FirstBank Puerto Rico controls costs with HandPunch®

“As I told the employees, there are no excuses with the HandPunch®. Your hand is your credential. You can forget a card but you cannot forget your hand.”

- Aida Garcia, First Vice-President & Director of Human Resources, FirstBank Puerto Rico

Summary
Fast-growing FirstBank Puerto Rico reduced hourly payroll costs and took control of time and attendance with Schlage HandPunch® terminals.

Business need
Caribbean-based FirstBank Puerto Rico, the second largest commercial bank in the Commonwealth with more than 1,700 hourly employees, needed to retool its time and attendance system to reduce payroll costs, prevent unauthorized overtime and stop timecard misuse. The bank also wanted to do away with two costly practices: employees punching in early for work, and “buddy punching,” or clocking in other employees who are absent.

Challenges
At one time, FirstBank employees reported time and attendance on the honor system. The bank lacked attendance controls and had no data on employee absenteeism and tardiness. In 1990, FirstBank installed a bar-code-based identification card system.

“The bar-code-based identification card was good,” said Aida Garcia, first vice-president and director of human resources. “But employees began punching each other in and then they would claim that they forgot their cards to avoid clocking in. It was hard to maintain control.”

Statistics
Industry: Financial
Application: Time & attendance
Biometric: HandPunch®
HandReaders: 108
Users: 1,700
Geography: United States
Employees also were clocking in up to a half-hour before their shifts started. By law, bank employees must be paid for time clocked, even if they did not work.

**Solution**

FirstBank augmented the bar-code identification system with 108 Schlage HandPunch® terminals. The terminals are installed in 100 locations, including bank branches, corporate headquarters and affiliated businesses in Puerto Rico, and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

The HandPunch terminals eliminate expenses associated with replacing lost time cards. They also stop unauthorized overtime and timecard misuse. Instead of filling out or punching timecards, employees simply place their hands on the HandPunch. It automatically takes a three-dimensional reading of the size and shape of the hand, and verifies the user’s identity in less than a second.

After seeing the HandPunch system demonstrated, Garcia recommended that the bank install it. “It was the solution to our problems,” she said. “As I told the employees, there are no excuses with the HandPunch. Your hand is your credential. You can forget a card but you cannot forget your hand.”

An Ethernet connection links the HandPunch terminals to the bank’s Windows-based network and works seamlessly with the bank’s web-based time and attendance software.

**Results**

FirstBank’s HandPunch terminals record more than 10,000 transactions per workday. Employees swipe their badges through the HandPunch’s integrated bar code reader and place their hands on the unit to confirm their identity. They clock in at the beginning of the day; clock in and out for lunch and breaks; and then punch out in the evening. If an employee attempts to punch in before a shift begins, the HandPunch will not accept it.

The terminals offer supervisors the flexibility of making manual adjustments when employees forget to punch in or to record sick leave, vacations or authorized overtime. In fact, First Bank has significantly reduced the payroll department workload because supervisors and employees are now responsible for many attendance functions.

Not only has FirstBank saved substantially by streamlining the attendance process, and eliminating unauthorized overtime and buddy punching, but employee response to the system has been “excellent,” Garcia reported. Fast-growing FirstBank expects to add more HandPunch units soon as it continues to upgrade its time and attendance system.