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eBook

Complete guide to managing employee vacations

Well-rested teams are more productive

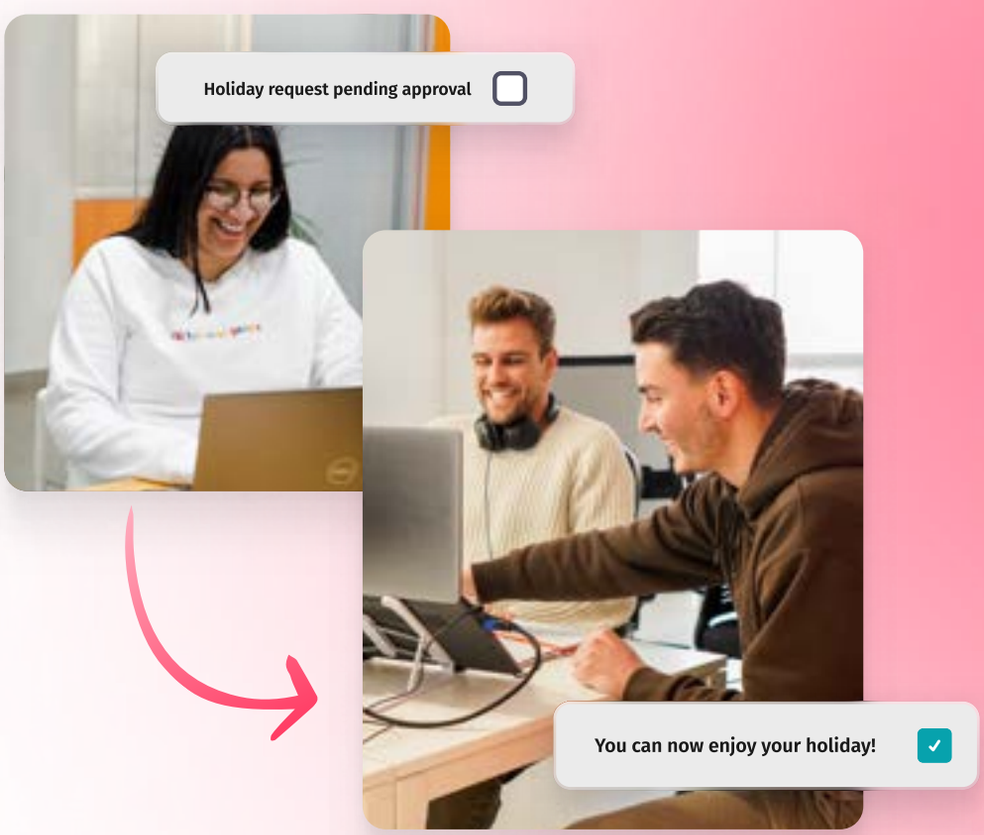
Say goodbye to pre-vacation stress

How to organize your team to avoid chaos

The holiday season often comes with the challenge of coordinating shifts, organizing teams, scheduling, and staying ahead of upcoming absences.

Is your HR department struggling to manage and organize employee vacations? Here's something important to keep in mind: it doesn't have to be that way.

With the right planning strategy, an early start, and a few improvements to repetitive processes, managing employee vacations can be simple and stress-free!



Disconnecting from work

More than necessary, it’s a fundamental right

Every company should have a clear vacation policy in place, always aligned with local labor laws, collective agreements, and any commitments made with employee representatives or unions — as these form the legal framework that governs employee time off.

Some **pre-vacation pro tips** for your team:

1. **Tie up loose ends before heading out:** Make sure everything is coordinated - hand over tasks, pause anything non-urgent and wrap up what you can.
2. **Leave your laptop at the office:** If it’s shared or might be needed in your absence, clear any personal files before you go.
3. **Limit your availability:** If you're on vacation, you're offline. Enjoy your break, it's well-deserved!
4. **Turn off your work phone:** Disconnect fully to avoid distractions.
5. **Uninstall Teams (or similar tools):** Otherwise, the temptation to “quickly check in” can creep in and you won’t truly switch off.

It’s also important to note that the **concept of the “right to disconnect”** is reflected in many remote work regulations, including recent laws around telecommuting. For employees working remotely, this right is just as essential.

That’s why strengthening your company’s disconnection policies isn’t just about vacation, it also reinforces a healthier work culture all year round.

How to calculate your time off?

If you also get confused about calculating hours outside the full workday, take note:



Vacation for part-time employees

To calculate the vacation entitlement for a part-time employee, the company must consider the hours or days the employee has actually worked.

In other words, they are entitled to the same amount of vacation as a full-time employee, proportionate to their working hours.



Vacation for weekend workers

Vacation days are counted as calendar days, so weekends must be included unless the collective bargaining agreement states otherwise.

The total number of days counted should include all calendar days, whether worked or not.



Vacation for public sector employees

Public sector employees typically receive between 3 to 4 weeks of paid vacation annually, though the exact amount can vary depending on local regulations and collective agreements.

How to plan your team's time off effectively?

There are several criteria to consider:

1. Understand the order of priority

Companies often have a system of priorities or criteria that determine which employees can request their vacation days first. For example:

- **Employees with children:** Many companies support work-life balance by giving priority to employees with school-aged children, allowing them to align their time off with school holidays.
- **Seniority:** Employees who have been with the company the longest are often given the first choice, as a way to reward loyalty.
- **Rotating system:** This is considered one of the fairest methods, as everyone gets a turn to choose first over time.

It's important that the whole team understands how this system works, so they can plan accordingly and avoid misunderstandings later on.

2. Know what each contract and collective agreement says

Employment contracts and collective agreements don't just set the minimum number of vacation days—they may also include specific periods when time off cannot be requested, such as during peak workload times. Similarly, the company may enforce mandatory vacation periods during office closures or slow seasons.

It's essential that these conditions are clearly outlined in the contract and communicated to employees in advance.

3. Using software to manage time off

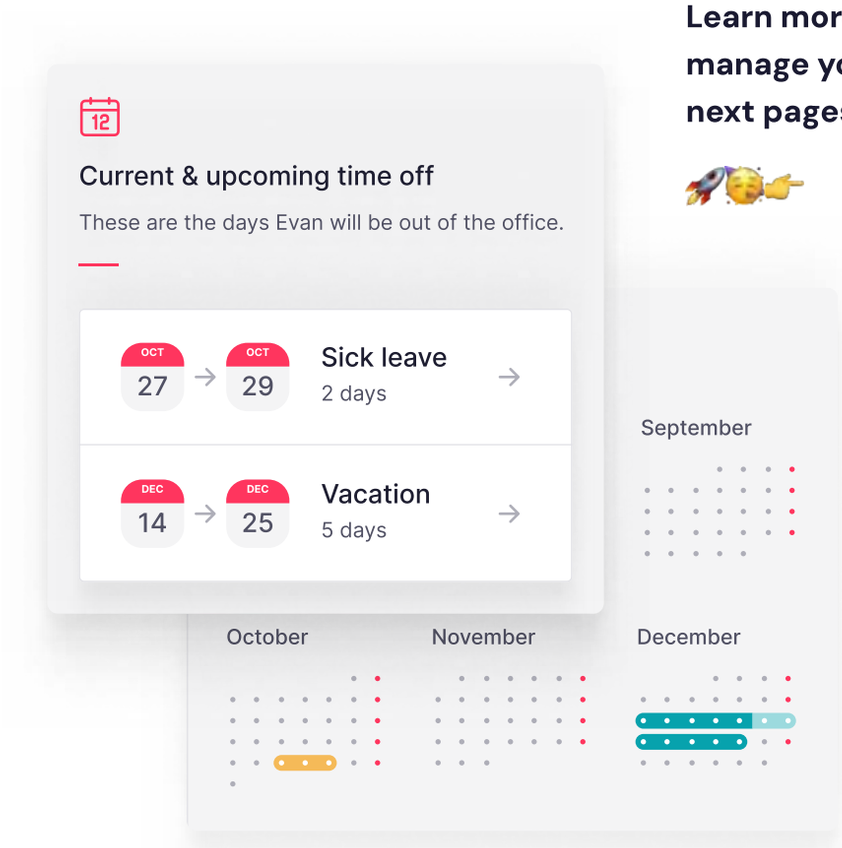
No tip will truly make a difference if you're using the wrong tools to manage time off.

Many companies still rely on increasingly complex Excel sheets to plan their teams' vacation days. At first glance, this might seem like a reasonable solution—but over time, it becomes unsustainable.

To begin with, the calendar needs to be built from scratch to suit each company's unique structure, which takes significant time and resources. Then, if it's not updated regularly, the file can quickly become outdated—and when multiple versions exist, confusion is almost guaranteed.

The best way to streamline vacation management is to use software that automates the process for both employees and HR managers.

Learn more about the tools to manage your team on the next pages.



Management Tools

Don’t worry, you’re not facing this alone:

Option A: Excel

It’s the most common option and honestly, we get it. It’s as simple as creating a file, dedicating columns to months and days, and filling the rows with employee names. You can even use formulas to add up vacation days. However, the more employees you have or the more details you want to track, the more complex and tedious this method can become.

Option B: Factorial (our favorite, of course)

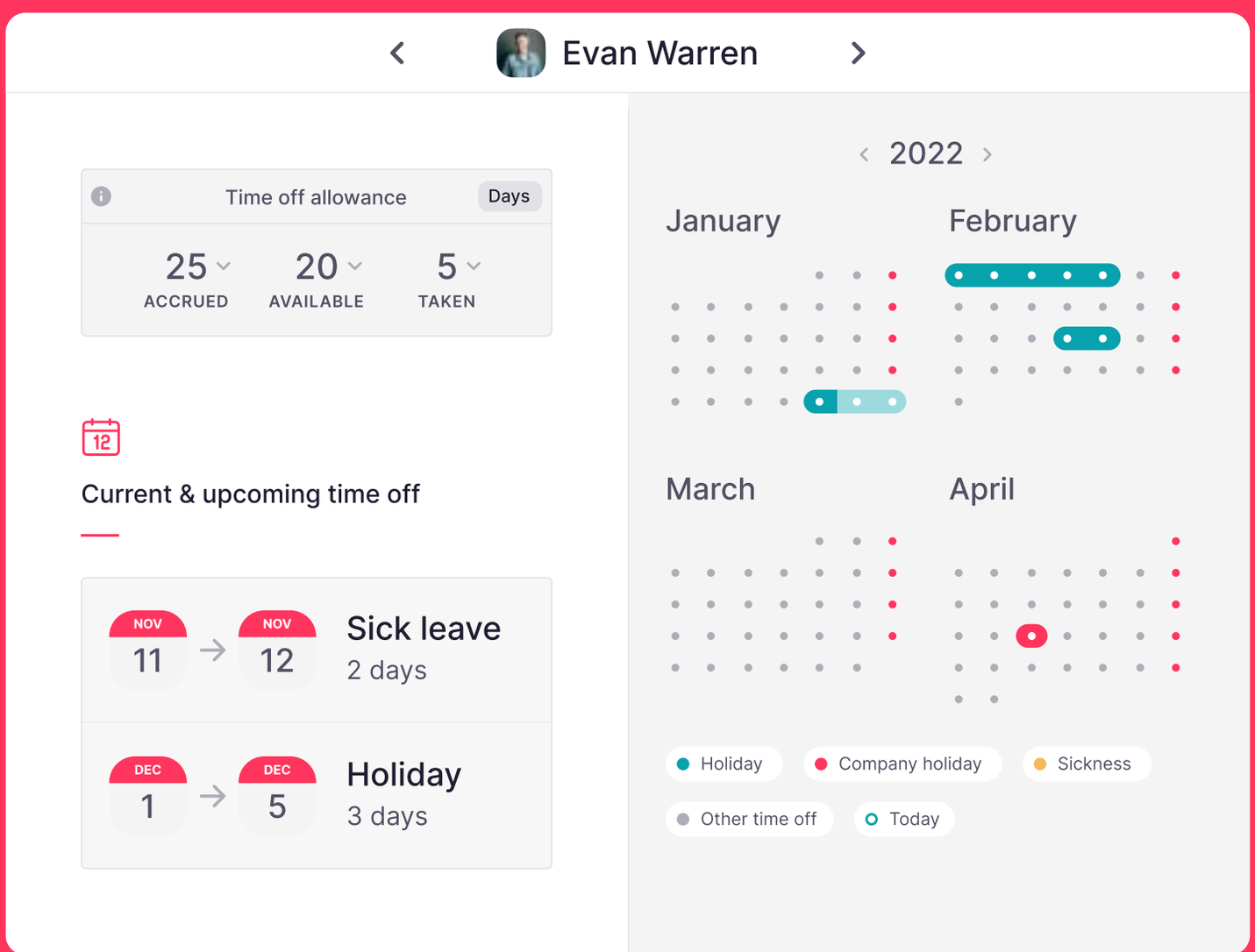
Do you know which platform **lets you manage hundreds of employees with every detail covered**? That’s right, **Factorial**. Each employee can access their Employee Portal and easily select their vacation or absence days on the calendar. Plus, the **software allows you to**:

- Managers receive a notification of the request and can approve or reject absences by checking the calendar and the team’s existing time off.
- An automatic update is created in the company calendar so everyone stays informed and can adjust accordingly.
- The calendar adapts based on the location of each company office, with local holidays updated annually, and allows the admin to create a fully customized vacation policy.

Additionally, since the software is synced with each employee’s work information, it automatically calculates their proportional vacation days based on contract type and start date, as well as any carry-over days from previous years, provided the company allows it.

It’s not as difficult as it seems.

Get your team’s vacations organized in just 3 clicks. 🥳



How do contracts and agreements affect vacation time?

Support your team and comply with the law.

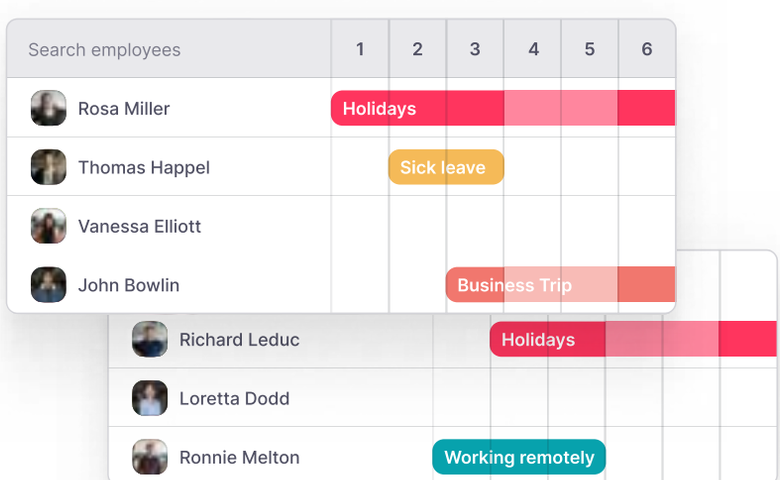
Although managing vacations might seem like just coordinating schedules, it's actually regulated and protected by law. Therefore, it's essential to comply with labor regulations. But that's not all, it's also important to understand what collective agreements and individual contracts specify. In this article, we explain in simple terms how to properly manage employee vacations.

Collective agreements: Tailored regulations for each industry

Collective agreements may set specific conditions regarding vacation time, so it's essential to review them before planning your team's time off. Some of the most common rules include:

- A number of days greater than the legal minimum
- Specific periods when vacations must be taken or restrictions during certain times
- Procedures for requesting and approving time off

To avoid issues, the company must ensure that vacation planning aligns with the terms set out in the collective agreement.



The employment contract: Specific conditions for each employee

Each employment contract may include clauses that affect vacation management, as long as they respect the legal minimum and the terms outlined in the collective agreement:

- Whether there are predefined vacation periods.
- Conditions for carrying over unused days.
- Specific procedures for requesting and approving vacation time.

Before approving an employee's vacation request, it's advisable to review their contract to ensure it aligns with the agreed terms.

Employee vacation rights and employer responsibilities

- Vacation time cannot be exchanged for money, except when the employment relationship ends.
- Time off should be scheduled by mutual agreement between the employer and the employee, it shouldn't be imposed unilaterally.
- If an employee is on medical leave, they should be allowed to take their vacation at a later date, in line with local labour regulations.



Best practices for efficient vacation management

- ✓ Plan ahead
- ✓ Communicate clearly
- ✓ Keep accurate records
- ✓ Follow legal guidelines

Frequently asked questions

about vacation management

Employee vacation: mandatory, unlimited, or flexible?

In many countries, flexibility around vacation time depends on the industry and company policies. It's true that, in some cases, employers aren't obligated to let employees choose their vacation days. However, this is changing as more organizations move toward better work-life balance and employee wellbeing.

The ideal approach? Offering flexibility while keeping in mind that, at the end of the day, there's a client or business to serve.

What happens if an employee doesn't use their vacation days? Can they be carried over?

In general, vacation days earned in a year should be used within that same year. However, if an employee was on medical leave, sick leave, or maternity/paternity leave during that time, they may be allowed to carry over their unused vacation to the following year.

How will the new digital time-tracking law impact businesses?

The new digital time-tracking law aims to improve the monitoring of working hours, including the documentation of justified absences such as vacations. With these updates, companies will be required to implement a digital system that records not only clock-in and clock-out times but also tracks employee absences.


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