



Ash Grove Concrete Companies Manage Complex Pay Rules, Simplify Time and Attendance Management

Attendance Enterprise shortens processing activities to a 90-minute, single-person job



Ash Grove Materials manufactures and distributes ready-mix concrete. Its companies load, deliver and pour concrete for large municipal, residential and industrial customers. In total, Ash Grove employs 300 employees across 23 locations in Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma.

The complexity of managing the time and attendance of employees across so many locations drove the organization to transition to a more flexible, sophisticated system. Attendance Enterprise eases scheduling, attendance tracking and reporting. Its advanced features allow for seamless and accurate attendance processing despite the highly varied and complex pay rules resulting from seven separate union contracts.

About Ash Grove Materials Corp.

Ash Grove Materials Corp. was founded in 1987 with two concrete companies: Fordyce Concrete Company, Inc. and Century Concrete, Inc. Fordyce included employees represented by three unions, later adding a fourth. Century Concrete was, and still is, non-union. The organization later expanded with the acquisition of Holliday Sand & Gravel Company and the Material Transport Company. Material Transport is non-union, while Holliday Sand & Gravel includes members of three separate unions along with some contract workers and non-union employees with unique pay rules. Holliday Sand operates three shifts; the other three Ash Grove companies have variable start and end times.

As Ash Grove grew, so did the task of managing employee time and attendance. Just prior to its acquisition of Holliday Sand, management realized it needed a new technology solution to replace the DOS-based system it had been using for time and attendance. Windows-based technology was replacing DOS applications and the DOS system was simply not robust enough to track and manage time for the organization, given the complexities of variable shifts of employees spread across 23 locations and affected by multiple pay rules.

The organization turned to PayTime, Inc. (Kansas City, KS) for help evaluating and selecting the best time and attendance solution. The labor management firm recommended Attendance Enterprise, the premier product of InfoTronics, Inc.

The Attendance Enterprise solution provides advanced features for managing labor data. It schedules employees; budgets for labor; applies shift requirements and pay rules; and automates timekeeping, processing and reporting. It also interfaces smoothly with Ash Grove's centralized payroll system for streamlined "end-to-end" workforce management.

Streamlined Scheduling

Ash Grove's union employees work either four 10-hour days or five 8-hour days each week, while non-union and contract employees work varying schedules over a five- or six-day workweek. Shifts and pay rates vary for union employees based on their various contracts. All employees are paid biweekly.

Attendance Enterprise meets the challenge of efficiently scheduling employees while following the myriad of pay rules and shift-related restrictions. Shift requirements, pay rules and other details were configured in Attendance Enterprise when it launched. The data and requirements are maintained within the system and updated whenever union contracts are renegotiated.

Prior to each pay period, Ash Grove's Wage Payroll Administrator Janice Smith inputs schedules for Fordyce and Century, including any expected overtime, holidays and vacation time. Every morning, the companies' Dispatch departments pull the schedules, develop transportation routes for each driver, and prepare customer delivery tickets. Holliday Sand and Material Transport schedules are developed by those companies' Dispatch departments; Smith enters them into Attendance Enterprise each week.

Overtime, time off, and pay rules are all applied when schedules are entered. These detailed schedules automatically drive payroll after the work is completed. Human intervention is needed later on only if adjustments are needed because the actual time worked did not match the scheduled time. This streamlined solution has improved accuracy and saved time over Ash Grove's previous manual processes.

"This process works flawlessly," said Smith. "Overtime is calculated accurately based on the schedules, union rules are followed, and the system prevents overpayment."

Tracking Attendance at Multiple Locations

Of Ash Grove's 300 employees, 210 must track their time. They swipe their ID badges at conveniently placed timeclocks as they enter and exit each of the companies' 23 locations.

Attendance data is automatically downloaded to a central server at Ash Grove headquarters in Overland Park, Kansas. Smith pulls reports from the server each week and exports data to Payroll at the end of each biweekly pay period.

Because the majority of the workforce is involved in transporting concrete, the average employee can clock in and out of more than one location on a daily basis. For example, several Holliday Sand employees clock in and out of all four of the company's Oklahoma plants each day.

Employees' time must be billed back to each of the locations in precise increments. Smith shudders at the thought of having to track this amount of activity without Attendance Enterprise.

"Accurately tracking the time employees spend in each plant would have been impossible with our previous manual processes," she notes. "Attendance Enterprise allows me to add as many lines as I need for each employee's possible work locations and easily track and bill time."

Smith set allocation options in Attendance Enterprise so she can enter and track time spent in multiple locations for each employee each day. She can easily add more lines or departments, if needed, with just a few mouse clicks.

Applying Differentials and Allocating Time

Attendance Enterprise automatically applies the pay differentials required for Holliday Sand employees when they work the night shift.

The system also meets another special time and attendance need for Holliday Sand. On a daily basis, employees' time must be allocated to one or more of 10 departments which pay at different rates. For example, an employee might perform dredging, loading, and delivery. The time the employee spends "dredging" must be billed to the Dredging department, time spent loading must be billed to "Loading" and so on. With Attendance Enterprise, employees' schedules include codes that identify each type of operation they perform at any given time. This ensures their time is allocated to the correct departments and they are compensated correctly based on the exact type of work they perform.

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Resource and Time Savings

Before Ash Grove moved to Attendance Enterprise, the organization had two people dedicated to processing time and attendance for only two companies. Smith handled Fordyce and a second person handled Century. Today Smith handles processing for both, plus Holliday Sand and Material Transport.

When she was processing time and attendance for Fordyce, it took Smith a full day each pay period to calculate and enter timecards before payroll could be generated. Now it takes just 90 minutes to manage the entire process -- for a workforce that includes three more companies and five times the number of employees.

Responding to requests for reports was also time-consuming in the days before Attendance Enterprise. Since the system launched, Smith has developed 50 different summary reports that meet the needs of various members of the Ash Grove management team. The reports include different mixes of data and were developed over time based on the most common requests.

Smith easily generates the appropriate summary with current data whenever someone asks for a particular report. Ash Grove managers appreciate receiving reports so quickly, and Smith is pleased with how easy it is for her to pull the exact reports they want.

Smooth Audits

As a government contractor that extracts minerals and uses mining equipment, Ash Grove is subject to regular audits by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Mining Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Labor Department. Attendance Enterprise enables these audits to run smoothly. Ash Grove produces a single report that includes all companies' employees, their hours worked per location, and other details required by auditors. Management can generate the report in advance of the audit or while the auditor is on-site.

It takes about 10 minutes to produce a comprehensive audit report. Previously, it took at least one full day for an auditor to collect the same data on-site.

An Evolving Solution

Smith has managed time and attendance processing for Ash Grove since 1994.

She reflects on the changes she's experienced since then, "I've literally grown up along with our systems over time. We moved from manual processes to a DOS-based system, and now to a PC-based system that is flexible and sophisticated enough to meet the needs of a complex workforce."

Through the years, Smith and the Ash Grove management team have been impressed with customer service provided by labor management firm PayTime.

Ash Grove often receives unusual customer requests, and PayTime is always quick to respond and configure Attendance Enterprise to best support these needs. For example, when NASCAR requested that Ash Grove quickly set up a portable plant, PayTime immediately provided an Attendance Enterprise time clock for the site and set up time tracking for the employees who would be working there.

“Whatever has come up, we always receive prompt, reliable service and the product is exactly what we need,” said Smith. “I would absolutely recommend PayTime and Attendance Enterprise to other organizations looking for a great attendance management solution and great service.”

Attendance Enterprise exceeds the expectations of Ash Grove’s four companies. The solution has eliminated the pain of managing time and attendance for a workforce spread across nearly two dozen locations, governed by seven union contracts, and subject to complicated pay rules and allocation requirements. It seamlessly integrates with Ash Grove’s other workforce management systems and brings dramatic time savings and other efficiencies to the organization. Attendance Enterprise is the perfect platform for the growing organization to balance central control with the flexibility needed to meet various companies’ needs.

About PayTime, Inc.

PayTime, Inc. started offering InfoTronics’ time and attendance products to the Kansas City area in 1997. The firm works with companies ranging from 10 to 5,000 employees to customize labor-tracking to their specific needs. It has helped companies deal with a wide variety of labor tracking issues, from union contracts to employees requesting time off through self-service portals. The combination of great products, great service and great value has allowed PayTime, Inc. to grow into one of Kansas City’s largest independent time and attendance dealers. More information can be found at www.paytimeinc.com.

About InfoTronics, Inc.

InfoTronics, Inc., is a technology company with more than 30 years of expertise in developing employee time and attendance solutions that provide businesses of all sizes with a cost-effective, easily deployed workforce management system. Attendance Enterprise is the flagship product and provides advanced features for managing labor data — calculating pay rules, scheduling employees, budgeting labor, automating benefit accruals, tracking attendance-based merit points — while meeting the scalability, reliability and security requirements of large organizations. An extensive North American dealer network has helped more than 20,000 organizations use InfoTronics products to reduce labor expenses and improve decision-making. www.infotronics.com