tcp™

MOBILE SOLUTIONS

# Mobile Solutions Are Essential for Today's Workforce

The idea of a mobile workforce may seem fairly new, but it's not. It began with a NASA engineer. In 1973, Jack Nilles worked **on a complex NASA communication project remotely**, and the concept of "telecommuting" was born. Since that time, organizations have slowly accepted the idea that employees don't have to be in an office to get their work done.

Small and large businesses are focused on empowering every employee to use technology that fits their needs and adds value to the bottom line.

"Businesses operate in a very complex global world today that requires them and their employees to work everywhere," **Brynne Kennedy, CEO of Topia, told HR Technologist**.

"More than 60% of the workforce will be millennials and Gen Z by 2020, and they have vastly different working styles than other generations. For example, they prefer to work in and out of full-time employment and often want flexibility between remote locations and being in the office. Managing a mobile workforce involves supporting administrative processes and employee experiences across many locations, policies, and types of locations."

Today, the modern workforce is uses mobile solutions on a daily basis, and thanks to the proliferation of the cloud, most employees are now able to access necessary work information anywhere easily when they need it. They can also join meetings via the internet and email colleagues regardless of their location. Mobile technology has changed the game even more by providing most employees with access to digital information and records easily obtained through a device that fits in their back pocket.
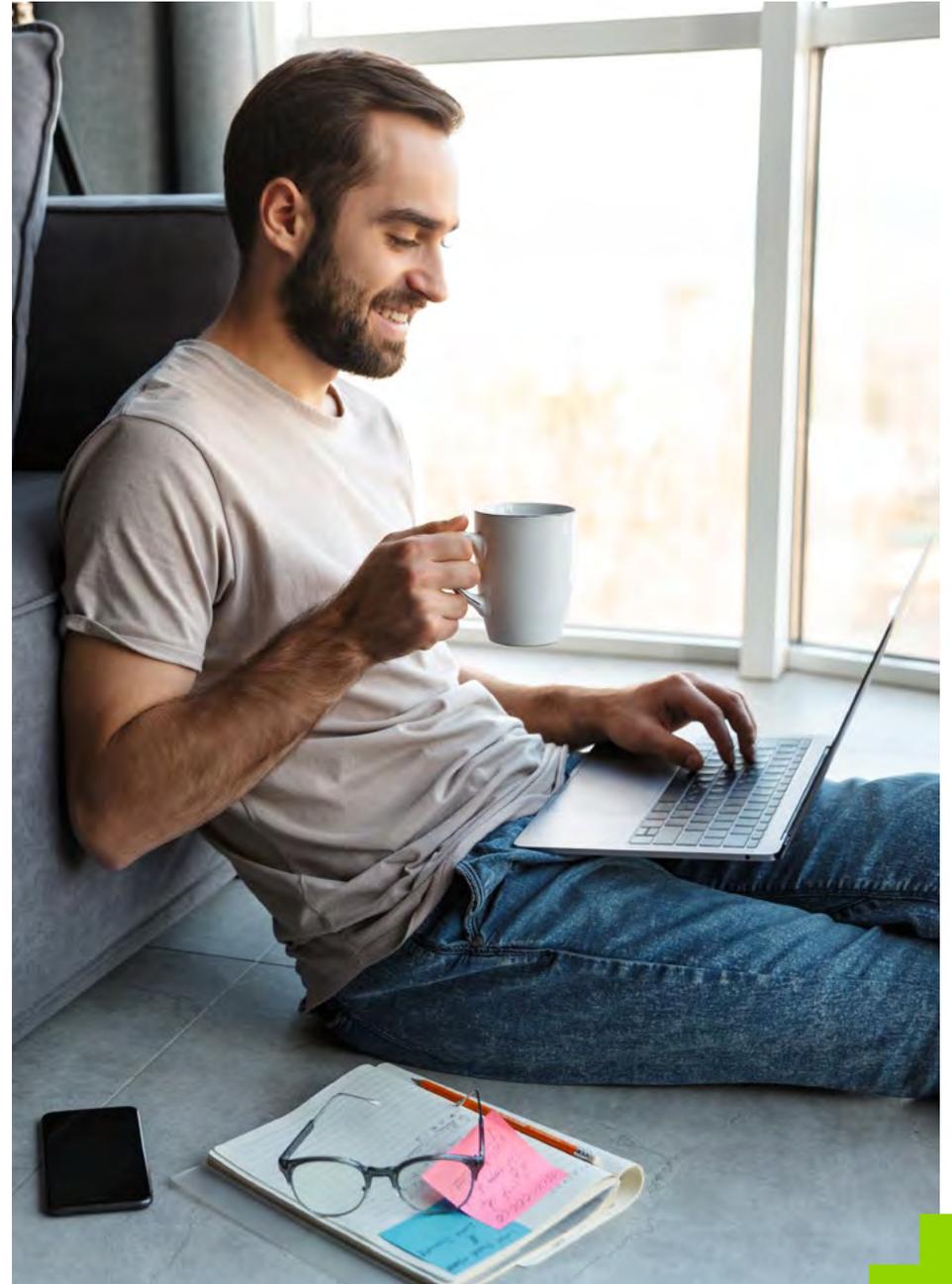
What does mobile mean for workforce management solutions?

Mobile is all about accessibility and ease of use. Through mobile solutions, companies can deploy workforce management to employees who may not work in an office setting – for example, construction, maintenance, transportation workers and hourly employees who are working remotely. For these employees, workforce management software is accessed via a mobile device to provide them with access to time clocks, schedules, manager communications, and company notifications, among other things.

Some companies allow employees to access the full breadth of workforce management capabilities, and other employers just use the mobile interface for time clock purposes. Company policies and needs will inform what level of access each organization needs to offer employees at any given time.

Top Mobile Functionalities & Requirements

Not all mobile workforce management solutions are created equal. Unlike the fitness app, if it doesn't meet your needs, it's not as simple as downloading another app from the store. It takes careful review to ensure a mobile solution is right for your workforce management strategy. For organizations considering mobile options, you need a clear vision of functionalities and benefits they can achieve when deploying technology for mobile workforce management.

TCP believes there are five key functionalities that a mobile solution should include.

- **Configurability**

  You need a mobile solution that can be deployed to your level of comfort. A one-size-fits-all solution forces your organization to adapt to its limitations instead of the other way around. Managers should feel confident and comfortable about the level of access and self-service that employees have via their mobile devices. You should be able to provide employees access to simple functions such as the ability to clock in and out—to more extensive self-service options such as requesting time off or reviewing schedules. As always, access levels and permissions should be based on your comfort level and needs.
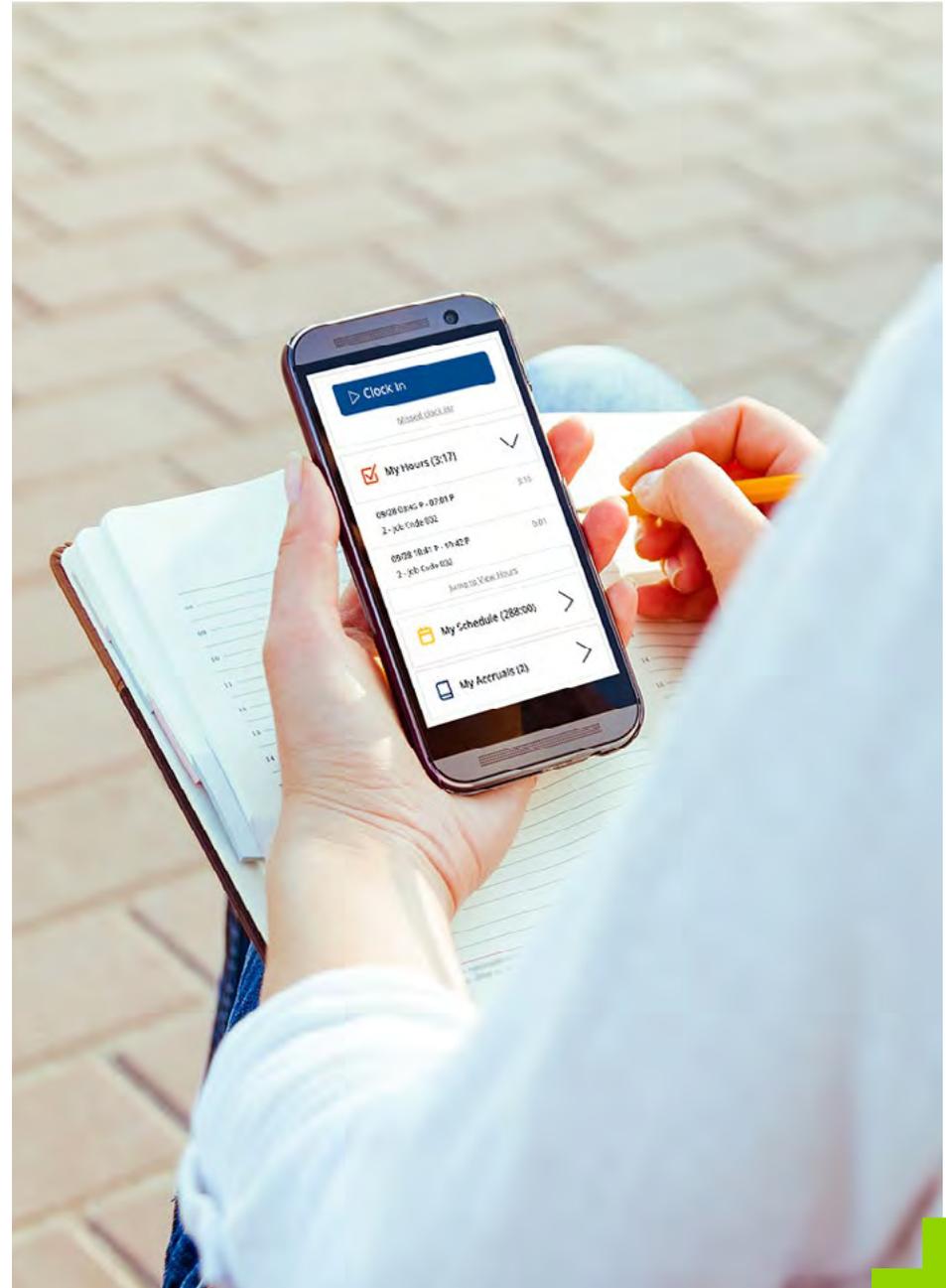
- **Offline access**

  If you're considering mobile access, that means your employees work from various locations – including those which may have spotty internet access. But we know that even if they can't clock in, employees may be working. In those cases, you need a mobile solution that is not just available in an employee's pocket but is also available offline to allow employees to use the system, even when internet service is not available.

- **Communication tools**

  Managers may struggle with reaching employees at remote sites. Your mobile workforce management solution should allow you to push messages to employees working in the field. This functionality is essential for sending schedule changes and communicating the same message to a dispersed group of employees. A side benefit is that you also have a document trail of all communications sent through official channels.

- **Individual devices**

  Whether it's via a mobile device or a desktop application, a digital solution allows your employees to clock in without long lines at a time clock. When considering pandemic precautions, this also reduces the chance of big groups of employees using common surfaces.

- **Geofencing**

  This location functionality allows you to map areas where mobile operations are permitted. For example, geofencing helps ensure that employees will not perform clock operations from home, on the road to work – or elsewhere.
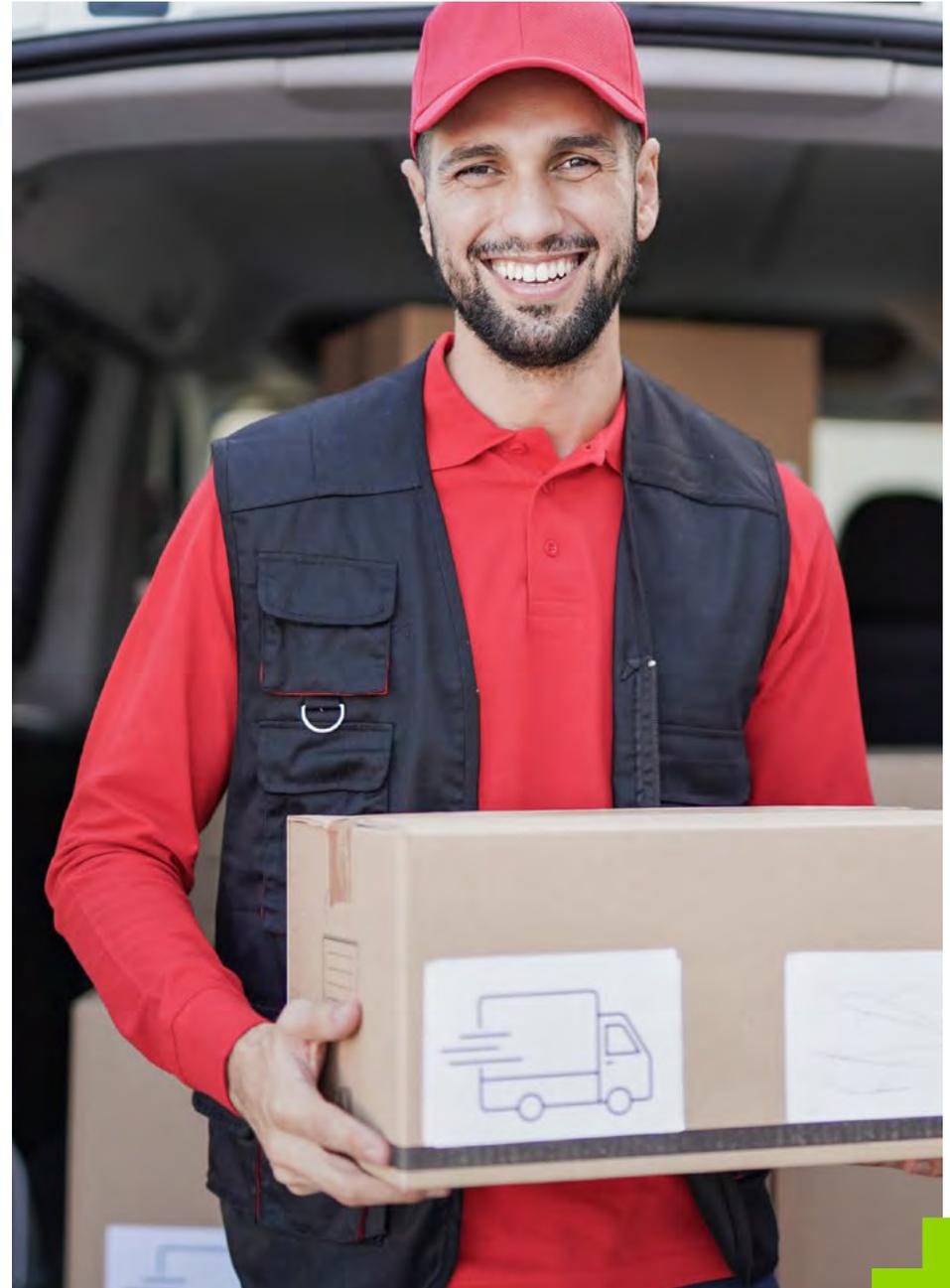
Industry Use Cases for Mobile Solutions

Globally, more than 5 billion people own a mobile device, according to **Pew Research Center**. More than half of those devices are smartphones. To maximize the benefits of today's technology and the efficiencies of a mobile workforce, organizations must adopt a mobile mindset.

"Any technology deployed for workers outside an office should be accessible so that efficiency improves," **according to HR Technologist**. "Organizations must keep in mind that their employees now have access to better technology outside work than they do at work. They expect any technology they use – for work or personal use – to be intuitive and engaging. To keep them engaged and efficient, a mobile-first mindset is critical."

The mobile workforce is most common in industries such as manufacturing, construction, retail and healthcare, where "deskless" workers are out in the field and not in an office. As an example of mobile workforce management efficiencies, consider how mobile makes it easier for employers and employees in these industries.

- **Construction**
  Workers can start their day at any job site without needing a physical time clock to do so. That means construction companies don't need to install or service time clocks at multiple sites. Managers can deploy teams to various places without worries about someone not being able to clock in at a given location. This flexibility allows companies to employ automated solutions without a physical time clock.

- **Transportation**
  Drivers can clock in when they start a shift, clock out for breaks, and receive urgent, official communication regardless of their location. Especially in times of disaster or emergencies, reaching these workers with information about inclement weather or road conditions helps reduce safety and logistical issues.

- **Maintenance**
  Custodians, landscapers, plumbers, electricians and other maintenance employees are constantly on the move during their shift. Mobile options to clock in help them do so from multiple sites to efficiently track their location as well as the hours they've worked each day.

- **Campus jobs**
  Colleges and universities employ large numbers of digital natives. For members of this workforce, who often work multiple jobs, it's practical to give them the ability to clock in via a digital time clock on their mobile device.

While these industries typically have more remote workers, it's important to note the increase of remote and mobile work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the peak of the U.S. shut down in early April 2020, **62% of employed Americans** worked from home. Since then, many organizations have shifted from managing a remote workforce to managing complex hybrid versions of work. These organizations have joined the growing list of employers who need a reliable, convenient way to manage remote and mobile employees.

Addressing concerns about falsified time

There are significant advantages when employers use mobile software, especially to manage employee time. Supervisors can react immediately if overtime issues arise. Through automation, digital time clocks save time and effort by seamlessly transferring employee's hourly data to payroll. Finally, time clock apps also improve record retention, securely store data in one location and help organizations comply with all regulations and avoid legal issues.

While managers appreciate and understand the benefits of using time clock applications, they may also have concerns about the falsification of time records. They want to know how they can tell if an employee is clocking in from the beach in Hawaii, 15 minutes early as they sit in their car in the parking lot or from the job site as per schedule.

Those are valid concerns. The answers to those concerns are geofencing and geolocation, staggered access and configuration options. Features that will help you limit falsified time records include the ability to:

- **Varied access.** Find a solution that allows you to enable all functions from every location, functions dependant on an employee's job, or block access from a specific location. For example, a user may have access to everything the app offers when they are onsite. From home, they may only be able to view time worked and request time off. If the geolocation is outside a specific area, you should have the option to shut off access altogether.

- **Configure the system.** Workforce management software should enable you to tailor the experience and user permissions based on time, user location, job types, department or other organizational specifics.

- **Limit IP addresses.** While geofencing and geolocation are popular solutions to limiting access, you may also want a system that allows you to limit the locations where employees can use the mobile app.

TCP's Mobile Solutions

We understand that organizations need a reliable, convenient way to manage both in-person and remote employees. Using TCP's **mobile solutions**, employees can perform time clock operations, check their schedules, request time off and more, making it easier for remote, hybrid and mobile workforces.

MobileClock removes the limitations of fixed time-collection devices and gives employees the ability to clock in and out from wherever they may be. Added benefits of our solution include:

- Streamlined delivery of app updates ensure all employees are using the latest version of the app.

- Ability to set different parameters for clocking in and out for salaried vs. hourly employees or remote vs. in-person workers, or prompting employees to complete a health questionnaire before they can proceed to work.

- Options for biometric security protection through a phone's fingerprint scanner to authenticate the employee's identity.

- Setting validation criteria, including using geolocation to ensure that an employee is in the right place at the right time.

TCP's **WebClock** is a web-based time clock that allows employees to perform clock operations and self-service actions directly from a computer, tablet or another device.

Through this easy-to-use interface, employees can quickly clock in and out, leave on break, change departments or tasks, submit time-off requests and create timesheets. The customizable dashboard widgets give employees a quick snapshot of their hours worked, messages, time-off accruals, leave requests and more. This software solution is available to employees wherever they are – typically on their personal computers. Some companies use the WebClock instead of regular time clocks, and other companies offer it in addition to time clocks.

Our web and mobile solutions allow employees the flexibility they need to do their jobs and provide organizations with a sense of relief, knowing that their time and attendance data is accurate, secure and accessible.
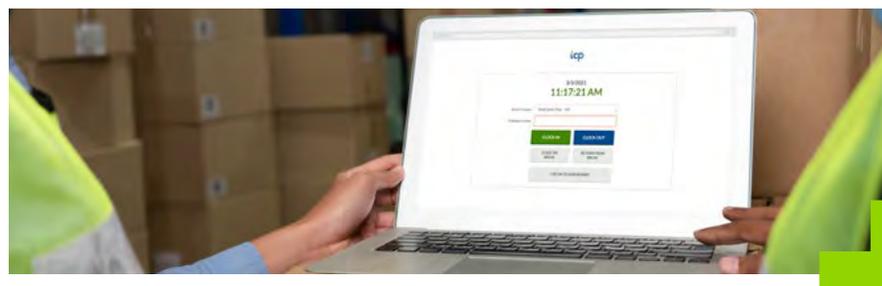
# Maximize the Benefits of Your Mobile Workforce

Mobile workforce needs aren't going away anytime soon. In fact, they're only increasing. The global mobile workforce is expected to **increase to 1.88 billion people in 2023**, accounting for 43.3% of the overall global workforce.

A mobile workforce is not defined merely by the type of worker. It is also determined by the technology that enables members of this workforce to do their jobs. This is about the data and location mobility that adds to the "anytime, anywhere" landscape of modern work.

Today, mobile workforce management tools enable this agile workplace. When you deploy mobile solutions, time tracking is possible from any location. Communication is enterprise-wide and not limited to people within a single specific job site. With a mobile workforce, information and data are streamlined across systems for greater visibility, productivity and efficiency.

If you're ready to maximize the benefits of a mobile workforce, let's talk. We'll help you understand how you can take advantage of mobile options to deploy the versatile solution that your workforce – and your organization – needs.

Reach out today to learn more and **schedule a demo** with one of our consultants.
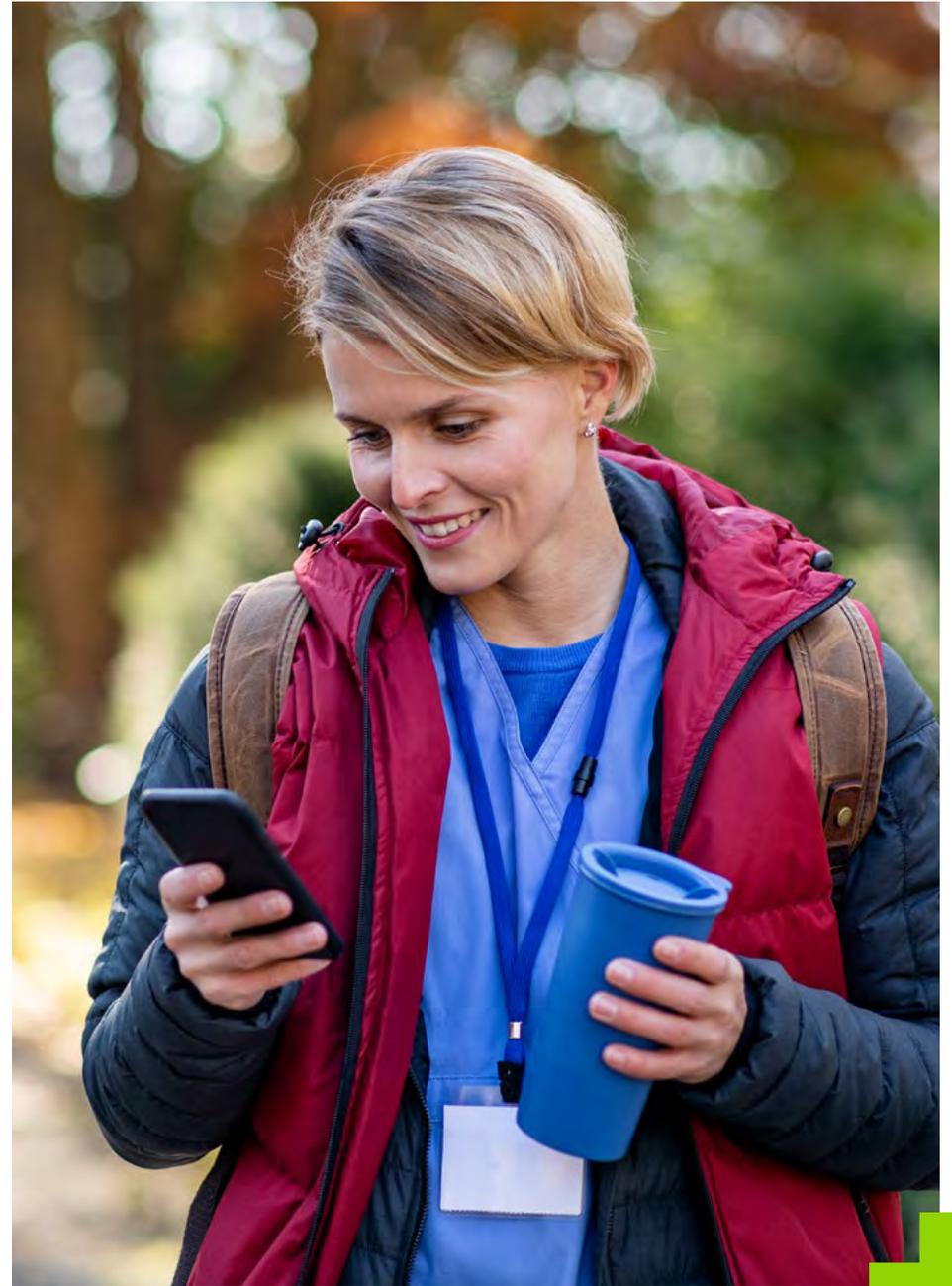
Integrated solutions are key to maintaining a productive workforce

While time and attendance is at the core of workforce management, true workforce management occurs when all the key activities required to maintain a productive workforce integrate seamlessly into one package. If your organization is looking to up-level your HR technology, **download** our full eBook, "Everything You Need to Know About Workforce Management," to learn how robust, integrated solutions can help you streamline processes and maximize your workforce.