



# SAGE ABRA HRMS NEWSLETTER

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## How to Benefit from Employee Self Service

Human Resource technology adoption is often driven by small projects aimed at specific business problems that, when solved, provide a very clear return on investment. As an example, Employee Self Service technology, or ESS, has evolved as a fantastic solution for an HR staff that is burdened by the repetitive administrative task of responding to routine employee requests. In this article, we'll take a look at ESS, explore the benefits it offers, and briefly introduce the ESS module for Sage Abra HRMS.

### What is ESS?

ESS technology provides a central location for company personnel to view and update important personal data and company information. As the name suggests, ESS enables employees and managers to "self serve" (rather than contacting the HR department) for routine tasks or inquiries such as time-off requests, review of current benefits, updating dependents, review record of attendance, and more. ESS access is typically delivered over the internet or company intranet.

### The Benefits that ESS Offers

By automating employee activities such as time-off requests & approvals or dependent/beneficiary changes, companies can save considerable administrative time and expense associated with paper-based forms and manual processes. Other benefits of ESS include:

- ◆ **Elimination of Duplicate Data Entry and Better Accuracy** – By allowing employees to enter routine record changes themselves, you eliminate the need to have HR staff re-enter the same information on a paper form or into an HR or payroll system. This also helps to reduce errors.
- ◆ **Reduced Transaction Costs** - Partially or completely replacing paper-based processes reduces (or completely eliminates) the time and costs associated with copying, routing, printing, mailing, filing, and storing paper.
- ◆ **Improved Focus** – ESS technology allows HR staff to focus on more strategic initiatives, such as employee retention strategies or developing competitive benefits packages, rather than getting bogged down by routine administrative functions.



Sage Abra Employee Self Service (ESS) allows employees to view and request time off, access current benefits & dependents, and more from the internet or company intranet.

### Introducing Sage Abra ESS

Sage Abra ESS will streamline your company's HR processes and give employees ownership of their personal information. **Employees** can request time-off, review benefits information, access performance reviews, update specific fields, and review payroll information. **Managers** can view a direct reports' personnel file, view and post employee notes, review attendance information, and approve time-off requests. Companies can also post important documents and messages for employees to review. Perhaps best of all, submitted and approved changes are automatically updated from ESS to the Sage Abra database which eliminates duplicate data entry and possible errors.



[Contact Us](#) to discuss whether Sage Abra ESS can save you money



# Payroll Pay Cards - A Good Option for Your Employees?

Payroll Cards are a relatively new employee payment option that can help reduce costs and liabilities associated with paycheck generation, while enabling companies to offer their employees a new and simple way to receive pay. In this article, we'll explore the concept of Payroll Cards and how they might benefit your company.

## What is a Payroll Pay Card?

A Payroll Pay Card holds a stored value and functions much like a debit card without the need for an underlying banking account. An employee who receives a Pay Card as payroll is able to access cash at an ATM, pay bills, buy groceries, make online purchases, and use the card just about anywhere a debit card would be accepted. Pay Cards are often branded, by Visa or Mastercard for example, and thus are widely accepted by merchants, banks and other establishments.

## How Does it Work?

Employers establish an account with a Pay Card program. The program provider does not handle the employer's actual funds, but establishes a partnership with a bank that handles the financial transactions. Money from the employer is deposited into the bank that then disburses the funds to the employees through the Pay Card program. Employees are issued Pay Cards, similar in appearance to a credit or debit card, which stores the amount of money the employee has earned in payroll for the period. The employee can use this card for any financial transaction such as purchasing merchandise, cash withdrawal, or paying bills. For security, each cardholder establishes a PIN number.

## Who is a Good Fit for Payroll Pay Cards?

For employees that already have a bank account, Pay Cards provide an alternative to carrying cash or cashing a check. Employees who **do not** have a bank account gain the convenience of using a debit card without the risk of carrying cash around nor the inconvenience and potential fees of cashing a check at a bank (according to a study in 2005 by the Office of the Comptroller of Currency, Americans without bank accounts spend roughly \$8 billion in fees and finance-related charges).

## How Does it Benefit Employers?

The main financial benefit to employers of offering Pay Cards is lower payroll processing costs. According to studies, the cost of issuing a paper check is estimated at \$1 to \$2

(paycheck paper stock, security features, envelopes, check handling, toner/printers, etc.). There is also a replacement cost and potential banks fees for lost or stolen paychecks. Direct deposit can minimize these costs. However, direct deposit isn't an option for employees who do not have, or are unable to qualify for, a banking account. As such, Pay Cards most closely approximate the cost savings of direct deposit.

## Sage Payroll PayCards

Sage Software has recently introduced the **Sage Payroll PayCards** program. The PayCards are re-loadable and the program will be delivered via a Web-based solution that requires no system integration, software, or hardware. An employer simply signs up and enrolls employees. Virtually all employees are eligible for a Sage Payroll PayCard, with no credit checks nor prior banking relationship required.



[Contact us](#) to learn more about the new Sage Payroll PayCards program.

## Tips and Tricks:

### 4 Tips for Better Password Security

One thing that can prevent your system from being compromised **a great password**. Here are 4 tips to prevent unauthorized access to your system:

- 1 Go Long** - The longer a password is, the exponentially more difficult it is to crack. As a general rule, a minimum of 8 characters is ideal.
- 2 Mix It Up** - Incorporate both lower and upper-case letters as well as numbers and keyboard characters (i.e. #,\$) for maximum security.
- 3 Random Encounter** - Don't use anything in your password that's personal and easy to guess. That includes names of children, pets, birthdays, and phone numbers.
- 4 Change is Good** - Make sure to change your passwords at least a few times per year to create a moving target for hackers.

Source: Microsoft Small Business Center

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## Technologies LLC

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6401 Jefferson Street NE | Albuquerque, NM 87109 | [jcavanaugh@redw.com](mailto:jcavanaugh@redw.com) | (505) 998-3200 | [www.redw.com](http://www.redw.com)