Q&A with the Experts

Using mobile and other tools to track your workforce during a school closure.

In today's school environments, we are faced with many new challenges that we must account for. Employees are working remotely, and we must look for alternative ways to capture time worked and still ensure compliance.

Today we will speak to how one school has adapted to the new norm and how change management and business process efficiencies can promote a successful strategy during times of change.

See highlights from a discussion titled, "Using Mobile and Other Tools to Track Your Workforce During a School Closure," between the K-12 industry experts and school district leaders featured below:

Rob Tibbs, K-12 Industry Consultant, UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group)

Rob brings 15 years of K-12 experience to customers in his role as K-12 Industry Consultant and Subject Matter Expert. Rob was formerly the Director of Payroll for Jefferson County School District, AL, where he successfully transitioned the district from a manual, paper-based environment to UKG.

Julie Develin

Strategic Advisor
UKG

An expert on employee relations, workplace flexibility, and workforce development, Julie Develin is a Senior HCM Strategic Advisor at UKG. With more than 17 years of experience as an HR practitioner focused on improving workplace culture and enhancing the employee experience, Julie helps organizations implement strategic employee technology and workplace initiatives to enhance productivity, improve communication, and increase satisfaction across the workforce.

Lani Munguia

Business Manager
Ector County Independent School District

Lani attended Angelo State University and holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration – Marketing. She has served in the role of Senior Business Analyst for Information Systems, Business Applications Analyst, HR Information Systems Analyst II, and Student Applications Analyst. Lani works on the Ector County ISD Strategic Planning Action Team, is a facilitator for the Ector County Facilities Review Team, and presents at school district workshops on UKG policies and procedures.

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Q&A: Using mobile and other tools to track your workforce during a school closure

Lani, can you give us a brief overview of what changed and how you adapted to employees working from home?

Shortly after spring break, we noticed that certain groups of employees were not reporting to work at all, specifically bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and teacher's aides. Then we had employees switch to working remotely in order to comply with social distancing.

That caused two big changes for employees:

1. Work schedules
2. Work location

We had to start thinking of our shortfall, which we didn't want to eliminate. We also had to gather all information we needed while working remotely. We needed solutions to these challenges.

We identified all types of employees to ensure their work schedules were documented. We wanted to have a weekly snapshot of everyone's time so our UKG™ system would calculate accruals and payroll correctly.

To leverage the shortfall, we created a pay code that would assist in getting the employee's timecard to 40 hours a week. We made sure all questions were directed to the right group and that job aids were created. That way, no matter which department employees called with a question, everyone was on the same page.

With most staff now working remotely, we had to react to short timelines to get everyone up and running. We also had to learn how to communicate with and train staff on clocking in and out remotely. Every day our staff would regroup to ensure all tasks relating to these new processes were completed.

> "No matter which department employees called with a question, **everyone was on the same page.**"

Thanks, Lani, for sharing. This is great and we are glad to hear you were able to quickly and efficiently shift to tracking time remotely. I can only imagine the amount of communication and correspondence that had to go out.

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We all know that proper change management is critical. No matter what type of change is taking place, a cultural shift to the new process or procedure can be challenging when you do not properly plan and communicate.

Julie, can you give us some tips on enacting a change management strategy, whether you are adapting to a crisis or even implementing a new system?

I don't need to tell you that there's been a lot of change happening in our lives, and work's been disrupted, so change has been forced upon us. But given the opportunity, most people aren't going to willingly change. We don't really like to go against the grain.

With so much change in K-12, it's important for districts to have some sort of change management plan in place. But a lot of resistance comes from people who are comfortable with the way things are.

A real pillar of good change management is a good communication plan. Using multiple channels and two-way communication is important. By ensuring your employees understand why change is happening and how it affects them, you will foster employee engagement.

The next thing I want to talk about is some fundamentals of change management. **The Kubler-Ross change curve** is similar to the stages of grief. This model can help you and your workforce adapt to change and move toward success.

You want to **be ready to consider** things like:
- Updating outdated policies
- What your new remote work guidelines are
- The level of IT support you'll need

You also need to **be ready to reflect**:
- Think about what worked or didn't work
- Consider what to keep versus what to change
- Try to be forward-thinking; identify additional opportunities to make your processes better
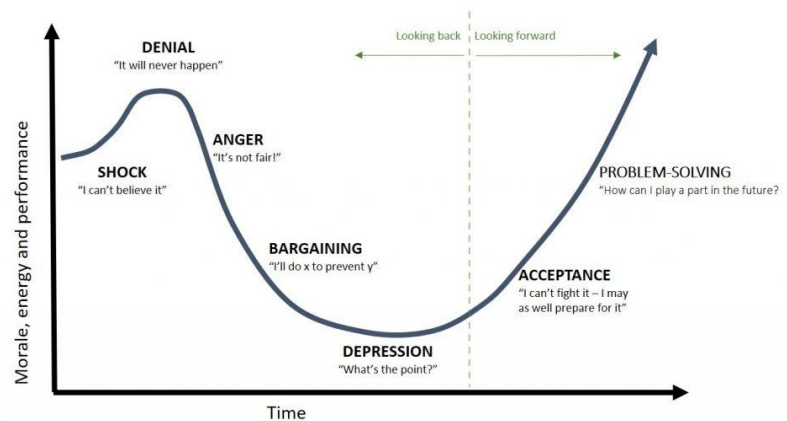
That is great! We know proper change management is critical to success in schools. Thanks for sharing ideas on how to design an always improving change management strategy.

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One thing that we are consistently hearing from Lani and Julie relates to employee experience.

Julie, can you give us insight into ways other districts have implemented best practices around employee engagement?

You might be surprised to know that in the United States **only about 30% of employees are actively engaged** in their jobs[1]. This means that more than half of employees are unhappy, possibly looking for a new job or opportunity.

Being an employer of choice means fostering employee engagement. Engaged employees consistently show up and do more work, with less absenteeism and more productivity.

Try to find the key moments that matter. These are transformational snippets of time where someone does something that makes a lasting emotional impression. These can include having a mobile experience that staff are comfortable with, a single source of truth that holds employee data, or technology that empowers staff to connect with each other and engage in their work.

[1]Reference: Harter, J. (2018, August 26). Website: https://news.gallup.com/poll/241649/employee-engagement-rise.aspx

Employees were able to speak with staff members via video calls, and we provided remote assistance for computer or other issues. We wanted employees to feel at ease with the new process and working conditions.

Lani Munguia

We have talked a lot about adapting to tracking time remotely as well as strategies you can put in place to assist with the cultural change that may occur, whether it be during a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or merely during a new initiative. We hope you gained insights into this and can start looking at ways your district could implement new technology or strategies.

Thanks, Lani and Julie, for sharing with us!

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