# GroupeX
## SOLUTIONS

# MANAGING TIME ENTRY IN A PROJECT BASED COSTING ENVIRONMENT

Businesses generally look to Time & Attendance solutions to meet HR needs for:

- Managing employees
- Tracking absences
- Administering payroll

For some companies, time entry is more than that, it's central to their business in order to balance employee time against the project and customers they are working for.

In these environments, there are unique challenges and considerations when implementing a Time & Attendance Solution that must be accounted for before or as part of your implementation.

Ex. Employee Data must be aligned in all systems before Time to Project Data can be sent to the Project System then in turn send Project Costing Data to the Finance System.

# What are the Project Based Business Needs?

If your business is driven by Project Based Costing, or Activity Based Costing (ABC), the needs can be relatively straight forward on what must be captured:

- The employee
- Their hours spent on a project
- At what cost to the customer

If your business delivers fixed fee services, the same information may be required for internal costing and allocations. What you need to consider in addition to this is what constitutes a project cost or accountable time.

Do hours spent in the sales cycle need to be tracked in order to manage the true cost of a project? How about administrative tasks? Are costing and bill rates static or do they vary based on the resource used or job performed?

As you dig through these intricacies keep in mind that those HR needs mentioned before still exist and unless you expect your employees to track time in two places, this needs to be accounted for in your requirements.

Working with an experienced Time & Attendance consultant will alleviate the burden of identifying all the use cases that span across your business. By leveraging their knowledge to guide you through the requirements gathering process, you will ensure you are asking yourself, and your teams, the right questions at the onset of a project.

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# Where Does Time & Attendance Fit Among Your IT Infrastructure?

A SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATION IN IMPLEMENTING A SOLUTION SUCH AS WORKFORCE SOFTWARE IS THE INTEGRATION TO OTHER SYSTEMS WITHIN YOUR BUSINESSES IT LANDSCAPE.

From an HR standpoint, there is typically an HR System of record upstream and a Payroll solution downstream. When looking at Project Based Costing there is typically a third and potentially fourth solution to consider in the landscape for managing project data and managing financial data. This can get complicated quickly when considering the timeliness all systems require data and identifying what system is the true owner of this shared data.

Consider if projects open based on a quarterly plan, at the start of a week or at any point in the middle of a day. The same must be considered for how projects are closed out. How many of these systems require employee information and do they need to align to the frequency project allocations change? Finally, at what regular interval is this data required by your Finance and Payroll solutions? Quite often businesses will look to keep large amounts of data integrated as often as possible to reduce the unknown risk around data management however that can lead to new risks, for example:

1. MiddleWear solutions must extract, transform and load data with only small windows for data or error corrections.

2. Data integration becomes overly complicated as more information than is required is pushed to every separate solution.

3. End-Users begin to trust and only work with a single point in your landscape without fully understanding the overall implications of changes.

When progressing through an implementation, it is vitally important to get the system and data architecture in a state that does not overly complicate or technically strain your solutions.

# Controlling the Project Level Data

Depending on your business, the list of projects at any given time can be quite lengthy. In particular, if you look to further specify to a Project Phase, Job or Task level. As a result, you will likely need to consider putting controls in place for a few reasons:

- Reduce risk of erroneous entry
- Improve user experience with simplified, relevant lists
- Control time entry to only approved projects for an employee

In a fast-changing environment you'll want to look for ways to automate the employee-project assignment as much as possible by considering the relevant data. This is a critical element to be addressed upfront in your design as it may result in additional information being stored or managed in your

solution. Look to attach Projects/Jobs/Tasks to individual job codes, departments or locations. Consider how this is organized in your Project Management systems and if there is an opportunity to replicate the logic. These decisions will require the input of your data architecture, human resources and project resources as well as a consultant who fully understands the tie-ins between IT and the business to truly find the best-suited solution for you.

# Deciding Upon the Right Solution

When going forward with the selection of a Time & Attendance solution, be sure to have a good grasp of your business' full requirements prior to evaluating different solutions on the market. As you look at options, consider how they fit within your overall landscape. Involve your IT department to assess the ease of integration to other upstream and downstream systems within your overall architecture. Lastly, consider the type of data you will need to capture and what opportunities exist to automate the data management to alleviate administrative burdens with the new solution.

Working with a consultant who understands both the technologies you're working with as well as the business of Time & Attendance will help you consider all the potential design decisions, drawbacks and best practices. This will ensure you achieve a well thought out solution design and ultimately, a solution reaching its full potential by being leveraged throughout your organization.

A GroupeX consultant can help demystify the architecture by working with your IT resources as well as your business to understand how project data is tracked and how frequently it changes in a way that impacts your other systems.

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# Aman Bassi

## Director of Professional Services at GroupeX Solutions

12+ years experience in HR System implementations include functional consulting, solution architecture and project management. Aman's goal is to ensure a common and consistent approach to project delivery across the organization.
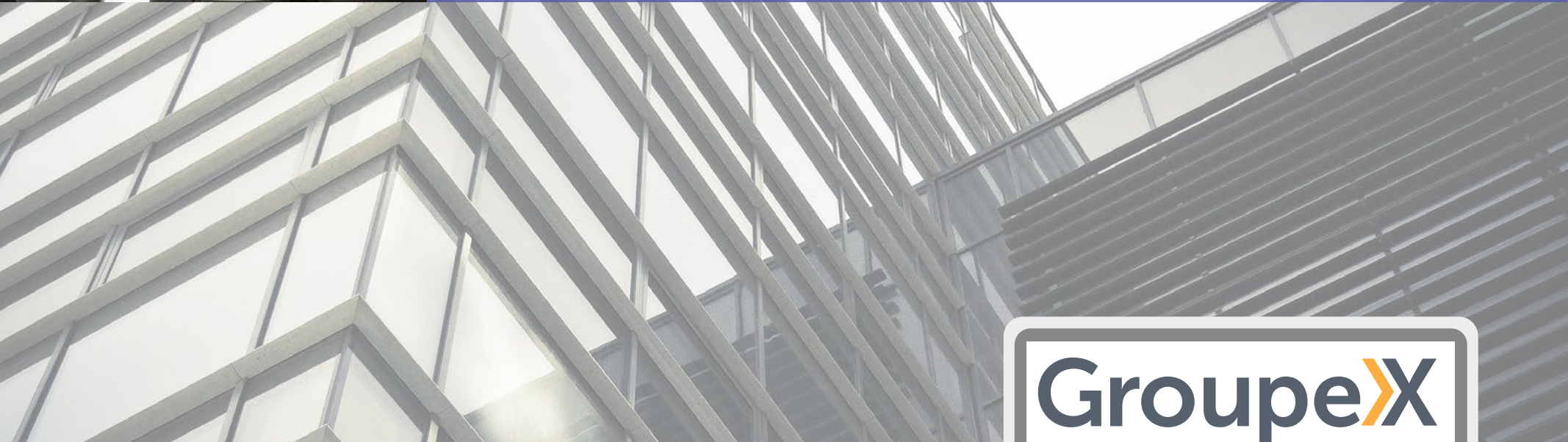
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