

# Aspen Square

Headquartered in West Springfield, Mass., Aspen Square owns and manages over 100 residential and commercial properties throughout the country containing approximately 19,000 units.

Many of the company's 1,200+ salaried and hourly employees work at several properties each day—and sometimes on multiple projects at each property—creating literally thousands of time-related transactions per day.

For over 46 years, Aspen Square had used the same basic method to track time and work completed: employees manually completed a physical time card, the cards were gathered, and then the information was shipped from the properties back to the main office. This method was rife with opportunities for mistakes, not to mention a paperwork nightmare.

Aspen Square recognized the need to move from a paper-based tracking system to an electronic solution. Management, along with company CIO Jason Lindwall, put together a team to evaluate and recommend potential solutions. The team was charged with finding a vendor that could automate the company's complex time tracking process, and help streamline overall operations.

Although the Aspen Square team wanted to automate as much and as quickly as possible, they also faced the very real challenge of employee buy-in. Most of the employees at Aspen Square are cleaners, landscapers and general maintenance workers with little or no technology training.

And because most Aspen Square employees spend only about 10 percent of their time at their desks each day and the other 90 percent in the trenches, they needed a system that was both easy to use, and fast.

The team began to research potential time and attendance solutions. In addition to ease-of-use, they also looked for an application with flexibility in both the type of information it could track and the way employees entered their time. And, they wanted a web-based application tied to a strong, central data center so the company could have faster and more reliable access to system-wide information.

The team went first to the large time and attendance providers, including Kronos, ADP, Ceridian and others. Most of what they found was much more complicated—from both an end-user and features perspective—than Aspen Square needed or wanted.

During their search, team members came across Qquest's website. They contacted the company and were immediately connected with Dan Higbee, director of the company's Premier Division.

Higbee, who had just joined Qquest from another large time and attendance vendor, quickly went to work identifying a solution that would address all of Aspen Square's needs.

"Although we are a mid-sized company, Dan treated us like we were his biggest customer," said Lindwall. "He knew exactly what we needed."

With Higbee's help, Aspen Square selected Qquest's TimeForce product to track time and attendance activities for Aspen's employees nationwide. In addition, Higbee and the Qquest implementation team were able to customize the software to track maintenance and service activities, which allows Aspen Square to chart real costs for each activity.

Aspen Square rolled out the first stage of the application to employees at the home office, who then traveled out into the field to teach other employees how to use the new system. "We got everyone at the home office on board first, we built champions," said Lindwall. "Then they went out into the field and taught other employees."

In the beginning, all employees used web-based clocks. However, the IT team discovered that with up to 12 employees keying into the virtual clock at the same time, the process was too time consuming.

Aspen Square worked with Qquest to achieve an ideal ratio of approximately 1:1 physical clocks versus web-based clocks, "With TimeForce, we can have multiple data entry methods," said Lindwall. "This flexibility has been crucial in achieving the quick-and-easy process we need company-wide."

TimeForce gives Aspen Square the ability to more accurately track employee time and make staffing adjustments when necessary. "This feature alone has resulted in a huge cost reduction in overtime pay due to more efficient scheduling," said Lindwall.

One of the most dramatic results has been the decrease in the time it takes to process payroll. Before TimeForce, it took five full-time Aspen Square employees three days to process 1,200 timecards. With TimeForce, which seamlessly integrates with Aspen Square's ADP payroll system, this process has been reduced by half to just 1.5 days. Not only has the time saved cut the overall cost of processing payroll, but it has also resulted in some unanticipated benefits. Aspen Square's shipping costs have decreased by two to three percent because most time and attendance data is submitted electronically instead of being sent on paper through the mail.

Thanks to the new automated process, managers have a much better handle on actual costs. Also, both time and project tracking, and payroll processing are much more precise and accurate.

TimeForce gives Aspen Square the ability to create customized reports for just about any information they need.

Aspen Square is also seeing a big impact on morale and employee performance. With the previous paper-based system, the company's payroll staff barely made the deadline each week.

---

Not only did this situation put enormous stress on employees, it prevented them from spending time on much more important duties.

With TimeForce, productivity and morale at Aspen Square are on the rise, employees are under less stress, and there is a much lower turnover rate. Employees have more time to answer questions and take on new duties, including benefits management. In fact, since implementing TimeForce, Aspen Square has been able to increase employee benefits and add a program manager by shifting staff from payroll to benefits—all without hiring additional staff or increasing costs.

“Qqest’s TimeForce has been the ideal solution for us,” said Lindwall. “The implementation process has been smooth, and because there are no transactional fees, we don’t feel like we’re getting nicked-and-dimed to death. But more importantly, TimeForce has created real change within Aspen that helps us work better and smarter. It’s not every day that you see a piece of software have this kind of impact.”