

Workforce Management Technology in 2019:
Finding Simplicity in Complexity

White Paper



Brandon Hall Group Research Team



Some aspects of workforce management (WFM) are immutable: attendance, leave management, scheduling, timekeeping, and payroll and employee self-service. As the technology driving many market-leading WFM systems becomes more intricate, some users seem unaware of the full capabilities of these systems, according to the latest Brandon Hall Group research.

Loyalty and satisfaction to systems and solution providers are on the rise, despite partner ecosystems and cloud-based data storage that should theoretically make it easier to switch. In our 2019 Workforce Management research, we found that more than half of all organizations were

either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with all aspects of their solution provider (including value proposition, functionality and customer service). These across-the-board endorsements are a strong indication that WFM providers understood the need for differentiation through service as much as product, and adjusted their model accordingly.

That is the purpose of this paper — to show what top-end WFM technology is capable of in its present state, where the needs of the market are leading us and what obstacles stand in the way.

As systems become more complex, it will require not just more advanced analytical skills, but also understanding that the ultimate goal of WFM technology is to reduce the complexity and create simpler, more intuitive interactions that ultimately benefit the end user.

Data from Brandon Hall Group’s most recent WFM technology survey is used to illustrate the trends shown in this report. Certain themes were evident across the survey, such as the need for completeness of product capabilities, cornerstone proficiencies in payroll and time and attendance, and the urgent need to address changes in the workforce to allow for more self-service/ autonomy — all of which are familiar to anyone working in talent management over the last few years. They are now becoming just as important in workforce management technology.

What do organizations value in WFM technology?

Time and attendance

81%

Payroll

76%

Employee self service

69%

Leave/absence management

61%

Performance management

56%

Benefits

55%

Compensation

53%

Manager self service

52%

Talent acquisition

49%

Scheduling

41%

Workforce analytics

38%

Workforce management

32%

Compliance

30%

Workforce planning

29%

COBRA

17%

Source: 2018 Brandon Hall Group Workforce Management Technology Survey (n=336*)

Payroll, time and attendance, and employee self-service are what the market values most in WFM technology. Of those, the most telling is employee self-service. As WFM functions are taken over by employees on their mobile devices rather than on a kiosk unit or physical time-clock, building a system that empowers employees to handle their own issues is more imperative than ever.



- 54%** Completeness of Functionality
- 46%** Value Proposition/Total Cost of Ownership
- 43%** Implementation Capabilities
- 39%** Customer/Technical Support
- 22%** Partner in Your Organization's Success
- 21%** Product Development Roadmap

When it comes to choosing a provider, value proposition, completeness of functionality, and implementation and technical support are highest ranked. Buyers are thinking more long term in their decision-making and taking an increasingly employee-centric view.

What are organizations still looking for in WFM technology?

Ease of Use

63%

Reporting and Analytics

63%

Integration with Other Systems

63%

Cloud Services

47%

Total Cost of Ownership

47%

Analytics Consulting

42%

Change Management Services

37%

Implementation Services

37%

User Training

32%

Browser Compatibility

26%

Industry Coverage

21%

Languages

21%

Consulting Services

16%

Source: 2018 Brandon Hall Group Workforce Management Technology Survey (n=336*)

There is still plenty of room for improvement in workforce management. When asked about their next WFM technology solution, the top responses were from those seeking improved integration, reporting and analytics, and ease of use. They are reacting to a changing workforce, one that wants simple, short-timeframe, mobile-ready ways to handle mundane but essential tasks (check-ins, shift swaps, leave requests, etc.). At the same time, management seeks more insightful analytics to show them where efficiencies can be gained.

These are not mutually exclusive goals. Based on the research, they both want to be able to solve business problems easily and more completely using WFM technology, rather than having to stage an intervention at a later date.



Why are organizations less likely to switch providers now?

Are you looking to replace your WFMS?

15% Yes

85% No

As recently as 10 years ago, organizations might have felt “held hostage” by long contracts and on-premise solutions. But current industry standards are shorter contracts and cloud-based solutions. Why are we seeing more longevity? It has to do more with providers than in the systems themselves. Service delivery, better relationship management and more services offered are all important factors.



Integration's Endgame

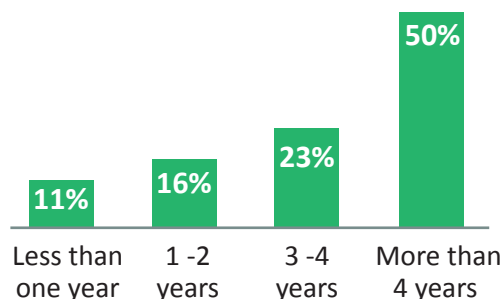
79%	Completeness of Functionality
63%	Implementation Capabilities
58%	Value Proposition/Total Cost of Ownership
47%	Customer/Technical Support
47%	Partner in Your Organization's Success
37%	Product Development Roadmap

Completeness of functionality was the only consensus reason any respondent said they would change WFM technology providers. As more and more solution providers are adding, acquiring or solidifying partnerships to supply the final missing pieces of their full-suite functionality, this final technological concern will vanish, leaving a landscape where providers distinguish themselves by being more of a partner with their customers. This can take the form of helping gain insights from their data, advising through benchmarking made available through anonymous client data, or by providing exemplary customer service.

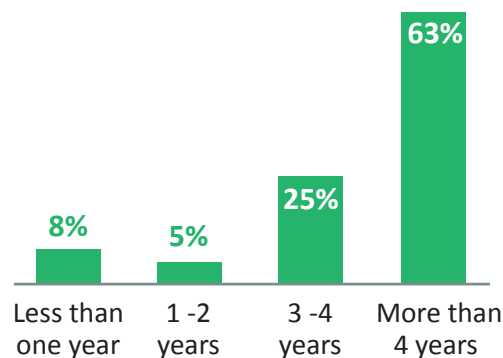
Case Study: KRONOS®

To illustrate how the research concepts discussed here translate into technology that assists organizations in meeting their goals, consider Kronos, one of the leading WFM and HCM cloud solutions. Of the 336 respondents from the 2018/2019 Brandon Hall Group Workforce Management Technology Survey, 51 of those were Kronos customers. By examining the performance of Kronos customers versus all others we can see how applied technology can result in a more effective WFM process.

How long have you had your current WFMS in place? (Overall minus Kronos)



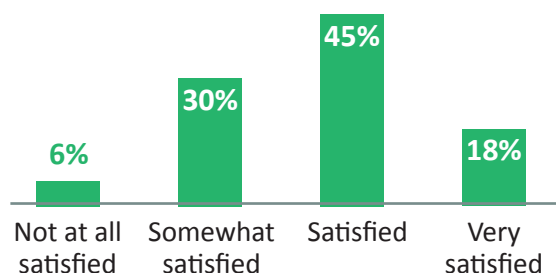
How long have you had your current WFMS in place? (Kronos)



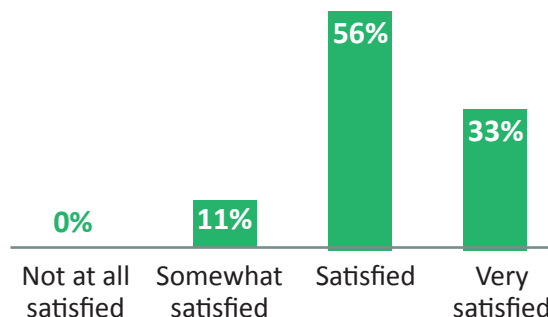
Source: Brandon Hall Group

The first and most obvious benefit is the experience of the vendor. Kronos developed the world's first software-enabled timeclock, and since that time Kronos has been synonymous with workforce management. They also have continued to innovate. In 2017, Kronos launched Workforce Dimensions, the world's first enterprise WFM suite built entirely in the Google Cloud. Innovation creates trust in a vendor's ability to meet future needs; trust creates loyalty; and loyalty creates longevity.

What is your overall satisfaction with your WFMS? (Overall minus Kronos)



What is your overall satisfaction with your WFMS? (Kronos)



Source: Brandon Hall Group

One reason for that longevity is satisfaction. The ultimate beneficiary of WFM technology is the end user, not the administrator. Having a system that is well-liked is just as important as the functionality of that system.

Top 5 Reasons for Choosing Your WFMS



Time and
attendance



Scheduling



Payroll



Employee
self-service



Managing
self-service

Functionality remains important, though it simply is a matter of prioritization. The market, as discussed in the research, is geared toward a younger workforce that values autonomy, and a more geographically diverse workforce with a need for greater self-service options.

Of course, none of this would matter if it wasn't for the bottom line. By examining the improvements made in a number of business metrics by Kronos customers versus the remainder of the market, we see advancements there, too.

Organizations that reported the following metrics stayed the same or increased (Kronos customers versus all others):

+13 percentage points

Employee engagement

+8 percentage points

Customer retention

+4 percentage points

Quality hires

+9 percentage points

Customer satisfaction

+4 percentage points

Market penetration/
customer base

+2 percentage points

Organizational revenue/
performance

+9 percentage points

Employee retention

With the usual caveat that correlation does not equal causation, looking at the above statistics does show that technology does play a part in a successful WFM strategy, albeit one that must be supported by the right people and processes.

Takeaways

WFM technology is adapting to the changing workforce just as any other aspect of HCM technology is, but what's surprising is how much it is becoming indistinguishable from HCM tech. They share the same issues as talent management and talent acquisition: the need to be more adaptive, more responsive, more autonomous and more centered on the employee experience. With the full integration of systems, we're moving in that direction but aren't there yet. Companies should have a clear plan on what they seek to accomplish

(beyond compliance). They must think differently about their buying decisions and become better partners with their service providers. In turn, providers must actively engage with their customers to showcase existing features and upcoming capabilities that sometimes are only used during the sales cycle, so that current customers have an idea of the best practices in WFM technology. How organizations differentiate themselves from the competition will not come from technology alone but from the better use of that technology.



Contributors



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About Brandon Hall Group

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