ATS
EVERY SECOND COUNTS

# Prepare For The Unwritten Future Of The WFM Interface

Your time clocks might just keep ticking, but the future of WFM hardware is in open architecture, highly configurable, application-driven terminals like Accu-Time's new Universal Series.

A Paper From

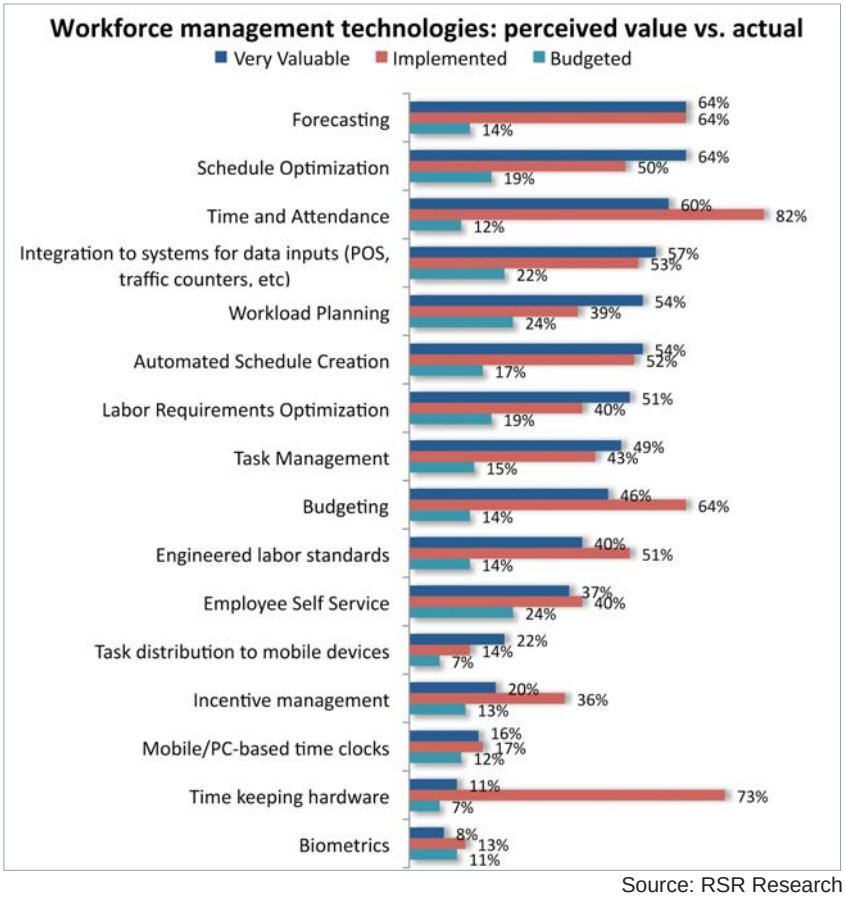
RETAIL SOLUTIONS ONLINE

"Stand-alone time and attendance terminals simply won't cut it for retailers that are quickly moving away from point solutions in favor of integrated, multi-functional devices and applications."

Perhaps you missed this. Back in March 2010, buried at the bottom of the 21st page of a 29-page report from Retail Systems Research, analysts Nikki Baird and Brian Kilcourse predicted the demise of stand-alone time and attendance hardware. Per the research they conducted that spring and published in the report Enterprise Workforce Management: Redefining the Boundaries of Customer-Centric Retailing, the writing would soon be on the wall where the time clock once stood:

*"One enormous gap between value and use that quickly emerges is around time keeping hardware, where only 11% of respondents ascribe high value to the technology, while 73% report having time clocks implemented. However, with only 7% reporting adoption plans, the future for stand-alone hardware seems small."*

That said, IDC predicts the worldwide human capital management (HCM) program market will hit $11 billion by 2016. All that HCM software has to run on something, right?




Source: RSR Research

Therein lies the revelation as to why the stand-alone time and attendance terminal, venerable as it is, could be on the cusp of extinction. Modern retailers are demanding employee-facing devices that can accommodate not just time and attendance applications, but

a full spectrum of HCM—and even store ops—programs and applications. Those might include payroll, HR, task management, scheduling, and employee training, to name a few. Per the Baird/Kilcourse observation, stand-alone time and attendance terminals simply won't cut it for retailers that are quickly moving away from point solutions in favor of integrated, multi-functional devices and applications.

## The Evolution Of The Time And Attendance Appliance

Accu-Time Systems (ATS) has been manufacturing time and attendance appliances for more than twenty years, and in that time it has grown its installation base to hundreds of thousands of terminals deployed at major retail brands worldwide. To date, that installation base has been comprised of three major product families that run the gamut from simple time and attendance data collection to multi-function, interactive self-service devices: The Century Series, The Cyber Series, and the current Global Series. With the release of each product family came an improvement upon its predecessor, taking advantage of new network technologies and operating systems that allowed customers to build on the application capabilities of their terminals.

Today, ATS is introducing a major leap forward in technology, user experience, and power. With the introduction of its next-generation Universal Series, the company is providing workforce management (WFM) professionals with a highly flexible, fast, and powerful platform on which they can offer new services, applications, and functionality. In short, The Universal Series is capable of filling the gap between limited-functionality time and attendance terminals and the WFM-centric multimedia workstation of the future.

ATS was driven by a simple directive in the development of the Universal Series; the need for an open, configurable platform that can accommodate HCM/WFM and operations application desires both known and yet to be determined. Consider that the aforementioned report from Retail Systems Research determined that 74% of "winning" retailers cite "improving labor productivity" as their

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*Modern WFM terminals must provide an operating system-agnostic platform that enables ease of integration and application development to meet the ever-changing needs of workforce managers.*

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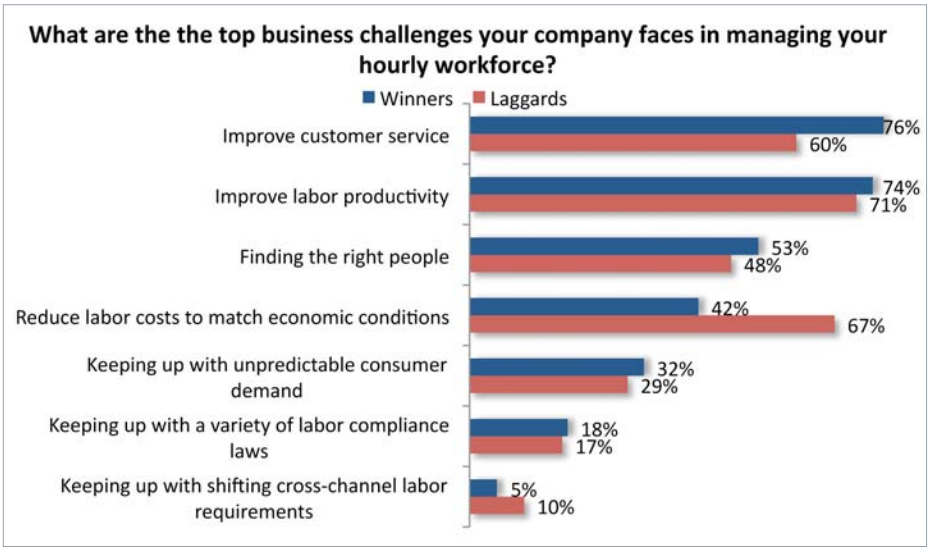
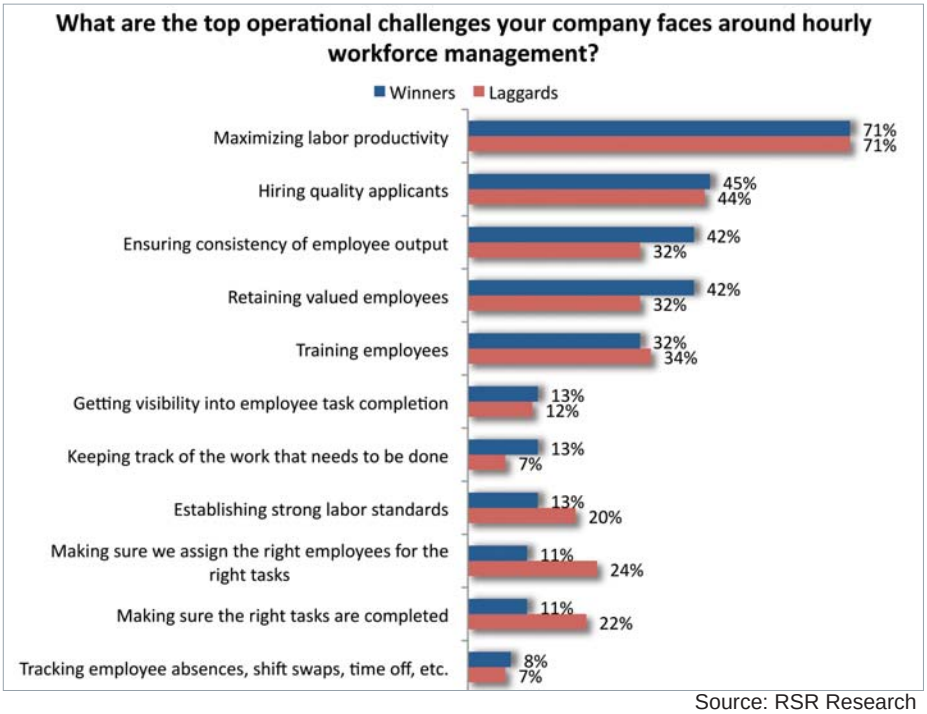
-Steve Sardi,
ATS VP of Engineering

primary WFM challenge, second only to improving customer service (76%). A full 88% of those retailers surveyed said their best opportunity to overcome this challenge is "optimizing store processes," a vague but important indicator of the need for flexible, multifunctional employee-facing terminals to replace stand-alone, application-limited time and attendance devices.




Source: RSR Research

In light of this evolution of the associate-WFM terminal interface, ATS chose to deploy a "common and open architecture" philosophy early in the development of The Universal Series. The company determined that, in order to best meet the diverse and evolving demands of its development partners and customers while maintaining the company's established price points, it needed to implement a new thinking process. Rather than offer discrete terminals with relatively closed operat-

ing systems, The Universal Series offers several combinations of Embedded Windows, open source operating systems, programming languages, and communication protocols. To ensure a future-proof and sustainable terminal infrastructure in the face of unknown future applications, memory can easily be expanded through a proprietary and secure SD card slot, and reader, biometric, and data transmission modules can be readily swapped.

The Universal Series is designed so that development partners and end users can develop applications around the entire product family, not just one terminal model. This modular, open approach allows ATS customers to easily move up through the product family—from basic time and attendance to highly sophisticated WFM, HCM, and employee self-service applications—as their needs evolve. Developers are assured they'll still be working within the same processor family, programming language, reader choices, and firmware.

As end users consider new technology investments, operating system compatibility is typically a foremost concern. Because modern and forward-looking HCM/WFM devices will require integration with a growing host of operations applications such as POS, task management, HR, and more, ATS offers Embedded Windows, Android, or Linux as operating systems, with support of Java and Python for application development. ATS chose these popular operating systems and programming languages with application integration in mind—its partners are familiar with them and have already done a considerable amount of work developing around them. According to Steve Sardi, ATS Vice President of Engineering and the primary architect behind the Universal Series, "Our design approach was to make it as simple and as quick as possible for our partners to migrate to The Universal Series. Choosing software with which they are already familiar was critical to that approach."

> "By providing associates with self-service functionality at the WFM terminal, retailers can achieve a nearly 10% improvement in employee engagement."

## Adaptable Terminals Prepared For Any Eventuality

Store formats continue on an unprecedented course of change; retailers are continually experimenting with store floor reconfiguration, temporary pop-up stores, and remote store locations that require hardware deployment configurability. As such, ATS sought to enable the flexible deployment capabilities necessary to ensure the terminal's expanded application functionality is matched by the deployment flexibility necessary to bring value back to the WFM interface. With The Universal Series, partners are free to mix and match standard and enterprise level WiFi, Ethernet, or cellular GSM/GPRS communications, ensuring devices are available wherever and whenever they're needed.

Another key to successful WFM device deployment is the associate interface. Technology ease of use is consistently ranked the most valuable aspect of implementing new WFM systems in studies from Retail Systems Research. In its recent

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report *Time And Attendance Strategies: Beyond Compliance And Payroll Accuracy,* Aberdeen underscores this reality, demonstrating that by providing associates with self-service functionality at the WFM terminal, retailers can achieve a nearly 10% improvement in employee engagement. In an industry plagued by an average 2.4% time tracking error rate that results in an average payroll error rate of 1.6% (Aberdeen), associate engagement is a central strategy to WFM success.

With the critical importance of associate acceptance and usage in mind, The Universal Series was developed to allow ATS development partners the choice between non-touch displays or resistive or capacitive touch screen displays. Keypads, card readers, and biometrics can also be assembled in a variety of combinations to suit each partner's application set. The Universal Series provides a card reader slot on either side of the display to accommodate both left-and right-handed users. Sardi adds, "Our common and open architecture approach carried over into the reader options. By making the swipe, RFID, and biometric options modular, we are able to quickly respond to the ever-changing needs of our partners and their customers." Changing or eliminating biometric


*With an available 10" full-color, high-resolution display, The Universal Series opens WFM device functionality to the possibilities of remote training and video conferencing, as well as advertising opportunities for local complementary businesses. The large display also lends itself to operations and task-oriented applications such as planogramming and task management compliance.*

or card readers, adding or removing a keypad, or customizing keypad overlays is simple because of the mix-and-match modular approach the common architecture concept introduced.

## Modular Manufacturing Efficiency Enables More Power And Flexibility For The Same Price

A "behind the scenes" benefit afforded by ATS' common architecture approach has profound implications on the company's ability to offer such enhanced functionality without causing sticker shock. The standardization of assembly and test procedures across The Universal Series results in a greater ability for the company to maintain its quality standards and ensure performance consistency in partner and user experiences while keeping unit pricing on par with earlier generations of its terminals. Although the enclosure, display, and interface specifications are highly configurable, there remains a great deal of commonality among the internal components of The Universal Series. For instance, some customers will want resistive touch display, some will want capacitive touch displays, and some will only need non-touch displays. ATS' modular design approach will make it simple to switch displays in the factory without extensive modification of internal device components. This creates manufacturing efficiencies at ATS and simplifies deployment and service for installation and field service personnel. Even the mounting-hole locations are the same across The Universal Series, allowing partners and end users to replace their terminals with more powerful units as their deployments grow and their needs evolve.

The Universal Series from ATS isn't predicated on planned obsolescence, it's built to accommodate the change necessary for the deployment of next-generation WFM applications and store operations integration—at a pace determined by the end-user. Unlike the forced upgrade approach taken by some WFM device manufacturers, The Universal Series is at once forward-looking and backward-compatible.

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>
> -Peter DiMaria
> ATS President

According to ATS President Peter DiMaria, "We want our partners and ultimate end users to be able to easily move between each of the products in The Universal Series. ATS has a long history with its partners and end users. We want to make it easy for them to migrate over time from our current Global Series to our next-generation Universal Series. The common architecture approach that we've utilized will make the series very attractive to our customers and shorten their development times."

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# www.accu-time.com

Accu-Time Systems (ATS) designs and manufactures workforce management tools. Companies around the world work with ATS when they need to solve time & attendance, human capital management, and labor and productivity challenges. ATS is headquartered in the United States with offices and channel partners in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Biometric and non-biometric workforce management terminals are offered by ATS for seamless integration to ERP and HCM systems, including PeopleSoft Enterprise and PeopleSoft HCM and Time & Labor modules. ATS provides solutions for nearly every industry with a product line that extends from simple entry level time clocks to state-of-the-art programmable and customized employee self-service kiosk systems with advanced biometrics.

ATS terminals offer a state-of-the-art biometric technology that increases accuracy and reduces failures. This multispectral imaging sensor takes all of the challenges of traditional biometrics like demographics, ethnicity, skin damage and environmental concerns (dirty, dry, extreme and wet conditions) out of the equation by reading the capillary patterns beneath the skin surface.

Please visit them at www.accu-time.com

Corporate Headquarters:
420 Somers Road
Ellington, CT 06029

Phone: 860-870-5000
Toll Free: 1-800-355-4648
Fax: 860-872-1511

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