

LEADING PAYROLL DECISION-MAKERS VIEW 100% ELECTRONIC WAGE PAYMENT AS A BONUS TO THE ENTIRE COMPANY

Study Results Analysis

For Current Members of Hackett Process Advisory Programs

By Felicia Cheek and Christopher Key

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Companies that have achieved 100% paperless wage payment enjoy numerous benefits including increased productivity and reduced operating costs. In addition, they have significantly reduced, if not entirely eliminated, the time and resources devoted to activities such as bank-account reconciliation and escheatment. Notwithstanding these benefits, the United States lags behind several other countries that have already phased out paper checks. While there are many reasons why some employees in the US do not receive their wages by direct deposit, the biggest obstacle is the lack of a solution for those who do not meet the minimum requirements to open and maintain a checking account. Paycards are eminently suitable to fill that gap.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic payments are changing the way the world does business. The use of paper checks is in sharp decline. Many countries, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden and the Netherlands, have stopped using paper checks altogether or are in the process of phasing out their use.

In the United States, the number of checks being written has fallen steadily since the mid-1990s,¹ and electronic payments have surpassed paper payments since 2003.² Consistent with this trend, federal and state government agencies have started to mandate electronic payments for government disbursements such as child support and state unemployment. Last year, the US Department of Treasury announced that anyone applying for federal benefits, including Social Security, after May 1, 2011, will receive those benefits electronically, either through traditional direct deposit or through a prepaid card.³

The delivery of wages using electronic methods is a logical extension of this “paperless” trend. Approximately 72% of American workers currently receive their wages by direct deposit.⁴ Employers offer electronic wage payment for a vari-

¹ Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Fedpoint: Check Processing* (July 2009), available at <http://www.newyorkfed.org/aboutthefed/fedpoint/fed03.html>.

² Federal Reserve Board, *2004 Federal Reserve Payment Study: Analysis of Noncash Trends in the United States (2000-2003)*; <http://www.frb.org/files/communications/pdf/research/2004PaymentResearchReport.pdf>.

³ Moreover, anyone currently receiving a paper check for benefits will need to switch from a paper check to an electronic alternative (e.g., direct deposit or a prepaid card) by March 1, 2013.

⁴ NACHA, *PayIt Green Survey 2010*, available at https://admin.nacha.org/userfiles/File/Direct_Deposit_v1.pdf.

ety of reasons including cost savings, employee satisfaction, reduced administrative burdens and environmental benefits. Employees participate in direct deposit for similar reasons, including convenient access to their wages, cost savings and security. Notwithstanding the benefits of direct deposit, certain obstacles have prevented a complete migration to electronic wage payment. While employees with bank accounts are able to participate in direct deposit, until recently there was no widely available solution for those without bank accounts. A 2009 study by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation found that 7.7% of American households are unbanked and that another 17.9% are underbanked, meaning that they have a checking or savings account but still rely on alternative financial services like check-cashing services.⁵

A great deal of research has focused on finding cost-effective solutions for unbanked and underbanked workers (collectively referred to as “the underserved” population). Paycards⁶ offer a promising solution because they allow employers to bring the benefit of electronic wage payment to all employees, even those with little or no access to traditional banking services. In a recent study conducted by the San Francisco Office of Financial Empowerment and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), low-income workers reported that their financial options improved as a result of electronic payment. Participants stated that paycards helped them prioritize their spending, allowed them to shop online, and helped them save money.⁷

THE SECRETS OF ATTAINING SUCCESSFUL ELECTRONIC WAGE PAYMENT PROGRAMS

In 2010, The Hackett Group interviewed companies throughout the United States to gain a better understanding of how they successfully achieved, or are approaching, 100% electronic wage payment. The research initiative targeted companies that were identified as having successfully implemented an electronic wage payment program. Each company was surveyed to understand the challenges it had to overcome, how it engaged and leveraged leadership support, and the impact to the overall employee experience. This report summarizes the study results and offers employers proven strategies in their quest to achieve a 100% paperless wage payment program.

⁵ FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households (December 2009), available at http://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/Full_Report.pdf.

⁶ A paycard is a reloadable prepaid (i.e., stored value) card issued to an employee through a bank, credit union, or savings and loan association on behalf of an employer. Employees can use paycards to access their wages in cash, pay bills, make purchases in person or online, sign up for services that require an account, and manage their finances.

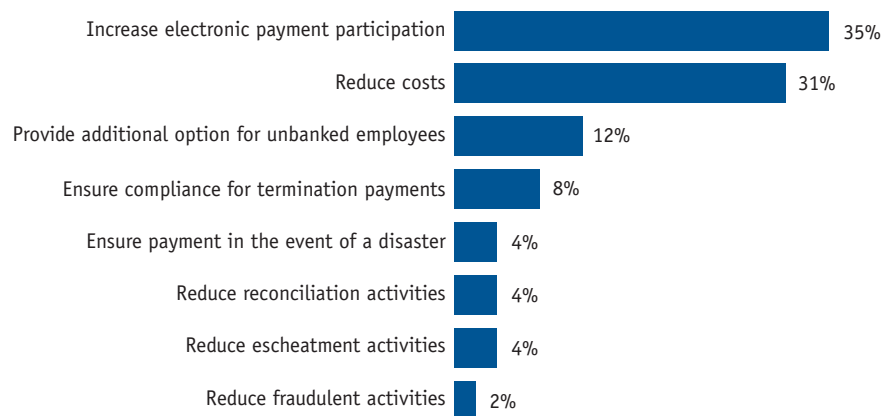
⁷ E. FitzGerald and L. Phillips, *Financial Empowerment through Employer Engagement: Migrating a City to a Paperless Payday* (CFED and the San Francisco Office of Financial Empowerment, March 2011), available at http://cfed.org/programs/innovation/White_Paper_Fin_Empowerment_thru_Employer_Engagement_2011_03_final.pdf.

Key Findings

1. Employers implement paycards for a variety of reasons

More than a third (35%) of the employers that participated in the Hackett's paycard best practices study reported that the primary driver for implementing paycards was a desire to increase the company's direct deposit participation rate (Fig. 1). Another 31% reported that the primary motivation was to reduce payroll processing costs, including the cost of wage payment distribution. Other reasons included providing a solution for unbanked workers; increasing state-law compliance; ensuring prompt delivery of wages; and eliminating escheatment activities, fraudulent activities and/or reconciliation costs.

FIG. 1 Primary driver for implementing paycards



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

2. Expectations affect results

Employers that set high expectations for electronic wage payment are more likely to achieve increased participation rates. Several reported that their goal was 100% electronic wage payment. These companies tended to put more effort into their programs and were more likely to survey employee attitudes and offer additional features with their program.

Employers that mandate electronic wage payment in states where they are permitted to do so are rewarded for their commitment. Over 70% that mandate electronic pay in states where they are permitted to do so have attained participation rates between 95% and 100%, compared to 42% of employers that have attained this level of participation using strictly voluntary programs.

Sixty-four percent of the participants that mandate electronic wage payment in states where they are permitted to do so are satisfied with the level of employee participation they have attained. In comparison, only 33% of participants that have implemented strictly voluntary programs state that they are satisfied with their current participation rate.

3. Communication is key

Employers that have achieved a high rate of employee participation emphasize that communication was one of the keys to their success. Taking time to communicate with employees about the program and answer questions prior to implementation, preferably in person, is vital to helping employees overcome their concerns. Many participants in the study stated that involving executive management in the process helped to build trust, as did having a program champion available locally to answer questions.

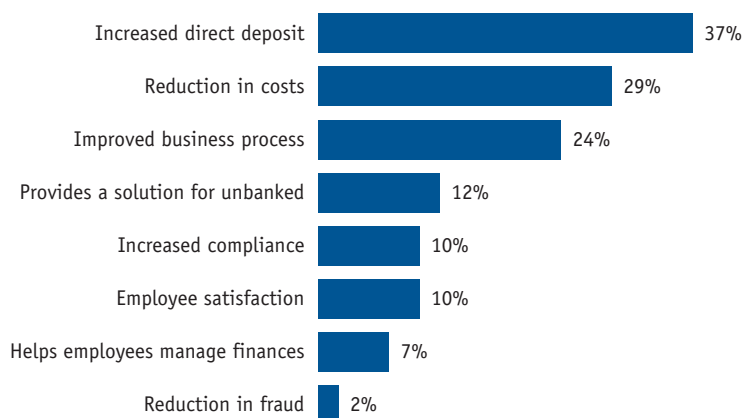
Participants also reported that communication during and after the implementation process continued to be important. Sharing progress and successes with employees helps to include them in the process and to build a corporate culture supportive of electronic pay. A few companies reported that surveying employees after implementation helped to identify areas of continued concern and allowed the company to address those concerns promptly.

4. Small efforts produce significant benefits

Most companies reported that the effort required to roll out a paycard program is minimal. More than 40% indicated that implementation took them three months or less. Almost 50% implemented paycards for all of their employees at one time. Others took a phased approach, and rolled out the program by operational unit, location or some other parameter.

At the same time, employers experienced significant benefits as a result of the paycard implementation (Fig. 2). These included increased direct deposit rates, cost savings and process efficiencies. With respect to employee satisfaction, participants reported that paycards offered a solution for unbanked workers and helped them to manage their finances, avoid check-cashing services and save money.

FIG. 2 Benefits of paycard implementations



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

The fact that the implementation effort is small but benefits are large suggests that a high level of executive support should be relatively easy to obtain. In turn, the study revealed that a high level of management support is a strong predictor

of program success. Approximately 70% of employers that reported a high level of management support experienced participation rates between 95% and 100%. In contrast, only 50% that reported a low or medium level of management support achieved participation rates in this range.

5. *Banked employees also use paycards*

More than a third (35%) of the participants reported that increasing direct deposit participation was the primary driver for implementing paycards. In other words, by introducing paycards as an option, and in some instances the only alternative to direct deposit, many employers hoped to encourage more employees with bank accounts to participate in direct deposit. What they did not expect to find was that employees with bank accounts would also request a paycard.

Banked employees who requested a paycard often participated in split pay, so that a portion of their wages was loaded onto a paycard and the remaining amount was directly deposited into their savings or checking account. Employees use split pay for many purposes, including as a means of providing money to a spouse or dependent, to designate a portion of their wages for spending, or as a holiday account.

POSITIONING ELECTRONIC PAY AT YOUR COMPANY

The business case must be clear and comprehensive

To obtain executive buy-in and support, the business case for 100% electronic payments must be clear and comprehensive. The advantages of electronic wage payment are so apparent that making the business case for improvement should not be difficult.

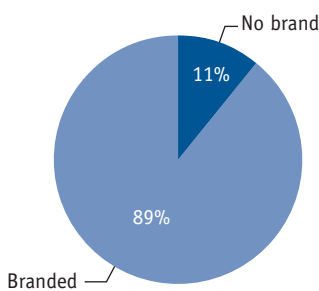
In payroll, electronic payment should be the goal for both on-cycle and off-cycle payments. Many companies work hard to achieve a high participation rate for on-cycle payments, but forget to make electronic pay available for off-cycle payments as well. In the last few years, many banks have introduced products that make electronic payment for off-cycle payments a viable option for employers.

The business case for electronic payment also should extend beyond the payroll department. For example, electronic wage payment results in increased employee productivity, is an essential component of disaster preparedness and supports an employer's sustainability initiative.

Position electronic wage payment as an employee benefit

To increase participation rates, electronic payment should be positioned as an employee benefit. Participants in the study use solutions that make paycards an attractive alternative to paper paychecks. For example, the vast majority (89%) of participants offer branded paycards (i.e., those bearing a Visa, MasterCard or Discover logo). Employees may use these cards anywhere that the payment brand is accepted. Branded paycards also carry all of the protections of the particular payment brand including zero liability fraud protection, purchase protection and dispute resolution procedures. Only 11% of study participants use paycards that are not branded (Fig. 3).

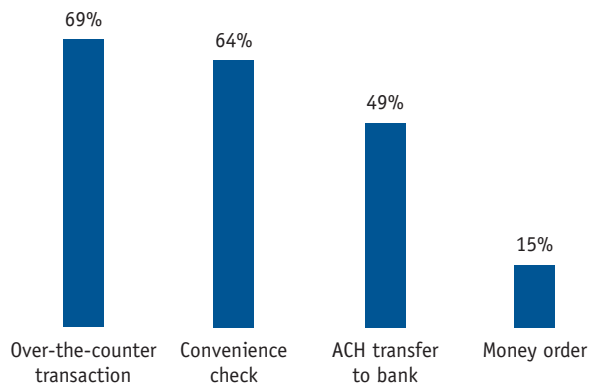
FIG. 3 Employer use of branded paycards



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

Paycards also benefit employees by providing them with a means to access all of their wages each pay period without cost. While most states require this for all payment methods, underserved employees often are forced to rely on expensive check-cashing services to access their wages in cash. Participants in the study used paycard solutions that offer employees a variety of ways to access their full wages off the card. In fact, 61% of all participants offer at least two different methods of full and free access and 18% of participants offer four different methods. The most common methods of cash access offered are over-the-counter bank teller transactions, convenience checks and ACH transfers to the employee’s bank account (Fig. 4).

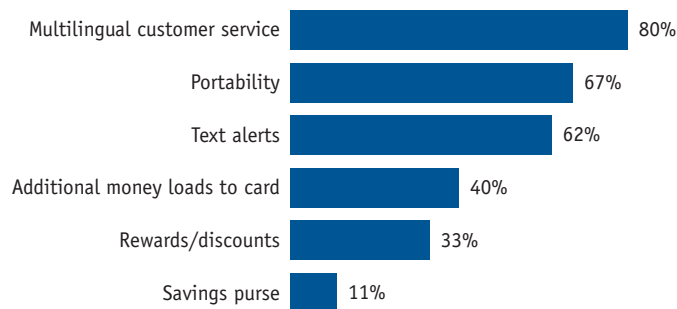
FIG. 4 Methods used to access full wages



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

Flexibility and ease of use also make paycards an attractive benefit. Employers that participated in the Hackett study offer a number of options and features to make paycards attractive to their employees (Fig. 5). These features include multilingual customer service, portability, text alerts, rewards and discounts, and a separate savings purse.

FIG. 5 Additional paycard features



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

Finally, electronic wage payment should be included in disaster recovery and/or business continuity plans to ensure that all employees are paid in a timely manner regardless of circumstances beyond the employer's control. Electronic wage payment eliminates the need to distribute paychecks, which is often impossible in circumstances such as natural disasters and crippling weather conditions. Employees will appreciate the company making a commitment to ensure timely and accurate payment in the event of such unforeseen circumstances. This message should be crafted with input from the human resources and benefits departments.

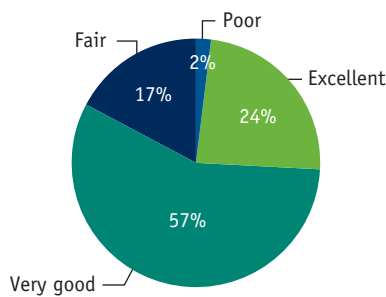
Position paycards as a corporate benefit that extends beyond the payroll department

Payroll departments enjoy significant savings from eliminating the cost of producing paper wage payments. However, the benefits of electronic wage payment extend elsewhere in the company as well. For example, substantial savings can be realized through increased productivity, fewer instances of check fraud and in several other areas. The alleviation of paper payments also has a direct impact on bank reconciliation and escheatment activities in the accounting area. Issuing fewer checks reduces the amount of time spent reconciling bank accounts and minimizes the risk of outstanding checks that fall into escheatment status.

Ease of administration is another corporate benefit. Paycard solution providers generally handle administrative tasks like issuing cards to new hires and handling paycard replacements. They also keep their employer-clients abreast of legislative changes and product enhancements. As a result, the majority of study participants (81%) indicate their satisfaction level with their paycard provider is either very good or excellent.

Finally, top-performing payroll organizations partner with the HR department to streamline the end-to-end payroll process. Paycards can be used for relocation expenses, tuition reimbursement and other corporate benefit payments. In addition, whether employees are reimbursed for business expenses through payroll or accounts payable, electronic payments (either to a bank account or paycard) help ensure accurate and timely payment of expenses.

FIG. 6 Employer satisfaction with paycard provider



Source: The Hackett Group, 2010

LEVERAGE BEST PRACTICES FOR A SUCCESSFUL ELECTRONIC WAGE PAYMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Study participants relied on basic project management skills and developed best practices to ease the transition to an electronic wage payment system. A summary of these best practices is provided below.

Establish goals and develop strategies for attaining those goals

- **Identify key objectives for implementing electronic pay, and structure the program to accomplish these objectives.**

Benefit: Explains why the program is important and is the basis for building the business case necessary to obtain executive and management support. Also, establishes standards by which to measure the success of the program.

- **Establish a goal for employee participation. Make the goal 100% electronic payment for the entire employee population.**

Benefit: Employers that aim for attaining 100% electronic payment are much more likely to attain high participation rates. Anything less will limit the company's ability to realize the full benefit of electronic wage payments.

- **Before introducing a paycard program, survey employees to identify any concerns they may have about electronic payments, and make sure these are addressed in planning, training and documentation. This process can also be used to help identify the features and options employees find most beneficial in a payroll card program.**

Benefit: Understanding why employees are not participating in direct deposit will help the employer tailor its program to address its employees' concerns. Information shared in a survey can be used to target communications to specific areas that are important for employees. Satisfies the question of "what's in it for me?"

- **Document electronic payment as part of the company's disaster recovery and/or business continuity plan.**

Benefit: Increases management and employee support by highlighting the importance of electronic payment to the organization as a whole. Ensures employees will be paid in the event of an emergency.

Obtain executive and management buy-in

- **Enlist executive support during the planning phase and throughout implementation of the paycard program.**

Benefit: Executive support can help ensure support across the enterprise and can also help create a corporate culture of 100% electronic payment participation. A high level of management support is a strong predictor of program success.

- **Identify advocates within HR and first line management before paycard implementation begins.**

Benefit: Helps ensure the 100% electronic payment program has as much support as possible. Since store/departmental managers are likely to receive many questions from employees, their support can be critical to the success of the program.

Select a vendor

- **Develop a questionnaire to guide interviews with potential vendors. Conduct a thorough vetting process to ensure the vendor ultimately selected is able to provide the services and benefits required both to the company and to employees.**

Benefit: Allows the employer to select a vendor that is financially secure and trusted in the industry. Also allows the employer to select a vendor whose program satisfies its needs and the needs of its employees.

- **Select one vendor to provide paycard services throughout the company.**
Benefit: This will help to secure the best terms and service levels for employees and provide a consistent set of program features. It also allows the company to leverage volume to receive the lowest cost both to the company and to its employees.
- **Define the respective roles and responsibilities of the vendor and the company. Map out the process for issuing cards to new employees, issuing replacement cards, etc.**
Benefit: Delegating administrative tasks to the vendor allows managers and other corporate employees to focus on running the business. Defining roles up front helps to set expectations and to prevent problems and misunderstandings in the future.

Develop a communications strategy

- **Use a mix of communication channels to promote electronic wage payment as a benefit to employees. Enlist the help of executive management to deliver the message.**
Benefit: In order to encourage participation, the corporate message should emphasize the benefits to employees. Some of the specific benefits that should be emphasized include immediate access to wages on payday, the elimination of check-cashing fees, the ability to make purchases and pay bills online, and wage continuity during emergencies. Stress that electronic wage payment is the safest and most efficient way to ensure that employees are paid regardless of external circumstances. Electronic wage payment provides convenient and secure access to their funds when needed and reduces or even eliminates the need to carry cash.
- **Communicate with employees directly, and provide them with written information about the program.**
Benefit: Employers that participated in the study emphasized that conducting in-person conversations with employees is an important and successful strategy for increasing participation rates. In addition, providing employees with written materials allows them to study the terms of the program, thereby easing the transition process.
- **After the electronic payment program is implemented, communicate the success of the program using a variety of corporate communications channels. Topics should include the increased percentage of electronic payments compared to paper payments over a specific period of time (e.g., quarterly) as well as cost savings and other benefits realized to date (e.g., environmental impact, etc.).**
Benefit: Provides continuous updates in order to maintain support throughout the implementation and on an ongoing basis.

Develop an enrollment strategy and process

- **Make enrollment in the electronic payment program part of the on-boarding process.**

Benefit: Employees are more likely to accept a new form of wage payment at the beginning of the employment relationship. Accordingly, employers can increase participation rates by making enrollment a part of the new-hire orientation process.

- **Require employees to bring a voided personal check to the new-hire orientation. Notify new employees of this requirement in the materials describing what documents to bring on the first day of work (e.g., to complete the I-9 process).**

Benefit: This ensures that the employee is prepared to select an electronic payment method during the orientation process. A voided check gives the employee the option of electing direct deposit and ensures that the correct information is recorded. Addressing electronic wage payment in materials that discuss the I-9 process and other important employment procedures demonstrates the importance of the issue to the company.

- **Where permitted, offer new hires the choice of receiving wages by direct deposit or on a paycard, without also offering a paper paycheck option. Make clear that employees who do not provide the information necessary to initiate direct deposit within a specified period of time will be issued a paycard.**

Benefit: This positions electronic payment methods as the only options available to employees and automatically increases employee participation. It also allows the employer to put in place the processes necessary to ensure the delivery of wages during severe weather and natural disasters.

- **Include enrollment in electronic wage payment on the new-hire checklist.**

Benefit: This holds the manager or HR representative conducting the new-hire orientation accountable for addressing electronic wage payment during the process. It also helps to solidify a culture where electronic payments are the norm and includes managers and/or human resources representatives in the corporate goal of attaining 100% electronic wage payment.

- **Update open enrollment and other forms employees receive on a periodic basis to include the option for employees to elect direct deposit (e.g., charitable giving campaigns, 401[k] plans, etc.).**

Benefit: Serves as a constant reminder that electronic payment is available, particularly for existing employees.

- **Offer incentives and use promotions to encourage enrollment in electronic wage payment.**

Benefit: Increases employee participation and creates a culture that supports electronic wage payment. Promotions can be fun and often bring employees and management together working toward a common goal.

Develop a training program

- Obtain the paycard vendor's help in training company resources that will then train the company's employees ("train the trainer").

Benefit: In many instances, having an employee serve as the face of the program increases confidence and acceptance of the initiative.

- Offer two types of training, one for employees in states that allow employers to mandate electronic payments (direct deposit and paycards) and one for employees in states where paper paychecks must still be offered.

Benefit: Ensures proper messaging for the program.

- Identify the topics to be addressed during training. At a minimum, these topics should include the advantages of electronic wage payment, instructions for card activation, available methods of accessing full wages without cost, fees that may be incurred, and how to avoid potential fees.

Benefit: Employees should understand how to use the card conveniently and without unknowingly incurring fees.

- Ensure that employees that are responsible for enrolling new hires in electronic wage payment have received appropriate training, and are knowledgeable about and supportive of the program.

Benefit: Increases understanding of the program and likelihood of enrollment.

Identify desired uses and features of the paycard program

- Identify features that will be offered as part of the paycard program. These features may include the use of instant-issue cards, the ability to participate in split pay and companion cards.

Benefit: Provides employees with enhanced flexibility, thereby increasing satisfaction and participation.

- Provide electronic pay statements to all employees who receive wages electronically, where permitted by law.

Benefit: Increases participation in electronic pay statement distribution, and saves money and other resources.

- If the program offers instant-issue paycards for new hires, ensure that an inventory of cards is available onsite and a distribution process is in place.

Benefit: Creates a well-organized and comprehensive paycard program in order to increase confidence and support of the program.

- Use paycards to deliver final wage payments, where permitted, in order to ensure compliance and help prevent overpayments.

Benefit: Since the termination process contributes to overpayments 71% of the time, a streamlined payment process will help reduce the risk of overpayments and help ensure compliance in states where there are specific requirements around the timing of termination payments.

Pilot the program

- Identify employee and management representatives to pilot the paycard program prior to implementation. These “change agents” should be located strategically throughout the company, and should be encouraged to use the card in a variety of scenarios (e.g., at an ATM machine, at a bank teller, in a store) to understand the employee experience and identify any issues. Embed the lessons learned in process designs and in employee paycard training.

Benefit: This helps to increase credibility and support for the program and allows the company to proactively correct problems and mitigate risks.

- Work with your internal treasury department and the paycard vendor to ensure that local bank employees are familiar with paycards and are aware that the first withdrawal each payroll period must be free to the employee.

Benefit: Provides communication to local banks, post offices and other places where the cards are used in order to alleviate problems for employees. It also helps increase confidence and support for the program.

Roll out the program

- Decide whether to roll out the program all at once or in phases. If rolled out in phases, consider implementing first in states that permit mandatory electronic wage payment or recognize a convenience check as a paper paycheck.

Benefit: Word-of-mouth support from other employees helps to increase employee participation. Successes in states that permit mandatory programs are likely to influence participation rates in states that require voluntary participation.

- Include a letter in the employee paycard introduction package that can be presented to the bank stating the initial withdrawal is at no cost.

Benefit: Proactively provides for those rare instances where bank employees are not aware that the initial withdrawal must be at no cost to the employee. This, in turn, helps increase confidence and support for the program

Monitor program results and developments

- Produce and distribute management reports detailing electronic payment participation by division.

Benefit: Ensures buy-in throughout the enterprise by holding division executives accountable.

- Solicit feedback from employees and use the information to make appropriate program adjustments.

Benefit: Employers can increase participation in electronic wage payment by gaining an understanding of their employees’ concerns and needs.

- **Monitor legal and program developments on an ongoing basis. Involve in-house and possibly outside counsel in the process.**

Benefit: Staying abreast of developments helps to ensure legal compliance and executive support. A few participants mentioned that they looked to industry trade groups, such as the American Payroll Association, to monitor developments in the industry.

Additional strategies for increasing participation rates

- **Encourage employees to use electronic payments by mailing paper payments one or two days before payday where allowable. Do not distribute paper payments in the office.**

Benefit: Makes electronic payment more attractive than paper payments, thereby increasing participation.

- **Close loopholes for electronic payments by not allowing employees to split net pay between electronic payments and a paper payment.**

Benefit: Minimizes any potential for paper payments. The option could be to split net pay between a bank account and a paycard.

- **Make electronic pay statements (e.g., e-stubs) available to employees before paper paystubs. Where permitted, consider mailing paper paystubs rather than distributing them in the workplace.**

Benefit: Encourages employees to receive paystubs electronically by providing a tangible benefit of receiving them earlier than their paper counterparts.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

With the addition of paycards, 100% electronic wage payment has become a viable solution for the entire employee population. Insight gained by The Hackett Group from companies that have successfully implemented electronic pay programs reveals that employers may achieve employee participation rates nearing or even reaching 100% by following a simple, yet proven, list of strategies and best practices.

To create a paperless payroll environment and achieve the cost savings and productivity benefits that accompany this move, companies must set their goal at 100% electronic wage payment. They should focus on the overall efficiency and effectiveness gains throughout the end-to-end payroll process. The business case for electronic wage payment should include benefits to the corporate entity as a whole, such as increased productivity, a reduction in check fraud, the elimination of escheatment and reconciliation activities, and support for the corporate sustainability initiative.

Most importantly, the main differences between companies that were very successful and those that were not as successful were a high level of management support and a desire to achieve 100% electronic payment participation. Now it is up to each company to make this goal a reality.

ABOUT THE HACKETT GROUP

The Hackett Group, a global strategic advisory firm, is a leader in best practice implementation, advisory, benchmarking, and transformation consulting services, including shared services, offshoring and outsourcing advice. Utilizing best practices and implementation insights from more than 5,000 benchmarking engagements, executives use Hackett's empirically based approach to quickly define and prioritize initiatives to enable world-class performance. Through its REL brand, Hackett offers working capital solutions focused on delivering significant cash flow improvements. Through its Hackett Technology Solutions group, Hackett offers business application consulting services that helps maximize returns on IT investments. Hackett has worked with 2,700 major corporations and government agencies, including 97% of the Dow Jones Industrials, 84% of the Fortune 100, 80% of the DAX 30 and 49% of the FTSE 100.

Founded in 1991, The Hackett Group was acquired by Answerthink, which was renamed The Hackett Group in 2008. The Hackett Group has global offices in the United States, Europe, Australia and India and is publicly traded on the NASDAQ as HCKT.

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Ms. Cheek has primary responsibility for advisory services as well as setting the agenda for research on the global time-to-pay process. She works closely with finance and HR professionals who own the payroll process in their companies, providing strategic insight, metrics and guidance about best practices. Prior to joining The Hackett Group, Ms. Cheek worked for ACS, where she was responsible for transition activities on a large HRO project; Turner Broadcasting System, where she was internal consultant for HCM implementations; and ADP as an account manager. Her broad payroll experience includes the areas of outsourcing, transformation, consulting and project management. She is a recipient of the 2009 APA Meritorious Award and was a 2009 Payroll Hall of Fame Inductee.

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Mr. Key has over 10 years of consulting and professional services experience across a variety of fields with a focus in information technology, shared service center operations/excellence and human resources. Currently, he oversees all aspects of benchmark project life cycle and support, including project/program management, training and delivery. In his tenure with The Hackett Group, Mr. Key has also been responsible for managing the IT and Global Business Services Advisory client portfolio for North America, providing client services, assessment and advisory expertise. Prior to joining Hackett, he was a recruiting and placement professional working in the IT and business sectors.