

A Study and Evaluation of the Effective Use of Timesheets or Time Management Systems (TMS) in I.T. Consulting Practice in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

For an IT consulting company, where the main product happens to be the consultants' time – apart from intellectual abilities that result to services, it is very crucial to keep track of time. Presently, the issue of time management has presented a serious challenge to employees of most IT consulting firms in Nigeria. The ineffective use of timesheets or time management systems have cost organizations several misfortunes including loss of clients, leading to loss of revenue, and even loss of staffs due to improper project accountability; inability to identify problematic projects; and most importantly, the inability to access up-to-date details of consultants' billable and non-billable time by managers in other to defend performance with existing projects.

Apparently, the situation is such that the available timesheet systems creates additional work for the already busy consultants and project managers as most of them spend several hours preparing this using either electronic spreadsheets or paper-based timesheets. In some cases, employees working from client sites have to call via phone to report their time, and report to the main office weekly to submit and defend their project status reports. These inconveniences led to inconsistencies with the time and status reporting, not to mention the frequent inaccuracies. Consequently, the consultants are fast losing interest with timesheet use – hence the negative attitude towards the system/practice.

Despite the challenges with using the available system, some organizations that are already used to adopting standard best practices have developed templates from these electronic spreadsheets and have continuously used it for improve their performance, gaining competitive advantages – even though the timesheet is not fully utilized.