5 POINT GUIDE TO
SELECTING TIME RECORDING METHODS & DEVICES

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Choosing the right Time Recording system is often a detailed and exhaustive process for many organisations and selecting the method for capturing time worked can be overwhelming. There are so many different variables involved such as staff groups, location, company environment, budget etc and added to this is the fact that the choice offered by most attendance recording vendors is usually quite limited.

Indeed, the main issue we find when consulting for companies is that the data collection devices do not meet the needs of the organisation. The issue isn't that the device does not work, rather it doesn't meet the specific needs of the organisation.

HFX has been a specialist in Time Recording and Scheduling solutions for over 50 years with more than 500 customers of all sectors and sizes.

We pride ourselves in taking a consultative approach to advise companies on which mix of our modules (such as time and attendance, scheduling, flexitime, access control, budgeting and costing) and time recording methods (mobile, QR code, proximity, biometrics etc) would best suit each business.

1. ON-SITE VS REMOTE/HYBRID WORKING

Companies need to consider whether their staff are working remotely as this impacts on time recording choices. Remote may mean working from home, at a client location, in a construction site or remote office that isn't connected to the internet. Another consideration is whether the device will be connected to local software or cloud software.

LOCAL	REMOTE
Network based units	Telecheck
Self Service	Mobile Application
Local PCs	Device with 5G enablement

2. SINGLE VS MULTI-FUNCTIONAL USE

When investing in Time Recording devices there are two errors that can be made in selection: The first is 'tunnel vision' where significant sums are invested in single function devices when they could have improved productivity and communication through multi-functional devices that can capture more data and provide information and self-service functionality to staff. The opposite is also true where organisations over-reach in purchasing much more expensive devices that can do everything, but actually the requirements are limited. Each organisation is different and should consider whether the additional functionality will be beneficial to the organisation – some of the main areas to consider are listed below;

FUNCTIONALITY	BENEFIT
Employee Self Service	Reduces queries to HR/Payroll, improves communication
Access Control/ Visitors	Restrict access to sensitive physical locations
Task/Cost Centre Recording	Improves productivity, time savings and accuracy
Communication	Overtime requests, vacant shifts, holiday management

3. HIGH TRUST VS LOW TRUST

Each organisation has its own "trust-level" for employee Time Recording which whilst not formalised has developed over time and in response to any abuses (perceived or actual) that the organisation has identified. Within Time Recording, these tend to centre on 'time theft' where overtime hours are inflated and lateness is under-reported and on 'buddy punching' where a colleague clocks in/out on behalf of an absent employee. The type of device selected needs to address the trust-level requirements of the organisation.

HIGH TRUST DATA COLLECTION	LOW TRUST DATA COLLECTION
Self Service (e.g. via web)	QR code
PIN	Mobile Applications with Geo Tracking
Card	Biometric Devices (Finger/Hand/Palm/Face)
Telephony	

4. LOW VS HIGH HYGIENE

Hygiene has always been critical for many businesses (e.g. clinics, care homes, food manufacturing) but is now being more widely considered since the coronavirus outbreak. It is best practice and cost effective to consider infection control within all business - each year Flu costs UK organisations £1.35 billion due to absences. Some time recording devices are more prone to spread infection spread than others.

LOW HYGIENE	HIGH HYGIENE
Finger	Contactless (Palm, Face)
Hand Reader	QR code
Card	Proximity

5. OFFICE VS INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Another aspect of device selection relates to the physical environment where the devices will be located. The device may look great but if it is a factory or warehouse with high dust/oil and rough treatment by staff then it will not last or worse will not function at all. Similarly, in food manufacturing environments where washdowns are common, an IP rated device is a must. A simplified guide of the types of devices for each environment is listed below:

INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENTS	OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS
Ruggedised casing (Robust Environment)	QR code
IP Rated (Washdowns/outside building)	Mobile PC
Hand Readers (Dirty, Dusty, Oil)	Biometric (Finger, Face, Palm)
Proximity Readers (contactless)	Card

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SUMMARY:

The right time recording method for your organisation is often the result of combining and prioritising the choices in response to each of the 5 areas detailed above. There are always trade-offs to be made during the selection process, but the wrong choice can seriously impact both the successful adoption of the solution and the value derived.

It is also not a "one size fits all" approach.

Within many organisations there are different staffing groups (e.g. office staff, manufacturing staff, logistics) and environments, each with specific requirements that differ from other environments, so a "mix and match" approach may well be appropriate in these situations. Again, with each solution, it is important to consider costs, benefits, GDPR and practicality in deciding on a specific device.

THE SOLUTION:

HFX currently offers multiple time recording methods and integrates with a wide range of devices which enables organisations to mix and match time recording methods and devices across their different environments and staffing groups. It also means that customers are not locked into a specific software or hardware vendor and can change either one without impacting on the other. This smart approach enables organisations to be agile and adaptive.

The HFX solution does not simply provide integration, but also manages the devices, includes error management, secure template propagation as well as provides asset location and tracking. The solution can also enrich or transform data on demand to provide additional information in real-time.

Customers can also take advantage of the HFX Hardware Deployment and Support Service to both install and maintain the device estate through our UK wide engineering teams.

SOLUTION & SERVICES:

- **Full workforce management solution (Time Recording, Scheduling, Flexitime, Access Control...**
- **Consultancy**
- **Integration services: Time recording, HR & Payroll systems and Time Recording devices**
- **Device Installation**
- **Support and Maintenance Services UK-wide**

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