



Workforce Management Software Buyer's Guide for Manufacturing

Your guide to making the best WFM
choice for your company



Introduction

Workforce management (WFM) is an organizational method and approach that helps manufacturing companies maintain a productive workforce. WFM is a useful practice for all industries, but especially so for construction.

According to [a recent Deloitte study](#), the pandemic decimated about 1.4 million U.S. manufacturing jobs. Fortunately, manufacturers were able to hire back 820,000 of these jobs but more than 500,000 remain unfilled – even with openings. Executives said they're struggling to fill entry-level production positions as well as skilled workers for specialized roles.

As research like this suggests, WFM is an essential practice for manufacturing employers as they face labor shortages and rising materials costs. Genuine workforce management happens when companies integrate key activities into one platform. Regardless of the size of your company, chances are you're looking for information about how to choose the right workforce management (WFM) software because your:

- Existing systems aren't meeting your need to gather punches and track multiple project sites
- Costly payroll errors are hitting your budget or negatively impacting employee morale due to errors in pay
- Methods for scheduling aren't strategic, and supervisors must rely on their best guess to know where employees are the most productive

Introduction cont'd

With WFM, companies can make decisions based on labor tracking and job costing, and leverage document management capabilities to avoid risk. In addition, tools for supervising mobile manufacturing workers make it easy to capture all the necessary data, regardless of an employee's location.

Whatever brought you to this search for a WFM solution, you're in good company. Many manufacturing companies are realizing a need to elevate their workforce management approach.



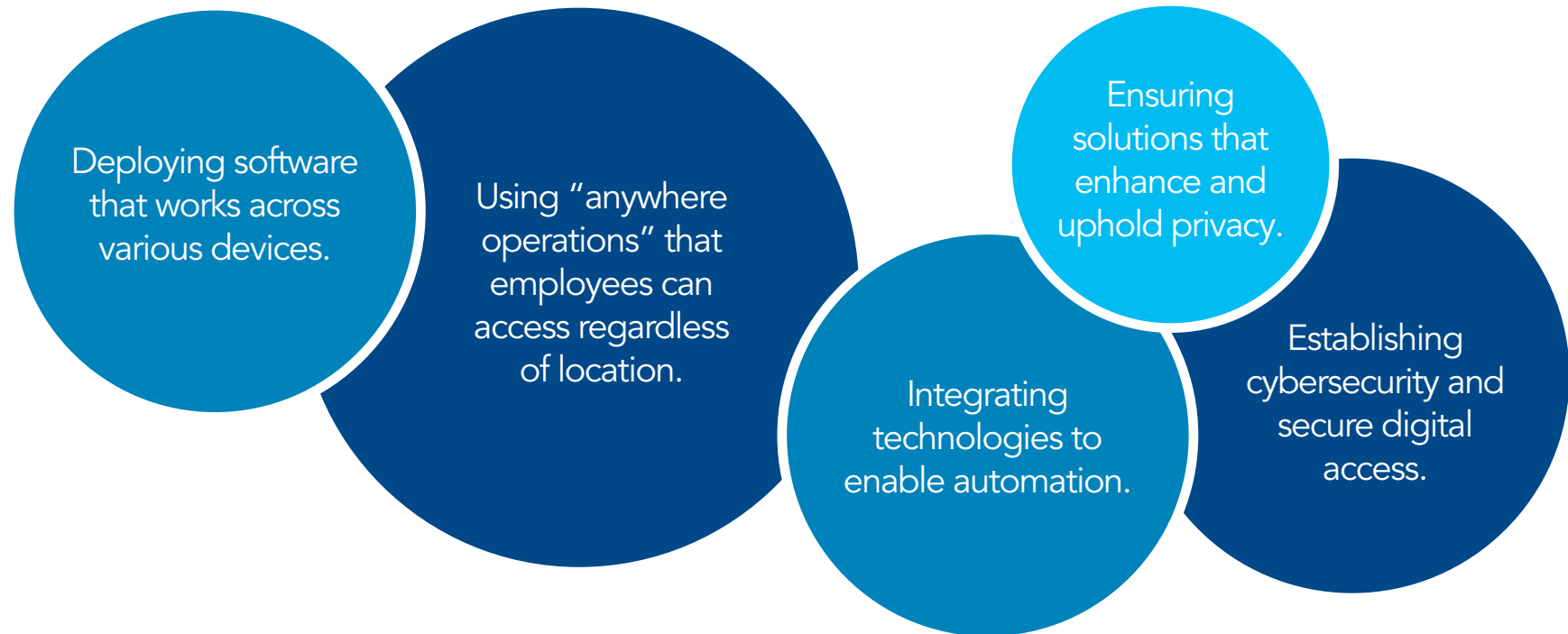
Use Systems to Empower Workforce Management

Given recent global challenges, agile workforce management systems have become more critical than ever.

“It is becoming increasingly important for HR leaders to plan for their technology investments with more caution than in years past,” according to [an analyst from Gartner](#).

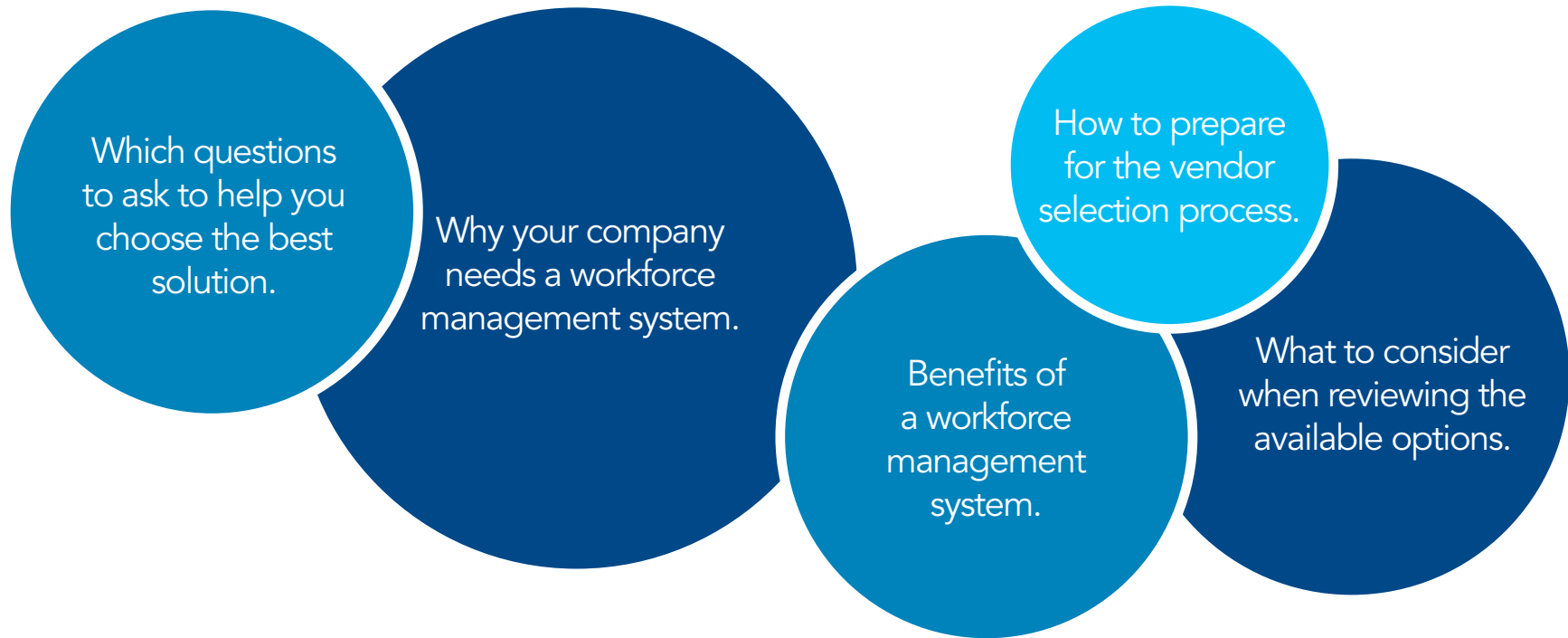


Gartner notes five key trends that are crucial for HR leaders to address today's workforce challenges:



You may know your company has outgrown the current approach but updating your systems or implementing workforce management software can feel overwhelming for the first time. You're also likely feeling the stress of needing to choose the right solution that will meet existing and future needs. The bottom line: it's tough to know where to start. That's where this guide comes in.

This buyer's guide will help you understand:



We'll guide you through key steps to help identify what you need to consider and who needs to be involved. Selecting a workforce management solution may seem like an ominous task, but with this guide, you have what you need to ensure you will be prepared for a successful journey.

Benefits of Better Workforce Management cont'd

You don't need convincing that there's a better way. But here are some examples of the benefits your company will experience with more effective, efficient workforce management systems:

Supervisors and administrators can use the WFM platform to easily create, share and update schedules.

Multiple time tracking methods help you manage overtime and labor compliance, regardless of location.

Improved cash flow occurs thanks to better visibility to what jobs actually cost.

Fast, efficient and accurate data transfer allows you to run payroll with greater ease and accuracy.

Absence and leave management processes are simple to administer.

With these benefits in mind, it's time to take the steps that will help you analyze and review the impact a workforce management solution will have on your company.

Why Your Company Needs a WFM System

Within the ever-changing manufacturing environment, effective workforce management is an essential organizational approach that simplifies crucial activities. Now more than ever, supervisors and company leaders must maintain productivity, effectively manage mobile workers, promptly schedule shifts, as well as administer leave management and manage documents.

If workforce management is an entirely new undertaking for your company, our eBook ["Everything You Need to Know About Workforce Management"](#) will help educate you on the terms and definitions involved with workforce management solutions, as well as the challenges WFM will help you solve. Immediate benefits of implementing WFM software include improved productivity, staff empowerment and efficient, automated processes.



Improved productivity

In the simplest terms – productivity requires that you’re effectively managing your workforce. For manufacturing workers to be successful, managers and supervisors need technology that assists with productivity. Unfortunately, according to research, a significant amount of time is wasted in the workplace.

[Finances Online](#) reports that:

60%



of employees’ tasks include work to organize files and communicate about tasks

49%



of American employees openly admit to time theft, which can cost as much as 7% of gross annual payroll

Employees spend up to

four hours a week

on unproductive tasks



These issues and others have a significant impact not only by creating unnecessary costs but also by decreasing employee satisfaction. If workforce management software doesn't engage your workers, your chances for success are severely limited. According to [technology marketplace advisor G2](#), employee engagement with software has a significant impact on its organizational longevity and success:

24.06%



of employees have considered leaving their job because they didn't have the right software

51.95%



of employees are unhappy at work because of the software they're using

With the right tools, your leaders, administrators and supervisors have access to the information they need to handle labor, scheduling and job costing all from one system. Ideally, they can also use the WFM system to manage employee leaves and retain important documents.

Fully integrated workforce management enables your business to manage time and attendance for every full time and part time employee on your crew(s), build accurate and effective schedules, and ensure that you have a clear perspective on the resources required to handle every job or project on the line.

Empowered staff

Workforce management software not only helps streamline management activities in a way that enables you to achieve company financial goals, but the right system also helps your supervisors and workers focus on what's happening on the job. WFM systems improve transparency and efficiency by giving workers access to view the hours they've worked, their schedules, leave accruals, and other personal information.

Not only does employee self-service in WFM software reduce the need for manager or HR assistance but it also empowers workers to review data prior to approval to ensure it's accurate. This level of autonomy is what supervisors and workers have come to expect from top manufacturing employers.



Efficient automated processes

Manual processes in HR are prone to errors. These errors take time to fix. If they aren't caught in time, they can even cost significant amounts of money to resolve – either through backpay, lawsuits or regulatory fines.

When you put automated WFM processes to work, efficiency can skyrocket. Thanks to the power of WFM technology, it's possible to track hours across multiple jobs sites and even automate labor calculations. The ability to automate calculations also dramatically decreases the time required for payroll processing, while also increasing accuracy. Using job costing capabilities also helps your company submit more accurate cost reporting on production.

Day-to-day employee operations is the core of your business. The ability to collect and manage data at any location ensures you have what you need to run your business efficiently. Integrations to payroll and ERP ensure time collected becomes actionable and your business processes, from collecting time to paying your team, run smoothly and efficiently.

With the understanding that your company needs a workforce management solution that can improve productivity and increase employee empowerment, you're ready to start talking to companies that provide WFM solutions.



Request and Review RFPs from WFM Providers

To choose the right workforce management solution, you need to align on “must-have” and “nice to have” capabilities and establish comparison criteria to ensure all systems are reviewed fairly.

Before you request information about possible solutions and meet with vendors, define these essential parameters:

- Articulate your goals and the issues you want the system to solve.
- Draft a list of system requirements; prioritize each item based on necessity.
- Review your timeline to establish ideal dates for system implementation and go-live.
- Identify who should be involved in the system review and selection process as well as who contributes to the final decision. Note: if your company has “represented workers,” such as those from a union, make sure they have representation during the system selection process.

It's essential to identify these parameters before you start requesting system information from vendors. Gather the necessary input and information so that you can explain and inform vendors what you need.

In addition to identifying your parameters, there are questions you must ask to gather the information you need – from your internal stakeholders, as well as your vendors.

Questions to Ask Stakeholders

#1 Does our WFM system need to integrate with other systems, such as payroll, enterprise resource planning (ERP) or human capital management (HCM)?

#2 Will this system support our needs for full-time and part-time workers?

#3 What system capabilities do we require beyond basic time tracking (e.g., labor tracking, job costing, leave management, document management)?

#4 How do we want workers to access the system (e.g., via wall-mounted clocks, web-based access or mobile options)?

#5 How do we anticipate staff will react to this change?

#6 What change management and communication resources do we have to help ensure successful implementation and user adoption?

Questions to Ask Vendors

#1 How long will implementation take for a company of our size and needs?

#2 What level of customer service does your company provide after implementation?

#3 If we provide remote access, can we control or limit worker access?

#4 What tracking features exist for mobile-enabled functionality in the system?

#5 Was your system designed as an all-in-one offering or has it evolved?

#6 What system integrations do you currently offer?

Asking these questions and doing your homework is essential to find the right solution and avoid wasting valuable funds.



Consider Important Workforce Management Factors

Successful companies use processes that increase data accuracy as well as support productivity. Staff and workers depend on your company's leadership to select and implement the systems that will support and enhance their work.

As you look for the right system to enhance workforce management at your construction company, keep these factors and considerations in mind.



Factors <hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: 0;"/>	Considerations <hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: 0;"/>
End User	<p>Think about the people who will use the WFM system – owners, administrators, supervisors and workers all have different system needs. You need to understand them and identify how the new system specifically meets their needs.</p> <p>Consider creating focus groups with end-users to gather their input and to their needs. This is the first step in an effective change management process.</p>
System levels	<p>Today's systems are highly configurable. Make sure you're considering what level of sophistication you require in your WFM system.</p> <p>For example, do you need basic time tracking or do you need a system that will allow you to add job and cost codes? What type of approvals and visibility do you require for scheduling?</p> <p>Make sure your future needs are part of the consideration – as your company evolves, you want your WFM system to grow with you.</p>

Factors	Considerations
Integration options	<p>There are wide-reaching WFM systems that cover many functions but don't excel in all of them. Not all systems are created equal, and not every company has the same needs and strategies. At the same time, patching together a system built on the best tool for every function can create an IT stack that is very difficult to manage.</p> <p>As you look at your options, use a "best-of-breed strategy" in which an ERP, accounting/payroll system or HCM, is at the center and can be supported by integrations that will extend the functionality.</p>
Cloud vs. on-premises solutions	<p>Depending on your company's operational model, you may benefit from workforce management software that is cloud-enabled, or you may require an on-premises solution.</p> <p>If supervisors require access to critical business systems while working remotely, a cloud solution is likely the best option. An on-premises or blended solution may be a better option for any employees who work in the office.</p> <p>Make this decision about cloud and on-premises solutions based on your current and possible operational needs which could arise in the future.</p>

<h2>Factors</h2>	<h2>Considerations</h2>
<h3>Budget considerations</h3>	<p>If you haven't had a WFM system in place, it's understandable if you're concerned about adding a new expense to your budget. Keep in mind that when you're leveling up your systems there are long-term benefits for both workers and the company.</p> <p>As you look at the options, consider up-front costs, individual license costs, and additional training or customer service costs. Not every vendor has the same cost model, so make sure you evaluate each offering accordingly.</p> <p>Also, be sure to calculate how your WFM solution will save you money. Whether it's fewer payroll errors, improved job cost reporting, more efficient document management or faster schedule creation, you'll potentially reduce costs with a better WFM system in place.</p> <p>Worried about getting the boss on board? Read our blog, "Building a Business Case for Time & Attendance Software" for some tips to help you calculate savings.</p>

Not sure where to start?

Download our Scope of Work comparison tool to easily compare WFM solutions and their capabilities.

➔ Check it Out



Gather Input from Trusted Sources

As the saying goes, you don't know what you don't know. That's why it's essential to gather input from a variety of trusted sources as you consider various WFM system options. Once you have a list of your top choices, it's time to ask for feedback regarding your top vendors.

At a minimum, make sure you cover your bases with these sources:

Talk to your peers:



- Current and former colleagues
- Fellow members in professional organizations
- Industry groups on LinkedIn

Attend industry conference sessions:



- [HR Technology Conference & Exposition](#): Meet vendors and gain insights needed to make critical HR system decisions.

Refer to software review sites:



- [G2](#): Discover and compare software options.
- [Capterra](#): Find software, compare options and read reviews.
- [Software Advice](#): Get one-on-one help and personalized recommendations about your software options.

Stay on top of trends:

As of 2021, many experts have cited the following workplace predictions that could influence your decisions about which WFM system is right for you:

- Health screenings are now required at many work sites.
- The need for mobile and remote access will continue.
- Desires for demand-based scheduling are increasing.
- Job costing data is crucial to manage budgets and avoid overages.



In the final stages of your decision-making, these trusted sources can provide objective insights from others who understand the unique needs of construction companies. Based on the experience of actual users, you can get the answers you need to make a well-informed choice.

Conclusion

Regarding WFM, there are multiple technology trends to consider and numerous system options available. Like other business owners, you're dedicating valuable time and resources to assess and plan for the introduction of new technologies that will assist with crucial workforce processes.

Complex projects can lead to delays, unexpected costs and various risks. The ability to track labor gives construction managers access to real-time information, as well as work location and project status. This information allows leaders across the company to handle potential issues faster and minimize risks, delays and unexpected costs. At a minimum, WFM will help you ensure the right people are scheduled to work so you can keep projects on time and on budget.

As you weigh WFM options and make decisions, stay focused on your company's unique technology needs and capabilities. Find a system that makes it easy for users with a modern, well-designed user interface. Involve a cross-functional team to assist with this decision and ensure it will benefit the entire company. Together owners, managers and supervisors can unite to improve worker experiences, increase productivity and reduce compliance risks by maximizing all that a workforce management system has to offer.

