



# What to Look for in a Time & Attendance System

Your complete T&A software checklist and comparison chart



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# Introduction

Thanks to ever-evolving workforce management technology, the days of using paper timesheets and creating rosters in an Excel spreadsheet are numbered. Your business has likely realised the many pitfalls of these longstanding employee time tracking tools: confusion about rostered shifts, people forgetting to clock in and out, lost timesheets, time wasted on manual data entry, endless data inaccuracies, incorrect pay runs, and worst of all - a lack of security leading to time theft. These pitfalls can mean that businesses lose thousands of dollars each year.

But imagine having real-time visibility of your largest expense – paid employee hours. What if you could pinpoint who's on the clock and how many hours you are really paying for?

Online, fully-automated time and attendance (T&A) systems make this entirely possible. But with a plethora of options and features available, it can be difficult to know where to start when you are looking for this critical component of your automated workforce management system.

To make this job easier we've put together a simple checklist of features that we believe every T&A system should have. You can use this list as a starting point to help you identify exactly what you need, and then use it to compare different providers.

# The Fundamentals of Automated T&A Systems

Before you start researching automated T&A system providers, you'll need to have a clear understanding of the core purpose, system types, pros and cons such a system offers.

## The purpose of T&A systems

An automated T&A system uses software that is accessed via internet-enabled desktop computers, smartphones or tablet timeclock kiosks to record employee clock in, clock out and break times. This data is collected in real time and instantly organized into online timesheets which are forwarded directly to a payroll system for processing.

**However, these systems don't just record when employees come and go. They can also:**

- Monitor mobile employees through geofencing/geolocation.
- Show who is working, who isn't, who was late and who's working overtime as live data.
- Calculate the accrual of paid time off work.
- Manage and create employee rosters.
- Provide owners and managers with accurate, detailed data on labour.
- Help companies comply with government employment conditions and regulations.
- Minimise errors in bookkeeping.
- Offer self-service options that allow employees to handle time-based tasks independently, including:

- Recording their own timesheets via an app.
- Viewing their roster.
- Monitoring leave balances and requesting time off.

## T&A software types

Whether you choose a cloud-based or on-premise system depends on several factors including cost, the level of flexibility you need and the size of your business.

### Cloud-based SaaS systems:

- Offers you the ability to scale up your operation quickly and add more sites without additional installation or account set up fees.
- Operating costs are usually paid as a monthly charge based on a per-employee subscription fee.
- May include timeclock kiosk device and installation.
- Some services will also include a base or minimum monthly charge.
- Some providers will charge an initial set-up fee.
- All support and software upgrades are included in monthly expenses.
- Updates occur automatically so no system down-time is required.
- Greater protection against data loss as all data is backed up into the cloud.

### **On-premise systems:**

- All costs are paid upfront and covers software, licenses for each individual employee, and initial installation.
- No further monthly fees or expenses.
- Ongoing support or software updates are often not covered by your one-time cost.
- Quick onsite issue resolution if your IT staff are fully-trained.
- Higher level of customisation.
- High level of internal data security and control.
- Onsite server space is required.
- Scaling up can be very expensive.

### **Pros and cons of T&A systems - a quick list**

#### **Pros:**

- Eliminates the need for manual punch cards and timesheets.
- Time and attendance data is collected accurately, in real-time.
- Reduces time-theft and improves data security.
- Pay, leave and entitlement calculations are completed automatically

- Eliminates data entry when integrated with payroll and rostering.
- Live attendance data helps managers address unplanned absences and time-related behavioural issues quickly.
- Planned versus actual labour costs give managers valuable financial and staffing insights to help improve how rosters are built.
- Employee Self Service, particularly via mobile apps, improves employee engagement.

#### **Cons:**

- Can be more expensive than manual paper or spreadsheet methods.
- Employees may feel bringing in an automated system means they can't be trusted to fill out timesheets honestly.
- Some time is required to implement and train staff.
- You will need to have an offline contingency plan should an electricity black out or internet outage occur.

# T&A System Features Checklist

Feature	Details
✓ Easy-to-use interface	Look for simple, clean interfaces that employees with all levels of technical ability can navigate.
✓ Cloud-based SaaS for flexibility	<p>A cloud-based application will offer managers and their employees greater flexibility for accessing and entering data in non-office environments on multiple devices such as smartphones, tablets and desktop.</p> <p>A cloud-based system also means that your data will always be secure, and updates to the system will occur without delays or downtime.</p>
✓ Employee identification / user authentication	<p>Strict user authentication is the best way to prevent time theft and ensure your data is safe and accurate. There are different types of authentication that offer different levels of security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIN or password – this is a minimum requirement.</li> <li>• Photo capture – this avoids people using other's PINs or passwords.</li> <li>• Biometrics such as fingerprint and retina scanning or facial recognition – this is the highest level of security available, but it is expensive and not every system will offer it.</li> </ul>
✓ Inbuilt online timeclock	<p>Your new system should include an inbuilt timeclock that can be accessed via desktop computer and a tablet (or 'kiosk') onsite. This should be simple and only ask employees to complete user authentication or enter their PIN before tapping 'clock in', 'clock out', or 'on break'.</p> <p>The T&amp;A system uses this data to create accurate timesheets for you.</p>
✓ Live T&A feed	Managers should be able to see who's in, who's not and who's on break from a central dashboard.
✓ Notifications	Many systems offer pro-active alerts or notifications to remind employees to clock in and out.



✓ Automatic timesheet generation	Modern T&A software can generate timesheets automatically based on data from the timeclock. This offers you two benefits:  1. Actual hours worked cannot be forged.  2. Timesheets do not have to be manually entered or transferred into another system for approvals or payroll.
✓ Automatic timesheet approvals	To save manager's time, timesheets should be able to be approved with one click or approved automatically based on pre-set rules. Data can then flow directly into the payroll engine without delay.
✓ Manual timesheet entry, approvals, rejections and overriding	Occasionally, internet connections do cut out or discrepancies occur, so it is important to have a manual override function to allow managers to make amendments and facilitate approvals without delay.
✓ Audit trail	Having the option to view original timesheet data (and any subsequent changes made by managers or supervisors) is indispensable in the event of an audit.
✓ Integration with or in-built rostering software	By having your rostering and T&A functions incorporated into the one platform you'll have visibility of rostered versus actual time worked. This data is useful in managing absentees, break times, late starts and early finishes.
✓ Ability to set rounding rules and grace periods to streamline approvals	Even with automatically generated timesheets, it can be time-consuming to apply grace periods and round hours or minutes up or down. Your T&A system should allow you to pre-set rules to streamline and automate approvals.
✓ Ability to set approval hierarchy for quality control	You should have the ability to set approval steps to ensure quality control before the data is approved and sent to payroll. This can be useful when multiple levels of management are involved in the approval process.
✓ Labour cost calculator	A labour cost calculator that interprets Modern Awards will help you see your true labour costs in real time to allow you to monitor budgeted against actual expenditure.
✓ Integration with or inbuilt payroll engine	To have a truly automated system, T&A data should flow seamlessly into an integrated payroll engine so that data entry and transfer is eliminated and pay runs can be executed accurately and on time.





✓ Modern Award interpretation	Your T&A system should be able to automatically calculate any combination of time rates, overtime, complex arrangements such as higher duties or split shifts, leave entitlements, superannuation and other industry-specific provisions based on employee profile, roster and time clock information.  Awards should be automatically updated by the provider so that you are always compliant.
✓ Installation and training	Installation of timeclock devices and staff training should be included in your T&A software subscription.
✓ Analytics	A dashboard or reporting function that provides you with absenteeism statistics, on-time clock ins, hours worked and labour costs is vital in helping you plan your workforce needs.
✓ Technical support	Your system should be simple enough that little to no support is required. However, you should still have a single point of contact for technical questions and issues.
✓ Scalability	Look for a system that can easily accommodate the growth of your businesses in terms of employee numbers and additional locations as cost-effectively as possible.



# T&A System Provider Comparison Chart

Feature	Roubler ✓ or ✗	Provider 2 ✓ or ✗	Provider 3 ✓ or ✗
Easy-to-use interface	✓		
Cloud-based SaaS	✓		
Employee identification / user authentication	✓		
Inbuilt online timeclock	✓		
Live T&A feed	✓		
Employee notifications / clock-in reminders	✓		
Automatic timesheet generation	✓		
Automatic timesheet approvals	✓		
Manual timesheet entry, approvals, rejections and overriding.	✓		
Audit trails	✓		
Integration with or in-built rostering software	✓		
Ability to set rounding rules and grace periods to streamline approvals	✓		
Ability to set approval hierarchy for quality control	✓		
Labour cost calculator	✓		
Integration with or inbuilt payroll engine	✓		
Automatic Modern Award interpretation	✓		
Installation and training included	✓		
Analytics dashboards and reports	✓		
Technical support included	✓		
Scalable to support business growth	✓		

Whether you're considering an automated time and attendance solution for the first time, or you're trying to replace a system you've outgrown, you're faced with a seemingly endless supply of options. It's easy to get caught up in the hype of the latest-and-greatest technology available, but instead focus on systems that perfect the basics. If you're upgrading or starting fresh, take the time to find a system that fits and is ready to grow with your business.



# About Roubler

Welcome to the future of workforce management. Our all-in-one HR and Payroll software consolidates multiple workforce management functions into one easy to use, cloud-based system.

All Roubler features, including onboarding, T&A, rostering and payroll are connected by a single data source enabling you to manage employee information and HR tasks across the entire employee lifecycle on one platform.

With an inbuilt Employee Self Service function available on iOS and Android, the information you need to onboard employees, create rosters, manage leave and run payroll is always up to date and ready to access wherever and whenever you need it.

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*“The biggest thing is how much time it has freed up for me, where staff can onboard themselves and create their own unavailability which allows me to get out there and manage the business”*

– Matt, Retail Store Manager, HG Retail

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*“The payroll is quick, accurate, and award-compliant without me being involved. The staff and management have engaged with Roubler really quickly.”*

– Chris Jolliffe, General Manager & Licensee, Potts Point Hotel

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