



Finding the Perfect Fit: **Choosing the Right Time and Attendance System**

Successful companies are continuously looking for ways to make their businesses more efficient. Since labor costs are often the single largest expense, an effective Time and Attendance system may be just the way to accomplish that goal. So how does a company choose the right system to maximize ROI and efficiency? Here are three tips to get your started.

1. Understand the Basics

Understand that there are two basic functions a Time and Attendance system should perform: first, automating the collection and management of employee time and activities, and second, improving the company's ability to allocate its labor resources. If you keep these two central goals in mind, you'll stay on track during your research...which brings us to the next point.

2. Research

Smart consumers educate themselves. Since there are literally hundreds of Time and Attendance vendors, it may be a daunting task to weed out those solutions that don't suit your needs. But taking the time to do some preliminary research to decide which companies you want to contact will make the job easier in the long run. The Internet is a good place to start.

Make sure you explore each company's 'full package', which includes hardware components, software, accessories, support, partners and scalability. Look for a system that meets your requirements now, but don't forget about the future: find a vendor whose systems are adaptable and can change and grow when your company does. The modular-component approach taken by some vendors is ideal, enabling simple adaptations and modifications to the system to meet the changing needs of their customers.

When deciding on hardware, select a vendor that uses non-proprietary language so that the hardware can communicate with any software you select, both now and in the future. And look beyond compatibility with just Time and Attendance software; down the road, you may want to integrate Job Costing, Shop Floor Data, Payroll, HR or other software applications. Having to replace the hardware to accommodate those future needs would greatly reduce the ROI and eat into the savings the system was designed to yield, so getting it right the first time is critical.

3. Establish Criteria and Questions

Once you have completed your research and narrowed the field, create a checklist of the features and functionality that your Time and Attendance system must have. Do you need Access Control, to restrict entry to certain areas of your facility? Will you use the system for Job Costing or Shop Floor Data Control? If you know what you're looking for, it will be easier to identify the vendors that fit your needs.

Make a list of questions to ensure that each system you are investigating does, in fact, meet your criteria. Don't forget to consider how you'll capture the employee data that will populate your new Time and Attendance system. Some questions you may want to take into account are:

Will you need data collection equipment, or are your employees entering data through existing PC's or workstations?

Will your employees have badges or cards for swiping, or will you opt for a biometric fingerprint identification system, which can be used without badges or PINs, and can increase security, as well?

Ultimately, the system you pick is an investment in your company's bottom line, so choose wisely – finding the perfect fit will pay off in the long run.

(For information on Synel Data Collection Systems please visit www.synel-usa.com or call 1-877-796-3546.)