WorkTech

Minnesota Power Customer Profile

Minnesota Power saves time, improves accuracy of time reporting with WorkTech Time™

"We have quite a list of rules. Is the work order valid? Is the pay code valid? Is this person eligible for paid overtime?" WorkTech Time incorporates the company's entire set of rules and automatically applies them where relevant.

Margie Waechter
IT Project Manager

Established in 1906, Minnesota Power has grown to become a major energy provider, producing energy at a very low cost to serve a 26,000-square-mile electric service territory across northeastern Minnesota. Headquartered in Duluth, the company supplies electric service to 136,000 retail customers and wholesale electric service to 16 municipalities. Minnesota Power owns and operates 179 substations with a total capacity of 8,562 megavolt amperes.

Owning predominantly hydroelectric and coal-fired generating facilities, Minnesota Power has a history of providing its customers highly reliable electric service at very reasonable prices. In fact, the company is the largest hydroelectric generation owner in the state, supplying approximately 8 percent of its customers' electric energy requirements from this local renewable source.

To better manage its assets, the company implemented MRO Software's Maximo as a work management system in 1998. All 1,300 Minnesota Power employees have their time entered into the Maximo system, including salaried employees whose time is recorded so that it can be tracked against work orders.

Most employees, however, found the time reporting procedure cumbersome. "It was a highly customized system," says Margie Waechter, IT project Manager at Minnesota Power. "We had a lot of complaints about how difficult it was to use. One major problem was that as soon as you entered your time, it was saved and approved and went on to the general ledger. So if you needed to correct anything, you had to do a reversal of the transaction, which wipes everything out. Then you had to enter all your information again."

The company looked for alternatives. "We didn't find anything that was really worth considering until we heard about WorkTech Time," Waechter recalls. WorkTech Time offered a much more user-friendly entry process, while still allowing the company to apply its extensive set of validation rules.

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Results

- *Saves time reporting hours*
- *Time entry is virtually error free*
- *Automatically provides time information to asset management, general ledger and payroll systems*
- *Validates all rules on data entry*

Boosting efficiency

Waechter reports that it now takes significantly less time to enter hours worked, and the process is much quicker for those workers who directly enter their own time. "Obviously, if they make an error, it's easier for them to correct it," she says. "And there are other features that help. If any of your information is repeated from earlier entries, for example, it can be automatically carried over so you don't have to enter it again. That's a big time-saver." WorkTech Time also offers summary views allowing workers review their time records – and it highlights missing entries, improving accuracy and preventing payment delays.

Once an employee's hours are approved, the information from WorkTech Time is automatically transmitted to the Maximo labor transaction table, and WorkTech Time is integrated with general ledger and payroll systems.

Reducing errors with validation

WorkTech Time also ensures that entries are validated before they can be saved. "We have quite a list of rules," Waechter notes. "Is the work order valid? Is the pay code valid? Is this person eligible for paid overtime?" WorkTech Time incorporates the company's entire set of rules and automatically applies them where relevant. "Validation definitely reduces errors," says Waechter. "Except for the type of errors people make that only another person would know is wrong, the entries are virtually error-free."

For most employees, WorkTech Time was easy to learn. Although the company offered training classes, many employees simply followed instructions in the user guide. "They were able to pick it up fairly quickly," reports Waechter.

A positive response from users

Waechter recalls that after one training class, one employee said, "I can enter my two weeks time in just two clicks."

Overall WorkTech Time has been well received, and it has dramatically speeded up the time entry process for most workers.

For more information

For more information on how WorkTech Time can help you reduce costs and increase accuracy of labor reporting across multiple systems, please contact WorkTech at 617-625-5888 or visit us on the Web at www.WorkTech.com.

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