

MARKET NOTE

Contact Tracing: Kronos Delivers via a Workforce Management Approach

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EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

FIGURE 1

Executive Snapshot: Kronos Takes on Contact Tracing with a Workforce Management Approach

Numerous HCM software suppliers and consulting vendors have taken on the task of building out contact tracing solutions to assist their customers in location and notification of COVID-19 incidents to aid in the prevention of the spread of the virus to the workforce. The solutions have largely involved the use of Bluetooth, GPS, thermal imaging, wearable sensors, and manual applications. Kronos, however, is leveraging the existing functionality of its workforce management suite for enterprise contact tracing — by analyzing data from labor records and its time and attendance system to provide insights into workers' location and proximity to others through the process of clocking/signing in.

Key Takeaways

- Kronos is, according to IDC's analysis of market share, the largest supplier worldwide of workforce management software and services. A major component of workforce management consists of software and hardware that employees use to clock in and out for their shifts of duty (time and attendance systems).
- The workforce management system contact tracing capability utilizes the data gathered from any and all software and devices that capture the clock in and clock out process.
- While of particular pertinence to hourly workers, employers may also ask salaried workers to utilize the clock in/clock out process for purposes of contact tracing.
- The data captured can then be analyzed to determine when and where workers have been or are on site. Having this information simplifies the process of determining exposure should any COVID-19-infected individual be identified.
- The fact that the Kronos solution utilizes data that is captured regularly without regard to health conditions makes the contact tracing a more automated and organic process than other available solutions.

Source: IDC, 2020

IN THIS MARKET NOTE

This IDC Market Note discusses Kronos' approach to contact tracing utilizing the functionality inherent in its workforce management (WFM) systems. The initiative was announced, and available to customers, in April 2020.

IDC'S POINT OF VIEW

Organizations throughout the world are dealing with the present danger and aftermath of the novel SARS-CoV-2. Employee surveys have shown that the majority of workers are fearful of returning to offices. As we enter the "return to the workplace" phase of the pandemic for nonessential workers and the need to calm fears of those essential workers who have worked all through the pandemic, employers are seeking resources to assure the workforce that their physical safety and well-being will be managed.

With bringing workers back to the job site comes a host of challenges. Among these challenges is the need to identify and contain virus outbreaks to ward off broad exposure. One prevailing approach to identification and localization of virus hotspots is the act of contact tracing. Finding out with whom an infected worker has interacted is a key requirement of the process. Enterprise contact tracing can take various forms. At the enterprise level, there are many vendors that are entering the contact tracing market with different technologies including:

- Manual contacting systems
- Bluetooth solutions that use cell phone proximity to track workers
- GPS solutions
- Wearable sensors
- Thermal imaging solutions

And now:

- Workforce management systems

While the various methods for contact tracing have different merits depending upon the worker constituency in place, for those organizations that utilize a workforce management system, it makes good sense for it to be deployed for the purpose. WFM systems typically include worker timekeeping, employee scheduling, and employee absence tracking. WFM systems are most often deployed in industry sectors with a large hourly contingent of workers. Typical sectors include manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, retail, and distribution. In addition, due to the pandemic, some organizations will ask salaried workers to use the time and attendance system as well. A compelling feature of WFM system contact tracing for employers is that it may not create as many privacy concerns as some of the other contact tracing technologies or the need for employees to "opt in" to the method; in addition, it is an existing system that can be used for a new purpose.

Kronos Workforce Management Suite's time and attendance functionality is now being repurposed for contact tracing. Kronos' data scientists are leveraging the system to analyze labor records and time and attendance data collected by the solution so that organizations can quickly identify and communicate to employees who come into contact with a colleague who has tested positive or is presumed positive for COVID-19.

Currently, Kronos is making contact tracing available free of charge to customers using any of Kronos' current workforce management products, as part of a larger set of COVID-19 customer resources. The Kronos contact tracing solution can be used in conjunction with Ultimate Software's, Kronos' newly merged partner, UltiPro Perception employee pulse surveys to provide insights to employers seeking to gauge employee sentiment about a return to the workplace and to assuage those fears with the knowledge that the employer is implementing safety features such as contact tracing to protect the workforce and prevent large-scale COVID-19 outbreaks. Also, with the PeopleDoc product by Ultimate Software, customers are able to initiate an employee leave case workflow for any employee who may have been exposed to track it for 14 days, according to current CDC guidelines.

Since Kronos announced contact tracing in late April, more than 600 customers in 16 countries have adopted the tool.

During this unprecedented time, employers need to do all they can to assure the returning workforce that safety measures are in place to protect them to the extent possible. Kronos' contact tracing solution based on its Workforce Management Suite provides organizations with a simple way to approach contact tracing with an existing solution that may not require significant legal leaps in terms of HIPAA and privacy employee protections. Solutions like these that stem from workforce management systems can also be used for other safety solutions such as the scheduling of staggered shifts. Regardless of the specific solutions selected, all organizations looking at the return to work will need to deploy safety features to protect and calm a disrupted workforce.

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *The Impact of Employer and Employee Engagement During an External Event Like the Coronavirus* (IDC #US46503720, June 2020)
- *COVID-19 Impact on HR Digital Transformation – Accelerated Use Cases* (IDC #US46427220, June 2020)
- *COVID-19 Impact on HR Digital Transformation Use Case Priorities* (IDC #US46377620, May 2020)

Synopsis

This IDC Market Note explores the Kronos solution workforce management system utility for contact tracing as organizations begin to bring workers back to the job site. IDC has explored a number of different options for contact tracing as a variety of methods may be needed depending upon the unique business requirements of an employer.

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