# Timesheets Are Not The End Of It

By *Volker Bendel*



Nobody likes doing timesheets. It appears to many users - in particular the creative users within an organization - to be a way of monitoring every single minute of their time. It doesn't encourage them either to enter timesheets if they are well aware that they are the only ones having to record their time, whilst the very same people asking them to do so, don't fill in timesheets themselves.

However, experience of many timesheet training courses for creative users has shown that if it is explained to those users that timesheet entry is not the end of it, that the time information that they log, is not going into a black hole only illuminated for the purposes of people higher up to control them, a timesheet procedure can be much more acceptable.

One of the big concerns, raised by the course attendants themselves is that they know clients are over-serviced and not charged for that, hence losing out on additional profit for the company that would otherwise form part of the bonus and/or influence the annual pay rises for everybody including the main timesheet users.

On a different level within an enterprise the team leaders and project managers in organizations, where time is not recorded or recorded manually and in the latter case often long in arrears (a month delay to get paper timesheets in is not an exception) often complain that they don't have exact historic information regarding the profitability of their projects. Even if the paper timesheet is submitted late it will hardly be correct, as nobody will be able to remember on the last day of the month every 15-minute conversation with a client on a day at the beginning of the same month.

And finally for the accounts department, missing or delayed time records of course means missing or delayed billing and revenue. Furthermore it withholds crucial data to plan for future projects of a similar type.

The outcome of many discussions with creative- as well as project management-staff is that the creative staff should be made aware of the job reporting benefits from their time recording. They should be shown where the information from their timesheet goes and that it is used for current billing and future estimating and not a mere control of every minute of their day. By involving them in this way their acceptance to enter timesheets is massively improved. If then in addition to this, they are also made aware that everybody else in the chain of control of a project records their time as well, as project management time can cause over-servicing to the same extend as can creative time, this will be an additional selling point of a timesheet system to the revenue producing members of staff. And finally if the time sheeting is then part of an integrated job costing/accounting system, where there is a streamline through from estimating time and costs on jobs to recording and billing time and costs on jobs, the implementation of a timesheet system might well be the single biggest tool to enhance profitability of the company and improve everybody's workday.

© 2013 Volker Bendel - Volker Bendel is manager of the training department of Agency Software Worldwide, the producers of the "Paprika/Rebus" job costing software ( http://www.paprika-software.com )( http://www.rebus-software.com ). Originally from a legal background, he has several years experience in planning and implementing Job Costing and Accounting Software Systems in the Creative Industry. He has also delivered training courses in the UK, Europe, Dubai, the US, China, Singapore, Japan and Australia. Prior to that he worked as a senior business consultant in Hong Kong and as a department manager of a design department in Hong Kong.

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