WorkTech

Onondaga County Water Authority Customer Profile

Onondaga County Water Authority simplifies time tracking and gains accuracy with WorkTech Time™

"We've eliminated the hours it took the payroll clerk to manually enter time, and made time entry the personal responsibility of our employees. You can't fool the system, which is a feature we really like."

Maureen Tomey,
Lawson HR/WorkTech
Project Manager, OCWA

Taking a comprehensive view of information management

Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA) is one of the largest public water suppliers in the U.S., providing quality drinking water to nearly 340,000 consumers in four counties of central New York. As a public authority, separate from any one municipality, OCWA is financially self sufficient, and is continually working to improve service while keeping rates as low as possible. By driving operating efficiency, the financial and work management systems used by OCWA play a central role in supporting those goals.

In 2002 OCWA took on a comprehensive project entitled "CONQUEST" to revamp all of its information technology systems. OCWA implemented a new Lawson financial and human resources system, integrated Lawson HR with ADP for payroll processing, installed an INDUS Banner billing/customer management system, and with the assistance of the consulting firm Stearns & Wheler, launched an asset management system using MRO Software's MAXIMO. But something was missing.

"As we began to work with MAXIMO, we realized that the time entry capabilities did not fully meet our needs," recalls Maureen Tomeny, Human Resources and Benefits Administrator at OCWA. "Stearns & Wheler recommended WorkTech Time and, after a demonstration, we felt it was a necessary addition to the whole process."

Simplifying time entry, review, and tracking

Although the Authority has only a modest number of employees—approximately 120—time tracking had become a complicated and time-consuming process. Paper time tickets required manual entry into multiple systems, which could occupy the better part of a whole day for the payroll clerk. In addition, many employees—particularly the engineers and field personnel—work on multiple projects in the course of a day, each of which must be tracked. This made the task of tracking, approving, and reporting time even more complex and difficult.

"It is not unusual for an Engineering Tech to work on 10 different projects in one day," says Tomeny. "So the supervisor doesn't have just one entry, but rather 10 entries to work on 10 different projects in one day," says Tomeny. "So the supervisor doesn't have just one entry, but rather 10 entries to review and approve. With 12 employees in the department, it quickly becomes a drain on productivity."

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Goals

- *Eliminate manual keying of time data into multiple systems*
- *Track multiple projects*
- *Simplify entry, review, and approval of labor time and leave*
- *Gain more accurate reporting on time for benchmarking*

Results

- *Created an integrated and automated time entry, work and financial management solution*
- *Enabled time entry against multiple projects for more efficient tracking, review, and approval*
- *Provided an intuitive interface for employees and supervisors to easily manage time*
- *Collecting valuable data for benchmarking work projects to improve service and pricing.*

For more information

For more information on how WorkTech Time and WorkTech Leave Time can help you simplify time tracking to enhance MAXIMO and leverage time data across multiple systems, please contact WorkTech at 617-625-5888 or visit us on the Web at www.WorkTech.com.

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Now, with WorkTech Time, employees enter their time directly into the system for each project as they complete work on it. It has simplified data entry—and simplified the review and approval process for supervisors.

Maureen Tomeny explains: "One of the things we really like in the WorkTech application is the fact that employees can see the total number of hours they've put in for any given week. Without WorkTech, employees would have to actually sit there and add up the hours to make sure they had their full time in. And we have so many entries in an individual day, it became very difficult to keep track. Likewise, WorkTech enables the supervisors to cross check reported time—for example, if an employee is reporting 40 or 50 hours, that's reasonable based on what the supervisor had been seeing during the week. WorkTech has made the whole process a lot easier for everyone."

How easy was it for the employees to adopt the new system? "Many of our employees were not experienced using computers. But WorkTech is so user friendly; they have adopted the new system very quickly. And because our supervisors can see, at a glance, the projects each person is working on, it's made both time entry, and the review and approval process, much easier and more efficient."

In addition to time tracking, OCWA is also in the process of implementing WorkTech Leave Time™ leave tracking, which has enabled the Authority to manage leave time more effectively. "What we especially like about WorkTech Leave Time is that the system prevents employees from requesting more leave than they have on their account. The alternative solutions we considered would allow negative balances to exist, and that was not acceptable."

Maximizing the value of data across multiple systems

OCWA has created a comprehensive and highly integrated solution for financial and work management. As a result, nearly every step—from time entry to payroll—is automated. Employees' time can be recorded against work orders from MAXIMO, general ledger codes from the Lawson financial system, as well as service tickets from the Banner customer management system. All systems are updated with time entry information through WorkTech's integration utilities.

"The best thing about this solution is having all these systems work together," says Tomeny. "As a result, we've eliminated nearly all manual entry. Employees simply input their time directly into WorkTech and indicate what projects they're working on. The information is entered only once, then fed automatically from one system to another. So, our work management system can capture all the time used on any given project, whether it's installing a new hydrant, putting in a new service for a customer, fixing a water main break, or anything. We are not only able to track the labor, but also materials—the whole system is extremely slick."

The entire solution will have far-reaching impact: "In addition to improving efficiency in our time tracking process, the system is also providing us with more accurate time reporting on a project basis," explains Tomeny. "So, ultimately the system will help us benchmark how much time it takes to perform certain jobs, such as installing a hydrant, and that will help us price services better."

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