



nettime[®] solutions
cloud-based time and attendance



Always on the Clock

The Rise of the Independent Employee

How You Schedule Your Employees Can Make All the Difference

Table of Contents

- ✓ Scheduling is a hot topic right now4
- ✓ Absenteeism is a symptom of a disengaged workforce6
- ✓ What we can learn from the rise of the remote workforce8
- ✓ Advanced scheduling encourages collaboration and employee engagement10
- ✓ Bring new levels of scheduling ease and control to your business and employees12

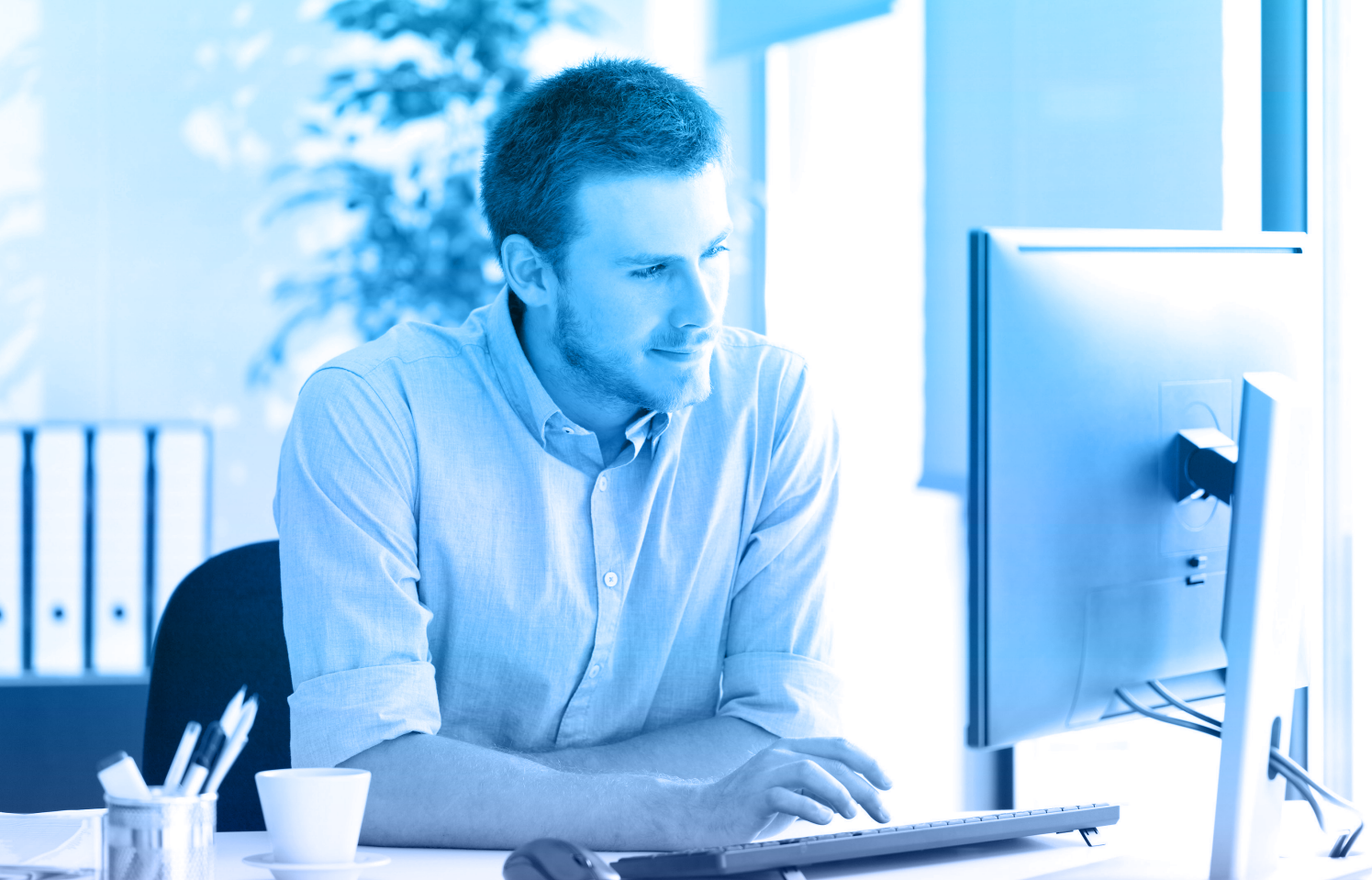


At a glance

What does it take to keep employees engaged these days? Do they need perks? The promise of advancement? Profit sharing?

What if the answer doesn't involve dangling a carrot, but actually has to do with giving them more say and control in something as routine as setting the schedule?

In the following report, we'll take a look at how an advanced scheduling solution may be the key piece in building an engaged workforce.



Scheduling is a hot topic right now

It wasn't all that long ago that businesses accounted for workers as "fixed costs." But as Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor writes, new technologies make it easier for companies to follow a flexible scheduling model.

For instance, businesses can use data to predict in-the-moment, real-time staffing needs, and avoid costs related to things like overstaffing during slow times.

While this is great for companies, it doesn't help workers who crave stability so they can plan their personal lives. And this is part of the reason why there's been so much focus on predictable and fair scheduling.

From San Francisco's Retail Employees Rights Ordinances, to Oregon's Fair Work Week Act, to the federal Schedules that Work Act, proposed in July 2017, the push for fair scheduling continues to gain momentum at all levels.

What these bills and ordinances have in common is their desire to create new levels of autonomy and fairness for workers.

According to data referenced in the proposed Schedules that Work Act, unpredictable and unstable schedules are particularly common in retail, food service, and cleaning occupations: as many as 64% of early career workers receive schedules less than one week in advance.

Common scheduling abuses include:

- ✓ Cancelling an employee's shift at the last minute.
- ✓ Distributing the schedule only a day or two in advance.
- ✓ Randomly updating the schedule without notice.
- ✓ Requiring employees to stay past their scheduled time.

When employees who earn \$10 per hour feel like they have no control of the schedule, it's natural for them to consider other lines of work. And burning through your employees is never a good idea, no matter what their hourly wage is.



The cost of losing a low-wage employee may be bigger than you think.

As a 2012 study from the Center for American Progress illustrates, the cost of replacing a low-wage employee is often a lot higher than the cost of keeping them happy. According to the report:

- Losing a worker who earns under \$30,000 a year can cost you roughly 16% of their salary.
- That means if a \$10 per hour employee quits because of scheduling issues, it could cost your business \$3,300 to advertise your job opening, interview and train their replacement, plus overtime pay when others have to pick up their shifts.
- That's more than eight, forty-hour work weeks!

On the flip side, according to a recent study out of the UK, when workers have a say in scheduling, they gain a positive outlook on their overall well-being, along with higher levels of job satisfaction.

Absenteeism is a symptom of a disengaged workforce

Have you ever wondered how much absenteeism costs your business, or the form that these costs take when they eventually show up?

- ✓ As cited in Forbes, “unscheduled absenteeism costs roughly \$3,600 per year for each hourly worker and \$2,650 each year for salaried employees.” These costs include things like lost productivity when other employees have to put their own work off to pick up the slack, and overtime when people take an extra shift to cover.
- ✓ When hourly employees pick up the slack, it can cause them to have to work overtime. According to research from SHRM, overtime is used to cover 47% of employee absences.
- ✓ Meanwhile, from the same SHRM report, co-workers are perceived to be nearly 30% less productive when covering for absent employees.

According to 2017 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the absence rate for full-time employees is 2.9%. While this may seem small, some reports suggest that employee absenteeism has risen to its highest rate in nearly two decades.

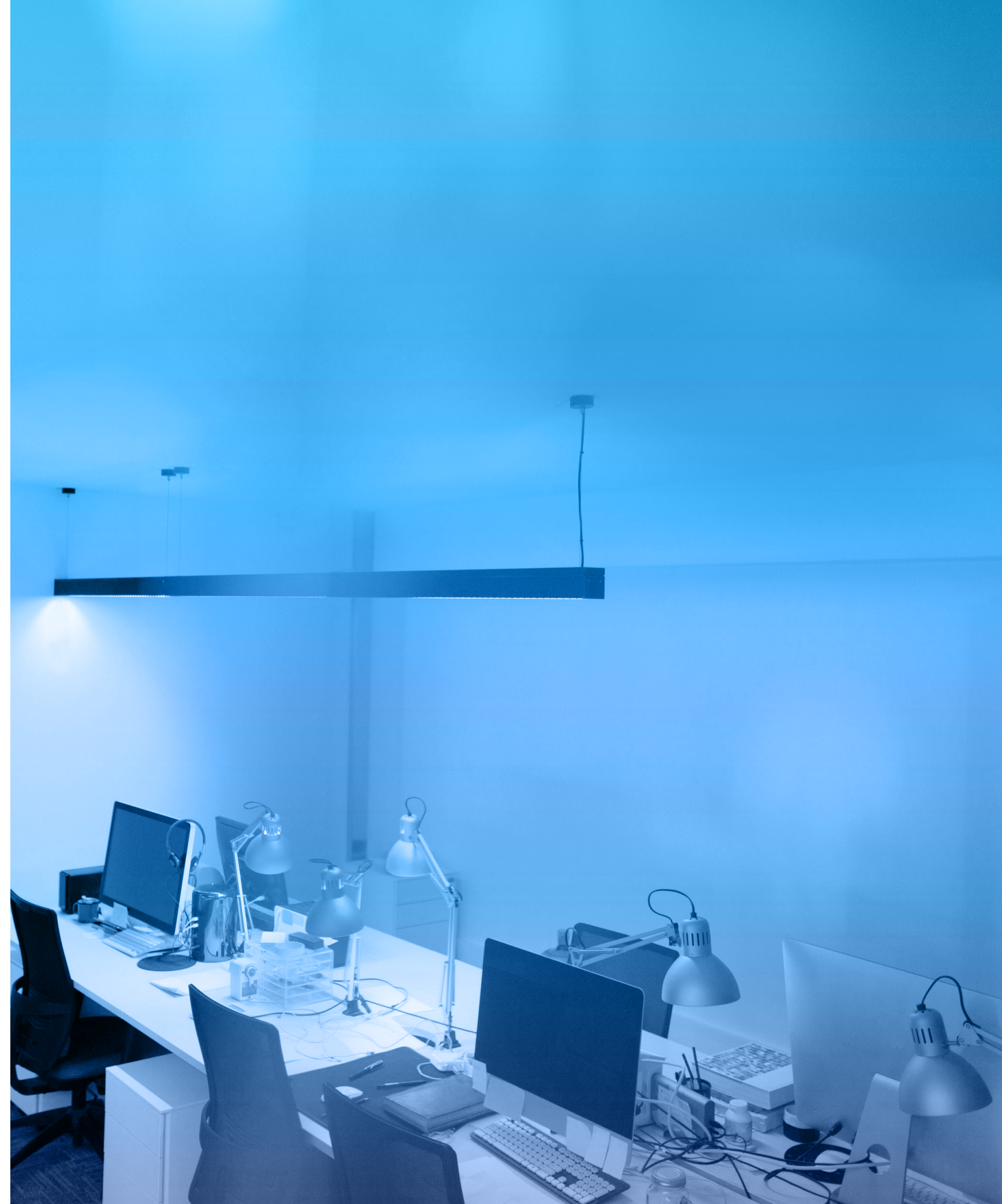
If you have a hundred employees, three of them might be home today. Are their reasons legitimate?

The reasons behind employee absenteeism can be difficult to pin down. What data tells us is that plenty of employees are missing work when they're not sick, according to a 2016 CareerBuilder survey. In fact, the number is as high as 35% of workers.



Regardless of the reasons, absences can impact your company at multiple levels.

- When employees miss work, teams are less productive. For instance, someone who misses work can fall behind on their own responsibilities. This can create bottlenecks elsewhere, especially when work groups are waiting on each other.
- Other employees might feel the need to pick up the slack. This can create stress, cause morale issues, and result in other employees getting behind in their own work.
- Missing employees can also put stress on managers, especially when they pick up extra work that takes them away from management responsibilities such as payroll, scheduling, employee reviews and others.





What we can learn from the rise of the remote workforce

Where matters of flexible scheduling are concerned, we can learn a lot by looking at the remote workforce.

Today, more workers are working remotely than ever before, and the numbers are expected to continue to grow. In a 2015 report on the remote workforce, the International Data Corporation (IDC) projected that remote workers will make up nearly 75% of the US workforce by 2020. The industries seeing the largest growth in remote workers are:

- ✓ Manufacturing
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Retail
- ✓ Healthcare

Part of this rise can be linked to new technology.

Now that cloud-based solutions have become more prevalent, it's easier than ever to connect with colleagues in real time. Meanwhile, innovations in broadband and wireless continue to make mobile collaboration faster and more reliable.

When people think of cloud-based solutions designed to support remote workers and teams, many focus on tools related to collaboration, project management, or even teleconferencing software. Providing a way for remote workers to clock hours is also an essential function for businesses with remote workers.

And there's also the freelance factor.

One of the strongest lures toward gig work is the promise of flexible scheduling.



Consider another type of worker who often works remotely—freelancers. As many as 55 million people—or 35% of the nation's workforce—consider themselves freelancers. And this number is projected to reach 40% by the year 2020.

Consider the options for someone working in retail. If you look at a site like PayScale.com, or check information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you'll see that median pay for retail sales associates is less than \$11 an hour. Meanwhile, Glassdoor.com estimates that an Uber driver's average hourly salary is as high as \$14.75.

In other words, you can make more money driving strangers around in your car on your own schedule, than you can folding jeans in a department store where you're "encouraged" to work two weekend shifts per month. From this standpoint alone, it's easy to see why people decide to quit retail and try their own thing.

Time & attendance software, such as **stratus**time, can also play a vital role in connecting remote workers, whether they're full-time staff members, or contract vendors, and syncing business systems and needs.

When **stratus**time went to the cloud in 2008, part of the move was in anticipation of the remote workforce we see today. In the years that have followed, **stratus**time has evolved in order to give employees and employers more of what they need.

- Remote workers can clock in and out with a dedicated on-site time clock, a central kiosk or POS system on a PC, or remotely via PC, laptop, tablet, mobile phone or dial-in.
- They can use a personal computer, tablet, or mobile phone to check their schedules, view vacation and PTO accruals, ask for time off, and even swap shifts with their coworkers.
- They can make sure their timesheets get submitted for payroll processing.
- Meanwhile, managers can receive notifications when employees are absent or late, and use geotracking to verify where or when employees clock in.
- And employers can review time and attendance information on a regular basis, no matter where their employees work from.

Advanced scheduling encourages collaboration and employee engagement

If giving each of your employees a dollar-an-hour raise is not in the cards, consider giving them more say in how and when they work.

In many staffing and scheduling models, managers lead the process. And for these managers, whether in a large company or small business, scheduling can be daunting. Add remote workers into the equation, and things can become impossible.

On the employee side of the equation, scheduling can contribute to issues such as burnout and dissatisfaction:

- When they have no say over their schedule, workers may feel like their needs are not part of a manager's thinking.
- They may feel blindsided when the schedule comes out, especially if they've communicated a time-off request that seems to have been ignored.

An advanced scheduling solution lets managers and team members look ahead and plan together.

Managers and staff can review and customize shifts, develop templates for common weekly schedules, and view employee availability in real time.

An advanced scheduling system can also inspire staff members to play a role in deciding their own shifts. This can help them enjoy a stronger work-life balance, and provide them with a renewed sense of engagement and autonomy in their work, including:

- Gaining greater control and input into their shifts. This includes being able to post shifts that they'd like covered, and swap shifts with coworkers.
- More engagement with coworkers and managers. For example, employees will be able to set their availability via their dashboard.
- A greater sense of stability, no matter what the working environment is like. You can encourage employees to pick up shifts by displaying potential per-shift earnings.

A cloud-based advanced scheduling solution lets workers clock-in/out from anywhere, whether it's a designated kiosk, or from their phones in the case of on-the-go workers.



What would happen if your business gave workers more say, and greater predictability, with advanced scheduling?

- When employees are able to actively track their time more conveniently using a mobile device, they stay more accountable for their time on and off the clock.
- When workers can view their coworkers' schedules, request time off, and even swap shifts by using their phones, they're liable to feel more connected with what's happening at work.
- By responding quickly to a time-off request, managers create a dialogue with their employees that can foster a renewed sense of inclusion.

Bring new levels of scheduling ease and control to your business and employees

Your time & attendance software may not be the shiniest tool in your toolkit, but if you have one, then there's a good chance that you know how essential it is.

- ✓ Employees clock in and track time through it.
- ✓ Managers use it to set and update schedules.
- ✓ Finance needs it to complete payroll.
- ✓ Senior leaders turn to it to track budgets and ROI.
- ✓ Your legal team refers to it in case issues related to wage & hour compliance come up.

Everything you do to encourage employee engagement can cycle back into retaining your workforce.

This includes using advanced scheduling software to create a predictable scheduling model your employees can rely on.

There will always be employees who need a flexible schedule because of their home life. Others may have very strict needs related to working on specific days. Whatever the case may be, workers at all levels appreciate when companies take their personal needs into account when scheduling.

stratustime from nettime solutions is built around giving workers and managers new levels of scheduling ease and control.

- From an ease-of-use standpoint, you and your employees can clock in and out via a dedicated time clock, a central kiosk or POS system on a PC, or remotely via PC, laptop, tablet, mobile phone or dial-in.
- You can check schedules, view vacation and PTO accruals, request time off, swap shifts and more via computer, tablet, or mobile phone.
- On the management side, you can set up schedule templates for regular shift patterns, and create policies around things like shift-swapping.
- If your business has high levels of illness and absenteeism, you can set up mechanisms so employees can voluntarily adjust schedules to help make sure you're not short-staffed during a busy season.

With the right advanced scheduling software, you can make work a little happier for your employees, and a little easier for you. As scheduling-related issues begin to disappear, more of your retail employees may decide to stick around.

Learn more about how stratustime is always on the clock for you.



Give us a call:

800.561.6366



Visit us on the web:

www.nettimesolutions.com