South African Payroll Association
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## *Payroll – make it easy, make it mobile*

Companies need to rethink payroll services and follow the international trend of investing more in mobile self-service solutions, advises Lavine Haripersad, a director at the South African Payroll Association (SAPA). "It's time to put payroll in your employees' pockets or purses. Mobile devices are having a huge impact on our lives," she adds.

### *The mobile experience*
According to industry experts, mobile penetration in South Africa is around 37% to 45% of the population. This is due to the introduction of cheaper smartphones as well as a growing dependency on mobile communications for everyday life and business. South Africans use their devices for a myriad of personal activities.

At work, however, employees often face the frustration of lengthy processes to complete simple tasks - like leave applications - or access their personnel information. This is in direct contrast to their typical online experience.

"We need to see workers as consumers and find ways to provide the experience they're used to. That means going mobile," states Haripersad.
What's available?

Many reputable software vendors, such as Accsys, Intuit, Oracle, Sage and SAP offer employee self-service products for small, medium and large businesses, although their features vary. Also, managed services companies providing outsourced payroll services may use a self-service app to make information accessible and reduce costly interactions.

"While many apps exist," advises Haripersad, "companies are usually restricted to the one produced by their business system's developer." The following are the most popular features:

### • *View and update personal information*
Payroll staff spend a lot of time reviewing records. It's more efficient to allow employees to do it themselves. Their changes can be approved by their manager before updating the payroll database, depending on the workflow structured into the system.

### • *View payslips*
Notify staff when their payslips are ready through their mobile device and let them download a digital copy. This could save companies millions annually in printing and distribution costs. These are also fast becoming acceptable to retailers who require proof of income.

### • *PAYE & IRP5*
Allow employees access to their tax data to keep track of their tax obligations, answer tax queries and submit their returns easily with the information on hand.

### • *Managing leave*
Reduce manual processing by letting staff submit leave requests through the self-service app. They'll also be able to check their remaining leave, reducing your payroll administrator's workload.

• *Travel & expense claims*
Employees can submit their travel claims together with other expenses. These can be automatically forwarded to their manager for approval before being submitted to the payroll administrator.

• *Time & attendance*
Depending on the app, employees could clock in or out with their smartphones, enter the time they worked on a task, or even be reminded of when their next shift will start.

• *Employee benefits*
Staff could, at any time, check their benefits to see their current status, such as the value of their pension plan or available funds in their medical aid scheme.

• *Maneger benefits*
Using a mobile application for items like leave, payroll input or training application approvals saves a line manager a lot of time, as it can be done "on the go", while being able to be assured that your staff are at work when they should be is also useful.

Ultimately, using mobile applications which allow employees to participate in what used to be traditional payroll processing, will allow payroll staff to spend less time servicing common requests and focus more on strategic activities.

In conclusion, Haripersad encourages every organisation to investigate the benefits of a mobile self-service app. "Technology is evolving fast and payroll must keep up if companies want employees to be happy and productive. This means making information and services available to them in a way they've come to expect."

SAPA will be hosting its annual conference this year titled Portraits of Success as follows:

• Johannesburg, 6 to 7 September
• Cape Town, 12 September
• Elangeni Maharani Hotel, 14 September

To register visit http://www.sapayroll.co.za/Events/Conference.aspx

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