



Using payroll as a foundation for business transformation

Think because all your people get paid, you have payroll made? Chances are you don't.

Have you considered that online timesheets and leave is not just about replacing paper, and the benefits are not just about payroll?

If you are looking at implementing elementTIME or any online timesheet, leave, scheduling, and workforce reporting solution, there are a few things we recommend you consider.

One of the most common things we find councils overlook is that online timesheets, leave, and scheduling are not just about changing payroll – though certainly that can be a big part of it.

It is easy to think the measurement of the success for payroll is people getting paid. Don't get us wrong, it is the important outcome, but considering how you measure the success of your payroll should factor in a lot more than getting the bank file lodged on time.

Changing how you think about payroll can ensure you and your organisation get the benefit out of an often overlooked but necessary and regular business event.

Done right, payroll allows organisations to ensure they don't just meet their obligations to pay staff entitlements correctly, it provides an anchor point for a council to build and foster cultural change, management empowerment, accountability, and responsibility.

Payroll is one of the few council business events that touches all staff within a council and happens every week or fortnight. This means it can be used as a unique focal point for evolving change throughout your organisation.

At a staff level

Most staff hate timesheets, but they are important for many reasons:

- ✔ They provide evidence of a period of work ensuring employees get the right entitlement accurately and on time, including overtime calculations, shift loading, allowances, and penalties.
- ✔ They allow staff control of their record of work, ownership of time, leave balances, work trends, and other information.
- ✔ They provide evidence of interactions (or lack of interaction) and transparency over issues that may not be the fault of staff.
- ✔ Providing staff with a single interface for leave, time recording, scheduling, and duty requests makes the process clear and easy to understand, removing excuses for staff not fulfilling their obligations.
- ✔ Coupled with rostering or proactive tasking, timesheets can transform communication, expectations, and understanding for staff about what they should do and what they did.

At a manager / team level

- ✓ Altering expectations around how staff account for time provides evidence of how staff work, what they worked on, when they worked, and what they are entitled to.
- ✓ Understanding how staff work allows managers to gain evidence-based data on what activities and tasks are consuming the time - including consuming the most time, the impact of seasonal change on task demand, and the split between planned 'productive' time and unproductive or 'non-outcome' time.
- ✓ Providing managers with the full picture of direct report's work records for the week in a single place can also help ensure managers understand the full cost of how they are managing staff - from the actual cost of overtime after adjustments to understanding the value of shift allowances and penalties.
- ✓ Offering the ability to track staff trends over time like leave taken, excess time, and engagement can help remove excuses around "I didn't know because I couldn't see". Automating the "busy noise" around decisions for managers as to what they should or should not be responsible for allows shifts to a "no excuses" culture that can drive an expectation for transparency and accountability in other areas.
- ✓ Leveraging a required function like payroll and supporting managers to appreciate the value of understanding and using payroll data to proactively manage their direct reports can transform organisation efficiencies one team at a time.

”elementTIME has really driven accountability with our managers to understand and address the way their staff are working.”

Carina Congdon

Payroll officer at Yorke Peninsula Council

At an executive and organisational level

Payroll is something that happens frequently: every week or fortnight (and sometimes more often if you include special pays) and it is governed by some very inflexible deadlines for when certain activity must occur. Unfortunately, rather than meaning most payroll rules, processes, and business is 100% clear, consistent, and repeatable due to the frequent and controlled nature of the payroll cycle, the opposite is true.

Many payroll staff just don't have time, or capacity to enact proactive change. As a result, they focus on solving the issue for the payrun and are not able to address wider root causes for why the issues exist in the first place.

This means some payroll officers, by default, start to inherit responsibilities of poor performing managers just so they can complete the payrun on time. This creates a circular effect where the more 'problems' payroll officers magically solve for managers and users, the more managers and users rely on payroll to solve the issues. This reduces understanding, awareness, transparency, and accountability. Over time this can erode the accountability or care managers have for what should be an important responsibility. Especially as, for many councils, the cost of staff is one of the council's largest expense lines on the budget.

While payroll maybe aware of issues or gaps, in most cases they do not have the ability to influence change, nor are they empowered to enforce managers to meet business requirements or expectations.



Ensuring processes and rules are set, clear and transparent allows organisations to reset. **Shifting to online tools helps create the consistent application of rules, policies and legal requirements without risking or requiring individual staff to be held as the change agents.** The tools can also be used to drive the visibility of data, accountability for decisions, and to highlight gaps in processes that need to be changed.

Working with your online timesheet, leave, scheduling, and workforce reporting solution, your organisation should be able to evolve using the foundation of a transparent, consistent process. You should be able to drive improvements throughout your organisation, from providing the impetus to finally get all staff onto council email, through to reviewing the way business has been done - from naming conventions for plant and work-orders through to robust data around the true wage cost for delivering projects.

Record, manage, understand, and evolve your organisation one pay period at a time.