Top 5 workforce management tech trends in 2021

Organizations were forced to rethink operations in 2020 and shift their strategies overnight, prompting new investments in workforce technology. So, what's to come in 2021?

We've compiled a list of the top 5 and relevant workforce.com technology features we predict will make for key trends this year. These include COVID recovery, labor compliance, automated scheduling, advanced workforce analytics and increased cloud and mobility functionality.

1. Labor compliance and minimum wage changes

The Biden administration is pushing to raise the federal hourly minimum wage to $15 by 2026. While legislation has yet to be passed, organizations will be preparing for minimum wage changes and complying correctly. Companies that fail to comply are at risk of facing stiff financial penalties and negative public attention.

Webinar: [What the Biden administration means for the minimum wage laws](#)

Staying abreast of these changes will be crucial, and organizations will be looking to have an automated system in place that will make the transition easier. Organizations will require solutions that can simplify and automate [labor law compliance](#). They will need a proactive platform that accounts for all applicable federal, state and local labor regulations from employee scheduling to payroll processing.

Workforce.com continues to invest in our fully automated and user customizable compliance engine, pioneered in Australia to manage the world's most complicated and expensive wage laws and costs. Instead of manually updating or having to calculate different wages for schedules, overtime and payroll, organizations will be able to have changes automatically forecasted and updated. We predict labor compliance to continue to become increasingly complicated due to political, regional and union influence.

Higher wages will also mean increased labor cost and a need for companies to be smarter around how they schedule, track and spend on wages. Workforce management features that can boost employee productivity whilst providing wage oversight for owners and front-line teams to proactively manage will be key.
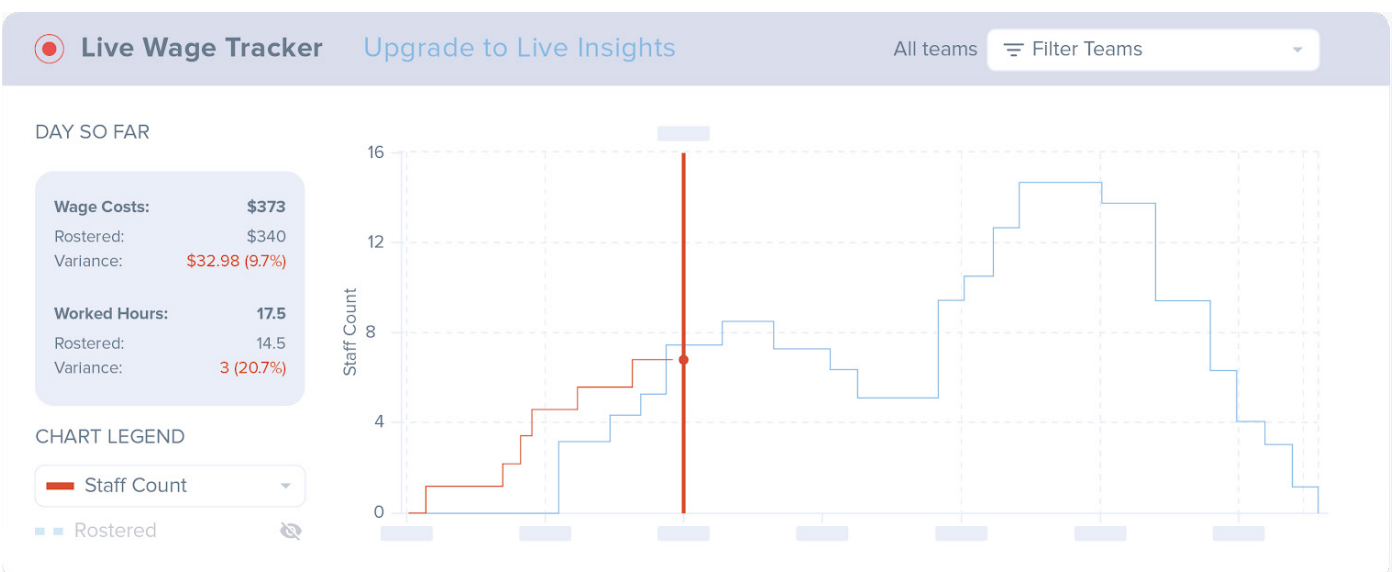
Also read: [The rundown on wage law compliance: What organizations should know](#)

A way to address this will be the workforce.com [Live Wage Tracker,](#) which provides a real-time view of staff count, exact costs and where there may be overspending per shift factored for compliance. It equips frontline managers to make decisions quickly and adjust staffing levels accordingly throughout the day. With this, businesses can be more efficient in controlling their labor costs and optimizing real-time operations.

2. COVID-19 recovery and employee well-being

As the world recovers from COVID-19 and shift work industries return to normal, it will remain paramount for organizations to have a workforce management platform in place for ensuring employee health, safety and feedback.

As workers return to their shifts in numbers, clear communication will be vital to responding to queries and staying agile as a team. Workforce.com innovations this year include the live 360-degree [shift feedback and ratings](#) feature so comments can be gathered from employees after each shift and proactively managed. Their responses enable managers to quickly address issues and apply necessary changes to future shifts. This tool promotes transparency and will provide an avenue for employees to speak up and be heard.

Watch: [Introducing shift feedback and ratings](#)

Tracking accurate time and attendance but minimizing contact with communal punch clocks will also continue to remain a priority for organizations. Instead of these older physical devices we predict an accelerated rise of next-gen mobile, app, GPS and tablet clocking in solutions that addresses these concerns.

For instance, with workforce.com [GPS Clock ins](#) instead of just one device for clocking in, staff will be able to use this feature to clock in on their own mobile device. Employees who are on the go can also use it to accurately log their start

and end times, as well as their break and location while on shift. This results in a lower hardware and maintenance cost of ensuring accurate timesheets while reducing multiple touches to a communal device.

Workforce.com has also developed a completely free tool called Reopen to help businesses manage their capacity and social distancing
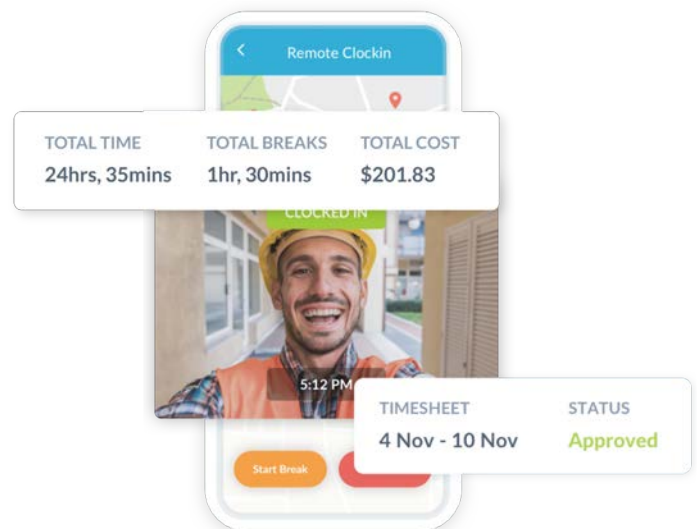
requirements as they open. By allowing customers to make an appointment online, this will assist businesses in managing the number of people within their premises at a particular time. Organizations will be able to set opening hours, and customers can book in a time slot using their phone.

3. Auto employee scheduling

We predict further advancements in automated employee scheduling in 2021 with an introduction of advanced algorithms and automatic demand prediction, shift building and shift filling. The future of auto-scheduling looks to be creating 'win-win' shifts for employees and employers that drive maximum efficiency whilst optimizing for employee choice and flexibility.

Demand prediction is considered the first key step in auto-scheduling. The more applicable information that can be collected about how busy it's forecasted to be, the more accurate and confident the staff coverage.

i.e., This Super Bowl will be 20 percent busier than last year. Next Tuesday will be as busy as the average of the last three Tuesdays. Next Friday will be 40 percent less busy because it will be raining.

Workforce.com can currently integrate with any existing business systems (I.e POS, MES, HMS, ERP's etc) to capture this demand data and predict staffing requirements. This can then be adjusted for location unique factors such as events, weather, seasonal changes, trends and manager discretion.

Once managers have confidence in their demand prediction, shift building is the next step. Software like Workforce.com can help managers create shift patterns for the amount of work that needs to be done, while keeping in mind regulations that set limits on how few or many people can be working at a given time. Still, managers need to ascertain certain information from employees to help make this possible, such as by approaching employees and getting hard numbers on how long it takes to complete basic tasks within their shifts.

Shift filling is where the most innovation comes in where managers will be able to effortlessly fill shifts factoring multiple constraints, such as labor costs, qualifications, roles and labor laws. If an employee is unavailable, managers can offer that shift to other available staff. Workforce.com can then show managers how much a potential shift swap costs, enabling them to stay on budget.

Being smart at shift building and shift filling against projected business demand will ultimately both make employees more satisfied and help control budget efficiency. Managers will be able to accomplish this with the right tools that give them the best potential technology and algorithms while also giving them the opportunity to put the employee in the process. Technology built on this win-win philosophy will be the future of automated employee scheduling with both employee and employer achieving desired outcomes.

These advancements in "one-click scheduling" are predicted to drastically save on manager administrative time, optimize labor cost and reduce over/under staffing.

4. Advanced workforce analytics and open APIs

Increased adoption of the workforce.com open API is expected to bring huge advancements in workforce analytics and promote internal innovation, integration and personalization. By leveraging the power of connectivity, enterprises can quickly eliminate the chaos of using multiple applications leading to rapid innovation and deeper insights into their workforces.

Companies that can efficiently discover patterns, spot potential problems and optimize their workforce quickly will stay ahead in 2021. This is only possible when organizations have access to their data and have the mechanisms to generate reports that are clear, easy to understand and make the most sense for stakeholders such as HR, payroll, managers and employees.

With Workforce.com's advanced reporting suite and API, organizations will be able create custom reports and workflows for efficient analysis. Companies can choose to use customizable built-in reports or create their own by pulling information from any data point.

Also read: Labor analytics and reporting starts with access to the right data

## 5. Cloud, mobility and ease of use

2021 will continue the rise of native SaaS cloud applications over clunky enterprise workforce management software with organizations preferring improved frontline manager/employee mobility options and ease of use. Employees should love to use the tools provided or they generally won't use them at all.

Simple and modern UI has long been missing from workforce management solutions with organizations needing to solve their problems and complete tasks in the easiest and quickest way possible. Workforce.com remains the leader in workforce management design as we continue to invest in simplicity and ease of use

to increase employee engagement, usability and lower support and implementation issues.

It's also becoming paramount for organizations to lead with a mobile first strategy for their workforce management. Workforce.com will continue to expand our employee mobile app that staff and managers can use to clock in, see timesheets, create schedules and communicate with the rest of the team.

Implementation expectations adhere to these ease of use and quick-to-learn principles with organizations expecting higher standards and tighter deadlines when rolling out or switching from a legacy solution. Workforce.com implementation is now easier and faster ensuring that users can start using the platform in no time reaping benefits of upgrading faster.
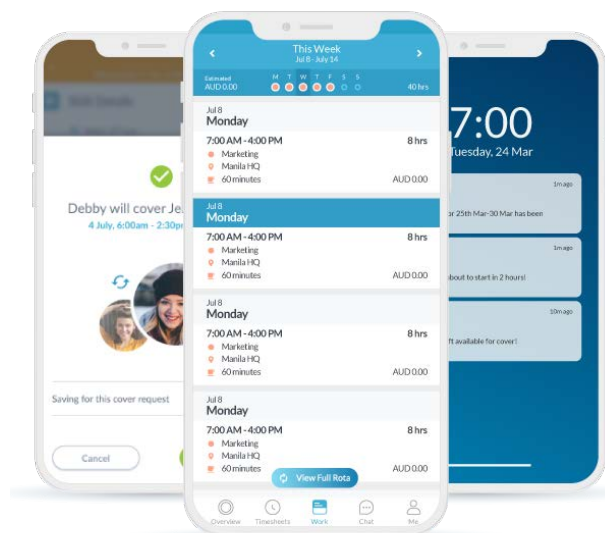
In 2021 we predict an increased migration to cloud computing services like workforce.com due to increased functionality, reliability, scalability, security, continual R&D and decrease in cost.

There are currently 300,000 people who use the Workforce.com platform, with a 4.75 app star-rating average and 99 percent client retention. Find out why and try Workforce.com today.

Or watch an introduction here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=monRhsgJ5lw