How Personal Mobile Devices are Transforming Human Resources
Investing in HR technology is an important first step in modernizing your human resources organization. Making that technology work in real time on employee’s mobile devices will boost engagement, productivity and retention.

In a recent poll, 65% of HR executives said they wanted to play a more strategic role in their organizations. So, what’s standing in their way? Work! The harsh reality is that HR spends 70-80% of its time on low-value, administrative tasks. This is why the first step in transforming human resources is getting rid of tedious and time consuming processes.

Of course, technology can offer companies a way out of this age old conundrum by automating administrative tasks so that you eliminate paperwork. Using the right technology can also make employees feel more engaged. This is a big plus when you consider that employee engagement is actually the #1 goal of global HR executives. After all, engaged employees feel more connected and are 37% more likely to stick around. Companies with high employee engagement also have nearly three times the average operating margin.

Is HCM enough?

Whether the process is paper based or automated with Human Capital Management (HCM) software, there are a few elements of human nature that can cause a problem with efficient HR process. It’s common for people to allow tasks to pile up, so these can be addressed at a “more convenient time.” The convenient time inevitably doesn’t arrive in one’s busy day. When the pile starts to get large, its size creates its own delay factor as now it seems too daunting to deal with. Plus, with any process, there are times when approval or rejection isn’t a simple decision, and some discussion back and forth is required to make progress. And all these situations can happen with employees, managers and HR personnel alike. It’s a wonder that anything gets accomplished at all!

Of course, the best way to address this is to make processes easy and quick. Automation was intended to do this, but today it’s more often likely to make things more complicated. What is needed are simple tools that focus the user on the specific request in real-time so the process is better connected to the work at hand. Adding mobile devices to the equation can be the answer and if done right, can take advantage of the many moments throughout the day where work could be done quickly.
Last year alone, consumers purchased roughly a billion smartphones. And these phones are coming to the workplace with the employee. Why not take advantage of that? Imagine putting simple tasks like vacation requests or expense reports onto a person’s mobile device to be quickly handled the same way people handle their personal calendars or online banking? As executives feel the mounting frustration with outdated processes, there’s growing pressure to change – to develop tools that can make work processes faster, easier, and more engaging.

What does Mobile HR look like?
You already have the ability to send emails to people and ask them to take action on their desktop. Going mobile is far more than adding a different button to that email. Today’s mobile HR technology lets you push time-sensitive information and tasks to people so that it can be addressed in the moment when it’s relevant to the person’s job, regardless of whether the person has a company issued computer or not.

Corporate Communication:
Not only can you send critical information (such as a new company policy) or alerts, you can also implement two way communications as part of the process (like sending a notice of office closures due to severe weather and offering a check-in button for employees to let the company know you are safe). Take engagement further with polling and real-time Q&A capabilities to find and leverage expertise quickly across the organization.

Employee Self-Services:
Employees who have a company-issued computer and those that are deskless can have the same HR capabilities when these are enabled through mobile.

Checking one’s paystub, time tracking (which can be automatic using the phone’s location services), submitting a leave request, and completing required training are just a few of the ways that mobile devices enable employees to complete routine and complex HR functions on their own, significantly reducing administrative costs for the HR department.

Manager Self-Services:
People managers can also take advantage of mobile to handle approval of personnel changes, expense reports, time off requests and other workflows. Managers can also be given actionable insights, such as personnel coverage issues and real-time KPI measurements. When managers have the right tools to quickly respond to employee needs, it improves job satisfaction for everyone.
What’s standing in the way of adoption?

Many of today’s senior HR executives are not technology focused and therefore do not prioritize efforts to modernize systems. More junior HR staff may simply not have time to get involved due to their ever-growing to-do lists. (In one recent survey, 56% of respondents said their HR staff have to manually approve even the most basic HR transactions.)

Despite the fact that technology can help HR drive efficiency, build culture, and retain top talent, many in HR still perceive technology adoption as an IT responsibility. As Sitrion Chief People Officer Nancy Gill points out, “The missed opportunity is that people see this as a ‘systems project’ versus an organizational development and culture change initiative.”

HR executives often fear the cost and added complexity of adopting still more technology. Studies show that 80% of employees only use basic functions like expense tracking, time reporting, and task approvals and many perceive low ROI when considering investments beyond these basic use cases, especially when mobile connectivity is needed. The greater cost can come from employee perception that the company doesn’t invest in technology to make work better.

If you’re not on board, you’re falling behind

When you are buried in work, the idea that technology will make your life easier doesn’t always resonate. But it’s exactly those physical stacks of paper or working with hard-to-use automation that is keeping HR from attaining its higher goals. If you are not fully committed to HR transformation, you are falling behind competitors that are using technology – and especially mobile – to drive employee productivity and engagement, save time and money, and even steal your top talent.

It’s time to stop managing manual processes, creating custom reports, and responding to the same questions over and over again. It’s time to look up and take note of what’s happening out there. Towers Watson has projected that 36% of organizations will make structural, technology-based changes to HR in the next few years. And CedarCrestone research reveals that automated HR service delivery will jump from 44% to 72% in the next 36 months, with 25% of companies planning to implement mobile HR technology within 12-18 months.

The results of HR transformation speak for themselves. In fact, 80% of organizations that have reengineered their HR processes report the outcome was above their expectations. Replacing tired old processes with new technologies offers distinct advantages.

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Don’t go it alone

If your business has a HCM platform, various options are available for transforming the way you mobilize HR administration. Keep in mind that there are other back office systems your people need to work with, such as ERP accounting systems or supply chain management (SCM). So your approach to modernization should also work for mobilizing those tools as well. Ideally, you will want to work with a single interface that simplifies the way employees take on everyday decisions and routines – so they’re more efficient and productive wherever they are. Find an intuitive system that makes it easy to edit and share any type of administration.

What’s in it for HR and your business at large?

When you move to a mobile centric HR approach, your organization will immediately begin to experience a domino effect of benefits.

Greater focus on strategic objectives
The right mobile solution will make your employees feel more engaged. It will also give your HR team the time to pursue even greater employee engagement by implementing tools that facilitate information sharing, collaboration, and innovation. HR will also be free to spend more time pursuing strategic priorities such as recruiting, developing leaders, identifying potential, and communicating company objectives.

Time and money savings
Using mobile HR self-service, the Hershey Company cut HR support call center costs by 70% for its 15,000 employees.¹³ The Cedar Group has estimated that by eliminating manual, paper-intensive processes, the implementation of HR self-services reduces costs by $9.00 per employee per month. For a 5,000 person company, that’s a savings of $540,000 per year.¹⁴

When looking at specific tasks like performance appraisals, salary changes and job requisition creation, CedarCrestone research shows that companies can expect process savings from 20% to more than 80%, with automated benefits enrollment providing the highest savings.¹⁵ Creating a mobile-based, real-time workflow capability can save your company in a variety of ways. By eliminating time-draining processes and making HR processes relevant to the work that is happening at that moment, makes a more flexible, personalized workplace that stimulates greater collaboration and employee retention. As Gartner points out: “Building a stable foundation for improved HR administration can significantly cut HR costs, and will lead to better employee service... successful shared-service projects often lead to cost reductions of 30%.”¹⁶
Mobile advantages
Not only does mobile access keep your workflow moving faster and your employees more engaged, but employees feel more empowered by having better tools which impacts retention of good talent. Integrating this with social functionality can help these tools gain traction even faster, as people feel better connected with their colleagues and have a stronger understanding of company mission, which helps with employee retention. CedarCrestone reports that this combination improves employee adoption by 25% and manager adoption by 50%.17

Don’t go it alone
Sitrion can help you accelerate HR processes and enable mobile self-services, working in conjunction with SAP, Oracle and other HCM systems. We offer mobile access for all of your HR-related activities and can integrate the same user-friendly technology with your corporate intranet or HR portal. Even more powerful than this, Sitrion's technology is designed to proactively engage employees and manager with timely information to make managing HR processes very easy.

Going mobile without all the headaches
Sitrion simplifies HR processes by letting employees use their personal devices (your IT department will call this “bring your own device” or BYOD) and will ensure it happens in a secure way, so that all your HR data is safe. Employees download a single native app on either their personal or corporate device of choice, log in with their company credentials, and gain the appropriate access to HR processes that matter from them. This is not just limited to approvals such as time off requests or expense reports. Users can also receive corporate communications, training videos, KPI alerts and more.

This same app can connect people to other systems as well, including a company-wide social portal that keeps them more engaged with people and developments across your organization.

Take the next step
The world of HR is changing fast. If you are ready to put a stop to time consuming HR processes and inefficient workarounds, and instead give your employees modern, mobile tools for HR processes, then it’s time to start looking into your best options.

14. Delphia Consulting, 6 Considerations When Implementing Employee Self-Service Technology, 2013. (Savings formula: 5,000 x $9/mo x 12.)

About Sitrion
Sitrion makes work better by helping your employees get their jobs done better every day. In a complex business world, our software solutions enable every employee to stay engaged, make smart decisions, and be productive. Sitrion empowers millions of people with a mobile and socially-enabled workplace that is tightly integrated with all the critical backend systems of your infrastructure like SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, and Salesforce.com. Follow us on Twitter @sitrion and at www.sitrion.com.