoft Windows® 2000 Advanced Server

Microsoft SQL Server™

Demographic Information:

Annual Budget: \$8.4 million USD

Number of Employees: 110

Number of Users: 5

Number of sites: 1

Switching from a time clock to a Web-based time recording system from Microsoft Business Solutions has reduced administrative time involved in payroll data entry and verification by 80 percent at Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center.

Salt Lake Valley Emergency Communications Center (VECC) handles emergency dispatching for 15 fire and eight law enforcement agencies in the valley southwest of Salt Lake City. The VECC service area covers approximately 120 square miles and serves a resident population of more than 566,000, plus a tourist population that balloons in the summer and winter seasons. With a staff of 97, 10 supervisors and three managers, VECC is the busiest public safety answering point in the state, fielding more than 4,000 calls per day.

Business Challenge

In the past, VECC shared a mainframe accounting system with a city government that is one of their member organizations. A time clock was used to track hours worked; however, it resulted in many challenges. The time clock generated a file that was uploaded into the mainframe system each pay period, but it didn't take into consideration factors such as sick time, vacation time and overtime, resulting in additional manual work to make these adjustments.

The time clock did not perform basic accuracy checks. For example, if employees neglected to punch out at the end of the day, they would be credited for working those hours until they punched out the next day. For these reasons, extensive cross-checking was required before the time clock file was entered into the payroll system, resulting in a slow and tedious process that took two employees a full day every pay period. Another problem was that an employee's time could only be recorded against one cost center even if they worked for multiple cost centers. This made it difficult to determine the cost of providing each individual service, and consequently made it difficult to set pricing for member organizations.

The Search for a New Solution

These issues led VECC on a search for a new business solution with improved payroll and business management capabilities. Dave Sanderson, Financial Manager of VECC says, "We chose [Microsoft® Business Solutions—Great Plains®] because it is designed from the ground up to take full advantage of the latest Microsoft technologies." With plans to migrate to Microsoft .NET, Microsoft Business Solutions will provide VECC with the latest platform, providing more connectivity, automation and time savings.

Another factor in the decision was the wide range of capabilities Microsoft Business Solutions offers beyond financials to provide functionality such as human resource management and project accounting.

"We have significantly reduced our administrative expenses while improving the accuracy of our cost center accounting by switching to eTimesheets from Microsoft Business Solutions."

Dave Sanderson
Financial Manager
Salt Lake VECC

Success with eTimesheets

One of the most successful components of the new solution is the eTimesheets module, which is designed to automate the process of entering time data, replacing paper timesheets, time clocks and other time tracking systems. Using eTimesheets, employees can record sick time and vacation time and also enter explanatory notes, such as why they missed a day. This has eliminated manual input and cross-checking. It is now possible for employees to charge their time to specific cost centers, resulting in the ability to accurately allocate expenses.

"We found eTimesheets to be very easy to set up, and our employees learned to use it without a hitch," Sanderson says. All 110 VECC employees now use eTimesheets to update their online timesheet information—either daily or at the end of the pay period. Since employees have an online record of their submitted timesheets, they can verify information against their paychecks without having to contact the accounting department.

The new process has increased efficiency and saves VECC valuable time. "The process of exporting files from the time clock and importing them into either the mainframe or PC program has been eliminated. The timesheets are automatically routed to the supervisors, who are now empowered to make sure their team members' time entry is accurate. Timesheets can be reviewed and approved with a few clicks of the mouse, and all related information is automatically updated into Microsoft Business Solutions," Sanderson says.

Superior Reporting

When VECC implemented Microsoft Business Solutions, they found improved reporting flexibility and an unprecedented level of detail. FRx Financial Reporter uses a spreadsheet-like interface to deliver the ultimate in report design flexibility. Powerful row, column and reporting-tree building blocks make it easy to construct new reports. The integration between FRx and Microsoft Business Solutions means that changes to the chart of accounts are instantly reflected in the financial statements, reducing maintenance time.

"I now use the FRx module to produce my management reports and financial statements," Sanderson says. "I can easily format reports with the latest data in any way that I want to see them. The data is live so if we see a number we don't understand we can simply click on it to drill down to the underlying detailed transactions."

For more information about Microsoft Business Solutions, visit www.microsoft.com/BusinessSolutions

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