



nettime[®] solutions
cloud-based time and attendance

What's Really Different about **stratustime**

**Our Competitive Advantage: Focus on Reliability
and Helping Clients Stay Compliant**

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At a glance

In business, there are a lot of c-words that people in management would rather avoid. Things like compliance, changes, complications, and catastrophes. In the world of time & attendance software solutions, **stratustime** has our fingers on the pulse of all of these, and more, as we focus on the one c-word that matters most: customers.

In the following report, we've laid out a series of cause and effect insights to help current and prospective customers and partners get a more in-depth look at what goes on behind the scenes at **stratustime**. We want readers to know more about the little things we do all day, every day, to ensure your time & attendance solution maintains consistent up-time, helps you stay compliant, and minimizes headaches and hassles in the face of a catastrophe.



A brief history of the time & attendance industry

Today's punch clocks live on our cell phones, mobile tablets, and computers. Some even take the form of innovative devices that analyze fingerprints and scan retinas. And unlike the old punch clocks of yesteryear, these time & attendance solutions allow for much more than clock-in/clock-out punching. You can use them to create schedules, calculate employee PTO, send text alerts and messages, and much more. Many of these features—now common among time & attendance solutions—are still relatively new.

Consider the changes that have taken place only in the last 20 years or so.

Up through the mid-1990s, many companies were still using paper as their primary means of tracking time. Paper timesheets were portable and easy-to-use, whether employees filled in their information on templates, or simply scratched notes down for later.

They also presented obvious risks:

- They were easy to lose.
- Handwriting could be hard to read.
- They were subject to inadvertent human error.
- They made it easy for employees to fudge the numbers.

This is the era in which stratustime as we know it today was first conceived.

Back in 1996, the earliest rendering of our business launched. It was an era when a handful of technologists and visionaries were laying out a map for what the future of technology might look like. Four years later, we launched the market's first browser-based time tracking solution—the grandparent, if you will, of the **stratustime** that our customers use today.

In 2008, at a time when only a few people were talking about something called “the cloud,” we were already in the cloud. In fact, we were the first time & attendance solution to do so. Our lead engineers were well aware of where software was headed: away from the inefficiencies of machine-to-machine application launches, and toward a more seamless and streamlined future. Now, the phrase “cloud-based technology” is business-as-usual—standard operating procedure for solutions big and small.

Giving you this bit of historical background is another way of saying that we've been here for a while. And we've always looked ahead toward providing a best-in-class solution.

Transforming over time

Obviously, we weren't the only time & attendance solution out there. Around the mid-2000s, a few things started to happen in the industry:

Large companies began buying up smaller, niche-focused providers. We'll delve into the effect of consolidation in our next section.

A new crop of smaller solutions began to spring up. Many of these came online in order to capture a specific market share, and solve the needs of specific verticals in a micro-niche sort of way.

Partnerships began to gain traction. Different than consolidation, partnerships enabled companies of various sizes to go to market with a suite of trusted HR solutions in order to bring greater benefit to their customers.

How it all translates for stratustime

Around 2013, we realized that we had become something of an outlier in an industry that we helped create. We were still independent, and continued to look into the future in an effort to stay ahead for our customers. And we knew that, with the right partnerships, we could truly be a one-of-a-kind solution that struck a balance between features and functionality on one side of the equation, and best-in-class support and rapid reconfiguration on the other.

In 2014, we formed a strategic alliance with one of the country's leading payroll firms. In so doing, we built an entirely new foundation around innovative services and support.

How consolidation created a more reliable time & attendance solution

A sudden break or stoppage in technology can create a pretty negative spiral in a business, and send ripples among employees that have lasting consequences. This is especially true when the software is meant to be something you shouldn't have to think twice about, like time & attendance or scheduling.

- Does a company really want to have to tell their employees that paychecks will be late this period because of an issue with the time & attendance software?
- What if this happens repeatedly? How does it affect morale and the company culture?
- If employees start talking about it on social media, how will it affect recruitment?

Unwanted breaks in service would happen for any number of reasons, any time of day or night. In some cases, it was caused when a weather event like a hurricane, or an ice storm, knocked a data center offline. But things weren't always that extreme. Sometimes, a small issue within a facility can take out one particular shelf in a data center, and wreak havoc on a few hundred customers.



What we realized was this: as more and more solutions moved to the cloud, and more providers sprang up in the hopes of grabbing niche market share, the companies that relied on these solutions were taking new risks that didn't exist a few years earlier. And customers weren't always aware of the stakes.

Seeing the downtick in reliability, we began to explore places in our own array of services and support where we could improve for the sake of our customers. We wanted to maintain our identity, while improving the way we helped customers minimize and mitigate risks.

Merging with a larger company allowed us to put additional resources toward building new lines of defense for customers.

Many of the micro-niche vendors in the market today have done a great job building solutions that cater to the needs of their specific markets. And they've stayed lean enough to keep their costs low. In fact, there are plenty of businesses for which this type of solution makes sense.

But one place where these vendors can put their customers at risk is in the area of rapid and agile response to disruptions and downtime.

That starts with hosting.

The nature of hosting has changed quite a bit over time, and it will continue to change. Out-of-the-box solutions have become so powerful that for some people and companies, the old paradigm of large, offsite data centers feels outdated. The thing is, the place where the actual hosting takes place is only part of a long list of considerations that most companies consider when it comes to the hosting itself.

Have you heard of **stratus**time's department of redundancy department?

All kidding aside, we're more than a little particular when it comes to things like hosting, backups, backups of backups, and even the geographical considerations that go into how and where we host.

Do some of our competitors host their customers' vital data in their garages or basements? We certainly hope not. But they probably don't go as overboard as we do.

We've seen enough in our careers to know that you can always make the case for having more protection against what you cannot see or expect.

Here's how our hosting is a little different than that of most companies:

- ✓ We don't host in one data center. Instead, we maintain a primary data center in the Southeastern US., and a "hot backup" in the Pacific Northwest.
- ✓ Every single database account that we maintain on the East Coast is mirrored and duplicated on a live, or "hot" basis. In essence, we're doubling down on protection with duplicate, redundant servers and databases, because our customers' data matters more than anything else.
- ✓ The real-world implications for this are striking, especially when your data is at stake. If your provider has one data center with backups, that means they need to bring a new data center online in the wake of a catastrophe. And they'll be doing so from backups, rather than from mirrored, live information. If they're lucky, it will take them a few hours to pull this off. More likely, it will take them days. Can you and your business afford this kind of downtime?
- ✓ We're constantly monitoring. Our network operations center is going 24/7. We monitor everything we can about the software itself. Every second of the day, we have teams of programmers on stand-by to answer questions, and issue critical warnings that will alert our team of programmers, database professionals, and network engineers. We are equipped to escalate a situation from "nuisance" to "red alert" within 90 seconds, and are prepared to collaborate to solve any challenge that might come up.

The reason why we're this way is simple: because your people matter. We know that our software provides a number of critical pieces you need to set schedules, monitor time, and complete payroll. These are must-haves in any business, and they're the types of things that customers should never have to worry about.



But there was something else the cloud could help us do, something unique to time & attendance.

With the cloud, we could expand the way we monitor laws around the country, then improve the way our software functions for our customers.

As we looked into the future, we saw that the need for rapid deployment and fast response would continue to be one of the most essential pieces in what we offered. And much like our fixation on redundant backups and mirrored servers, we didn't see, and still don't see, a day when we'll ever feel like we're "fast enough."

While features and functionality will always get the glory, making sure that **stratus**time actually helps you keep your company or organization compliant is one of our greatest priorities.



We have a team of over 60 compliance professionals in our risk management department. Together, they monitor legal and regulatory changes at the federal, state and local levels, including significant court cases that might be particularly far-reaching and impactful to regulatory compliance.

Keeping pace with state-by-state regulatory changes

Regulatory compliance is everywhere. It's wrapped up in complicated wage and hour regulations. It's tied to time sheets. It's connected to shift scheduling, overtime, contract workers...it touches nearly everything.

Earlier we mentioned the old days when software updates were launched from a central, local server, or done manually on your machine with the help of IT. Some version of this reality is the one most of us knew prior to the cloud that we know today.

But why the cloud to begin with? It didn't come into being "just because." In part, what drove the cloud and cloud-based technology into being was the desire to innovate and move beyond the wires that kept people locked to localized machines from which they could access files and folders. With the cloud came the promise of freedom, and the chance to connect with colleagues and collaborators from anywhere at any time—and to do so safely and securely.

The cloud was also a way to do things faster, from solving security issues to fixing software bugs.

With a risk management department of this size, stratustime is uniquely positioned to support our customers:

- ✓ Our risk management team has eyes on as many regulatory issues as possible, including retirement, insurance, paid sick leave, non-discrimination laws and more.
- ✓ We monitor and track pending legislation down to things like updates to specific wording or the movement of new laws or regulations through the legislative process.
- ✓ When we receive an alert that something could impact our customers, we push information out to our product developers to begin planning updates.
- ✓ We also send weekly legislation reports to our product management teams.
- ✓ For customers, this means you can use stratus

We understand that there's no "one-size-fits-all" concerning compliance. That said, in an effort to minimize risks on behalf of customers, we don't mind doing a little extra to stay ahead.

Bringing you the right features



There are many benefits that come with choosing a modern, automated time & attendance system. Ideally, your time & attendance system will:

- ✓ Allow employees to punch-in and -out, track breaks, log PTO, check schedules, make schedule requests, and more—from whatever device or devices make the most sense for your business.
- ✓ Provide alerts and notifications so management knows shifts are being covered, and alerts them when employees are late or absent.
- ✓ Give management an easy and efficient way to set schedules.
- ✓ Generate accurate, reliable reports that can help your company in its effort to stay compliant with wage & hour laws and regulations.
- ✓ Provide labor reporting that can help you analyze and lower your labor costs.

Product evolution will always be an important part of **stratus**time. And one of the key drivers is how certain features align with what companies and organizations need now, and what they'll need in the future.

If you're already using time & attendance software, then there's a good chance that you and your employees have come to recognize how vital it is to your daily operations.

- It's how people clock in and out, and track their time.
- It's there to set and update schedules.
- Members of your finance team need it for payroll.
- Your executives review it to track budgets and ROI.
- Your legal team refers to it in case issues related to wage & hour compliance come up.

And we've made a number of updates over recent years to make time & attendance more flexible, powerful, and easy-to-use for employees at all levels of any business or organization.



A number of standout features include:

- ✓ Advanced scheduling that creates a predictable scheduling model your employees can rely on.
- ✓ Shift swapping so employees can find someone to cover their shifts when they're sick or can't make it to work.
- ✓ Clocking 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.
- ✓ Options that let managers check schedules, and view things like vacation and PTO accruals via computer, tablet, or mobile phone.
- ✓ Setting schedule templates for employees to follow, and creating policies around shift-swapping.
- ✓ Geofencing, by which managers can authorize time punching from specific offsite location(s) for employees who need to work remotely.

stratustime will always be preparing for what's next.

Even the slightest level of manual input in an otherwise automated system can expose a business to issues, whether wage & hour compliance risks, time theft, or an incomplete understanding of where labor costs are going. **stratustime** works to make sure your time & attendance software keeps working on your behalf, so you can focus on business.

Contact us to learn more.



Give us a call:

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Visit us on the web:

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