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# Integrated Solutions For RETAILERS

Integrated Solutions for Retailers, August 2005  
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## Cut Payroll Expenses With Automated Time And Attendance

Airport retailer The Nuance Group reduced its payroll staff by 75% and improved its scheduling process with a time and attendance solution.

The Nuance Group operates 370 airport shops in 19 countries, including about 30 stores in its North American division. Several years ago, Nuance's North American stores migrated from an entirely manual time and attendance system to an automated solution. "It worked well enough, but it wasn't very user-friendly," says Norah Nahhas, payroll manager for the North American Division. Even more troubling, the system did not provide store managers the information they needed to staff stores appropriately, better control labor costs, and identify attendance-related trends which, if ignored, could have a negative effect on the business.

In late 2003, the retailer decided to upgrade to a more sophisticated time and attendance application. For help it turned to workforce management software developer, ITR (International Time Recorder) of Toronto with which it had worked on other IT projects. The Nuance Group subsequently began a roll out of ITR's TimeZone Client Server Workforce Management application along with ITR640 data collection terminals. The system has been installed in 45 stores to date and accommodates almost 1000 employees.



At stores with the technology in place, personnel punch in and out by swiping their magnetic stripe-embossed employee ID cards through the clocks' magnetic stripe readers. Using a modem built directly into the clocks, punch information moves via the Internet to the software, which resides on a server at corporate headquarters that runs on a Citrix platform. In cases in which The Nuance Group builds a new store rather than opening in an existing storefront vacated by another retailer, the clocks use a direct high-speed Internet connection instead of a modem.

### Real-Time Data Access Provides Staffing Visibility

While managers still create schedules manually, Nahhas says the solution gives them a much better handle on labor costs and improved control over staffing. "Through their laptops or PCs, store managers can tap into the system to find out who punched in and out when and on what day; see who called in sick on a given day or in a particular week or month; see who's on vacation; and look at attendance by the day, week, or month," she explains.

Because information can be viewed in real time at any juncture during a pay period as well as organized into printed reports, managers can immediately adjust schedules if it appears that stores are over- or understaffed. They can also proactively look for and address individual or storewide employee attendance patterns, such as repeated lateness or a tendency to call in sick on the day before a scheduled day off.



The system also makes payroll easier and more accurate. At the end of each two-week pay period, managers use their PCs or laptops to access the headquarters system. They review information gathered by the time clocks during the previous 14 days, entering any necessary corrections or adjustments. Once all changes have been executed, Nahhas consolidates data from all the stores and imports it into a single TimeZone file which is transmitted to a third party payroll processing firm via a system interface.

"In the past, all our time and attendance data was checked at corporate headquarters rather than by the managers themselves," Nahhas says. "This, combined with the lack of any interface with the payroll processing company, meant we needed to have four people in the payroll department. Now we're down to one person in payroll, and mistakes aren't a problem anymore."

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