

Are You on the Same Page?

IN THIS PART 1 IN A SERIES ON FIT, BE CERTAIN YOUR PROVIDER'S PLATFORM MAKES THE SAME ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WORKERS THAT YOU DO. BY NAOMI LEE BLOOM

Last month's column introduced the importance of your outsourcing provider's software platform, and the fit of that platform to your organization's needs. We then focused on having intelligent, content- and business-rule-rich self-service, as opposed to dumb, transaction-only self-service delivered by that platform. This month, we begin a two-part focus on one specific area of the fit question: to what extent does the provider's platform make the same assumptions about workers (Part 1) and work (Part 2, next month) as does your organization? Same or similar assumptions lead to a reasonable fit; truly different assumptions lead both you and a provider where you don't want to go.

Let's start with those assumptions about the kinds of workers and working arrangements that may once have been one-off exceptions or have been prevalent in very limited settings but which have become a common part of doing business. Do you have:

- Field sales or service employees whose migratory work locations ensure that their pay is taxable by more than one jurisdiction during a payroll period?
- Employees who are paid at different rates during the payroll period depending on what specific work they were doing at a particular time?
- Employees who telecommute and/or work exclusively from their homes which then become a work site for various regulations?



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Put together some scenarios for testing the ability of your provider's software to meet changing needs.

- When-actually-employed (WAE) employees who are paid on an hourly basis when they are called in to work, and are then paid at the rate that's relevant for the work they are doing, but who also receive a pay period stipend and some benefits in exchange for holding themselves available?
- Employees who are handicapped in such a way that a government agency subsidizes a portion of their wages and/or benefits?
- Non-employee members of your workforce, from

PEO-provided dual-employment workers to independent contractors to leased employees to those consultants who never seem to leave, for whom you need to capture time and expense information as well as the details of what work these non-employees did in order to produce accurate headcount reports, forecast workloads, and determine the actual costs of getting work done via various staffing strategies?

FUTURE SCENARIOS

Today's organizations increasingly rely on these and many more variations on the kinds of workers and working arrangements in order to deliver needed products and services as efficiently as possible and with agility to address changing business conditions. It's a very dated notion to presume that our workforce consists solely of our own employees and that they work at a fixed organizational location and are paid on either a fixed salary or fixed hourly rate basis for each pay period. Yet there is both commercial HRMS software as well as proprietary outsourcing provider platforms designed around these outdated assumptions and then jury-rigged to accommodate some of the newer approaches.

If your organization depends on flexible workers and working arrangements, make sure that your outsourcing provider's platform can handle all such arrangements as a matter of course rather than via expensive and error-prone human intervention. And do remember to check out how easily the provider's platform handles changes to these arrangements during a payroll period as well as retrospectively, retroactively, and prospectively as in forecasting.

If it's beginning to sound like you'd better put together some scenarios for testing your outsourcing provider's ability to handle these increasingly common needs without costly and error-prone human intervention, you're right. While you may not care in what language your provider has chosen to write their brilliant software platform (or in what language their selected commercial software is written), you absolutely do care that they've got a software platform capable of meeting your needs in these areas—as well as the different ways in which we organize work that will be addressed next month in Part 2 of this series. And we do promise to do a column on how to design those much-needed scenarios. **HRD**