



Notifications for Time and Attendance

Summary

Notifications have become standard features of consumer mobile apps. But they can also increase user efficiency and responsiveness when coupled with a time and attendance system. This white paper examines the unique benefits of utilizing notifications for time and attendance. It takes a closer look at the notification process, and reviews useful characteristics to consider when choosing a time and attendance system featuring notifications. Such characteristics include multi-channel alerts, a menu of alert actions and flexible alert configuration.

Saved by Your Smartphone

You are at the airport waiting to board a plane for a much-needed vacation. Three hours earlier, you responded to an email from your payroll vendor regarding a question that, if not resolved before your flight, will result in manual checks being cut, with the possibility of errors in employee pay. As a payroll administrator responsible for employee paychecks, you try to avoid your growing anxiety by checking your smartphone for a response from the vendor, but your inbox remains empty. As the barista hands you a freshly brewed cup of coffee, your smartphone chimes—you have email. You open your inbox to find a reply from the vendor assuring you that the problem has been resolved and payroll will be processed on schedule.

The smartphone chime that alerted you to the vendor's email is one instance of a growing software trend called "alerts and notifications." Designed to trigger an immediate response, notifications announce to users that an action needs to be taken or new information is available. Common examples include new email alerts, software update notifications, calendar alarms and game turn notifications.

Due to their usefulness, notifications aren't just for consumers. They have found their way into business applications as a way to increase business profitability along with user responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability. Consequently, notifications are increasingly useful for time and attendance systems where a quick response to time card exceptions, missing punches and other time-sensitive information is critical.

Benefits of Notifications for Time and Attendance

In the context of a time and attendance system, notifications offer two significant benefits; they:

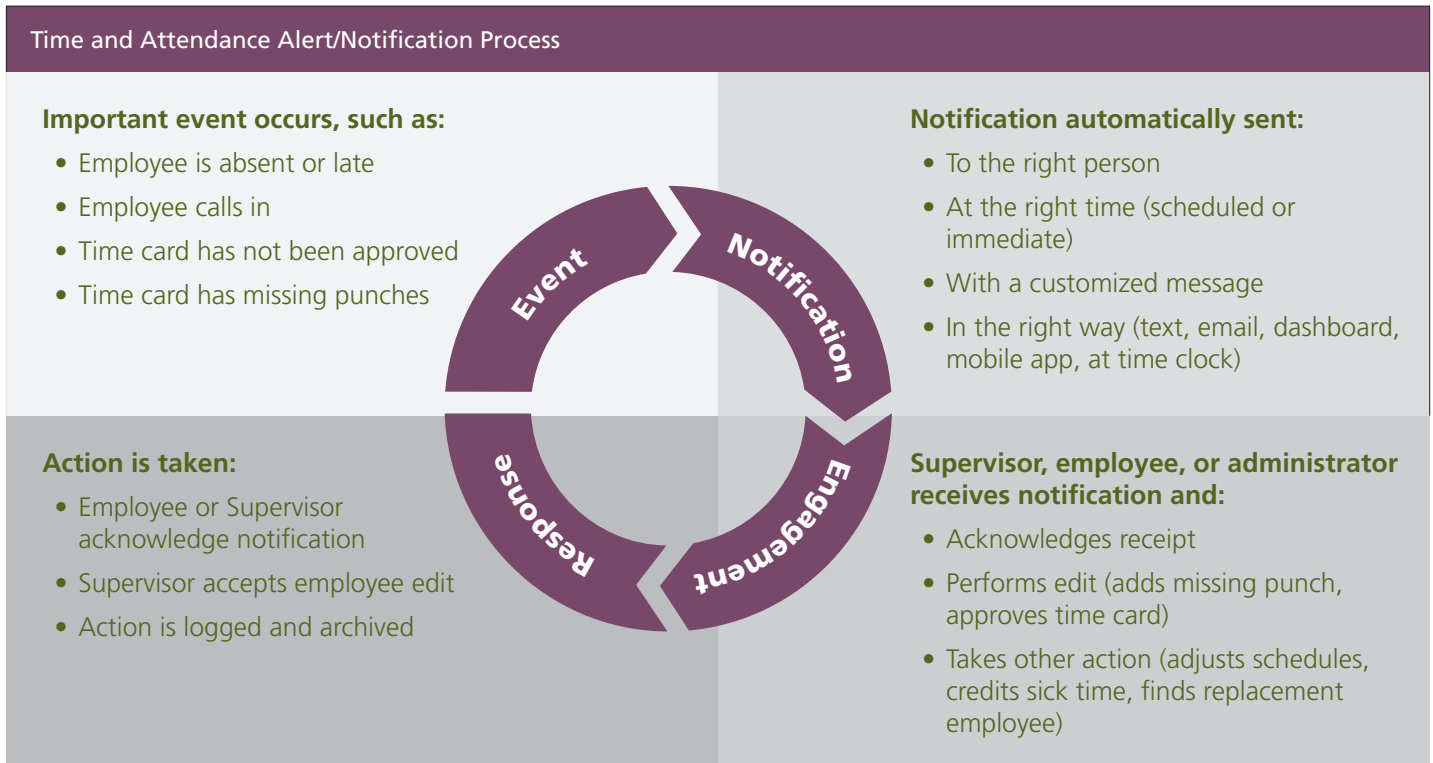
- Close the loop in employee and management communication.
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of the time and attendance system.

Alerts and notifications facilitate a feedback cycle so that employees and managers take action when it's required. This ensures missing information is completed, exceptions are reviewed and cleared, time cards are submitted accurately and on time, and payroll can be completed with few interruptions. It also frees employees and managers from the need to continually inspect time cards for potential issues since the system automatically notifies them of issues that demand their attention.



The Notification Process—A Closer Look

The notification process goes through four stages: Event, Notification, Engagement and Response.



- **Event.** A specific event triggers the system to initiate communication with a user.
- **Notification.** The employee or manager receives an automatic alert that action is required.
- **Engagement.** The employee or manager takes action through the time and attendance system or mobile app or at the time clock.
- **Response.** Once action is taken, the system responds to confirm the action and archives it for historical records and reporting.



Let's look at a specific example for an employee and his supervisor. An employee forgets to punch out at the end of a workday (event). The time and attendance system immediately sends an email to the employee to remind him to add the missing punch (notification). When the employee punches in the following morning, the time clock prompts the employee to add the missing punch (engagement). Once the punch is added, the supervisor is notified and approves the punch added by the employee (response).

Using Notifications for Time and Attendance

When selecting a time and attendance solution, look for a system that offers useful notification functionality, including multi-channel alerts, a full menu of alert actions and flexible configuration options.

Multi-channel alerts

Although most people assume notifications are only for smartphones, notifications can use multiple channels:

- **Mobile devices.** Not limited to smartphone, mobile devices include tablets, laptops and more. The time and attendance system must feature a mobile app accessible from any device so that users can receive and securely respond to system alerts through their preferred devices.
- **Time clocks.** Time clocks linked to the time and attendance system are useful outlets for notifications since employees are directly engaging with them already.
- **Basic mobile phones.** Employees and supervisors can receive text notifications with basic mobile phones—smartphones, apps, and data plans are not required.
- **Desktop applications.** Without time clocks, most employees will interact with a time and attendance system through a desktop application. In addition, many managers regularly log into the time and attendance system. A web-based time and attendance system will offer the most flexibility since employees can log into the system from any computer in any location through a web browser.

Menu of alert actions

The most useful notifications are multidimensional, allowing organizations to select from a menu of alert actions that best complements the company's structure, day-to-day operation and employee needs. A menu of alert actions should include:

- Missing punches
- Late arrivals
- Absences
- Unapproved time card
- Leave requests
- Leave request approvals
- Approaching overtime
- Approaching full-time



Flexible configuration

For optimal efficiency, notifications are preconfigured so that an event automatically triggers notification. Flexible configuration is vital to creating alerts that are useful and effective. Configuration options should include:

- Who receives the notification
- When notification should be delivered
- Which information should be included in the notification
- How to communicate the notification with other stakeholders (managers, supervisors, etc.)

With these basic characteristics, an organization feels confident that the selected time and attendance system's alerts and notifications can be configured to suit the needs of its employees and managers.

Conclusion

Alerts and notifications shift the time and attendance user's interaction with the system. Instead of relying on employees and supervisors to constantly watch out for potential time and attendance issues, alerts and notifications tell users when they need to take action and arm them with necessary information. This promotes efficiency among users and increases the effectiveness of the system throughout the organization.

About Attendance on Demand, Inc.

Attendance on Demand supports the labor management needs of thousands of companies and more than a half million employees across North America. Launched in 2006, Attendance on Demand is a rapidly deployed, cloud-based solution that minimizes a company's risk and technology investment while providing advanced features for securely managing labor data—calculating pay rules, scheduling employees, budgeting labor, and automating recordkeeping for labor law compliance. With standard uptime over the industry average of 99.995% and above average customer retention rates, Attendance on Demand removes the worry of maintaining expensive infrastructure. An extensive North American distribution network helps organizations use Attendance on Demand to reduce labor expenses and improve decision making.



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