

# Self Service: What is Real? Part 2

**REAL TIME SELF-SERVICE IS REAL HARD, AND IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHETHER YOUR PROVIDER'S REAL-TIME IS FOR REAL. BY NAOMI LEE BLOOM**

Last month, we examined outsourcing provider HRM delivery systems and concluded that there were critical features that minimized the need for human intervention in HR operations. From a self-service perspective, system-wide, elegant “effective-dating” of HRM software cuts costs related to past, late or simply delayed events, and/or questions about the impact of future changes in business rules or personal information. “Effective-dating” is present in the best HRM software, but not in all systems. Test your outsourcing provider’s platform specifically for “effective-dating” features.

As promised, this month’s column deals with another magnifier of HRM delivery system self service – role-based delivery. In “role-based delivery” of self service capabilities “role” means the multiple and/or concurrent roles that an individual plays in an organization. The delivery system recognizes a user during log-on and uses information that it already has to determine the data relating to the role or roles they filled during the period in question. With this knowledge of the user’s various allowed roles, the delivery system then presents to them role-specific system capabilities, including role-appropriate access to data, events, and content. Thus, “role-based delivery” ensures each user is given a highly personalized view and controls security of access to data, events and content.

In “role-based delivery,” there’s really no such thing as monolithic employee or manager self service. Are you an hourly employee who works on the night shift? If so, a question about your cafeteria menu would produce information for your shift, and a question about how your overtime is calculated would produce information about shift-specific compensation and the business rules around overtime calculations as they involve shift differentials. If your organization allows access to information on all total-compensation plans, you’d have that access, but a question about your own situation would produce a response that’s specific to you and your known work roles. Therefore, if you are a salaried executive, that same question about

your menu would produce information about the executive dining room, and a question about overtime would produce the response that you are not eligible for overtime and then go on to explain about the specific compensatory time off policy, if any, for which you are eligible. This ability to tailor system information, event handling, and content to each specific user is far more powerful than having a monolithic approach to employee and/or manager self service -- and it’s critical to reducing the errors, misunderstandings, and frustration that give rise to more expensive call-center and HR generalist interactions. Without “role-based delivery,” your outsourcing provider’s system is not good for them or for you.

Combining “effective-dating” with “role-based delivery” produces powerful results. When the manager of Team A is transferred to manage Team B, these two capabilities combine to ensure that, without anyone’s intervention, that manager acquires Team B’s data on the effective date of his/her transfer while being able to complete late performance reviews for Team A for the period during which he/she was the manager of Team A. As an employee is assigned to a new function, these two capabilities ensure that the employee will get the new functional training needed, that the schedule will be adjusted to reflect that training, and that the employee gets appropriate new equipment. And when an individual is playing two concurrent work roles with respect to the organization, (e.g. when a manager leads two different work teams or an employee holds a part-time position with each of two of the organization’s retail outlets) these two capabilities allow that individual to conduct the business appropriate to each of those work roles for the appropriate period.

“Effective-dating” plus “role-based delivery” are very powerful stuff. When both functions are included in an outsourcer’s HRM delivery system, they indicate the provider’s complete understanding of the HRO domain. They indicate that the provider is using technology to raise service levels while reducing costs. And they indicate the likelihood that the provider will cost-effectively handle your business needs. 



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