

IssueTrak

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Four Problems, One Solution

IssueTrak Keeps Hudson's Payroll Team Streamlined and in Sync

New York-based Hudson Highland Group provides professional staffing, recruitment and talent management solutions to clients worldwide. Within North America, 5,000 Hudson employees and contractors rely on the payroll department for accurate, timely paychecks. And Peg Bramble, Hudson's Director of Client Services, isn't about to let them down.

"It's a fast paced environment with a very short window," says Bramble. "One of our payrolls runs weekly, and we have to turn it around in two hours. So, if we can find a tool to help expedite our processes, it's a welcome thing."

IssueTrak Proves Its Worth with Major IT Project

Bramble first became familiar with IssueTrak when Hudson's IT team used it for a major PeopleSoft project during 2004. "People who were involved were located throughout the country," she says. "We used IssueTrak to manage issues encountered during development, implementation and maintenance. It helped us stay in tune with the whole project, allowed us to work with internal and external teams, and it gave us much needed visibility."

Flexibility and Ease of Use Helps Payroll Comply with Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX)

That project altered Hudson's operational procedures, with payroll (previously housed in the Shared Service Center) being re-located to 50 front offices nationwide.

"Staff members at those offices had a learning curve as well as additional job responsibilities," says Bramble. "With payroll processing, we needed a way to track adjustments. Some corrections would impact payroll, affecting employee pay, while others affected billing, cash applications and credit."

Prior to IssueTrak, Hudson used Excel spreadsheets to track adjustments, but they had difficulties making sure everything was recorded. "It's easy to correct the problem, but then to forget to log it," says Bramble. "You want to move on to the next issue, but you still need to manually put this into the adjustment spreadsheet."

When Sarbanes-Oxley pushed Hudson to seek a better solution, the company gave IssueTrak a try. Payroll's first IssueTrak system enabled staff to request corrections, monitor the progress of its requests and build

a repository of changes to ensure proper controls were met and metrics captured. "IssueTrak streamlined our process," says Bramble, "and allowed us to get to the crux of items that had to be addressed quickly."

Knowledge Management Helps Ensure Approval Processes Are Followed

Hudson found IssueTrak's knowledge management feature extremely beneficial. "We can attach process flow documents, flow charts and all kinds of things that are important to the process."

Adjustments require one or more approvals, "but approval layers are not something people always keep in the back of their minds," says Bramble. "We created a grid of approvals so when there's a change, they can quickly go to the knowledge base and see who needs to approve it."

A Tool to Manage Communication with Local, State and Federal Governments

"With such an expansive operation, we had a high volume of cross-jurisdictional tax issues that had to be managed," says Bramble. "The payroll team needed a place to store all of this detail and settle these items. IssueTrak was the obvious choice. It provides us with the management tools to keep notes on the progression of each tax issue, and it's a convenient way for us to communicate and refer to issues. Also, the reports we generate keep upper management informed."

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Secure, Centrally-Housed Storage a Big Plus

Protecting employees' personal information and preventing identity theft are high priorities for Hudson. When the company implemented a pay card system to process travel advances and direct deposits, it needed a way to record the issuance of the cards.

Hudson now uses IssueTrak to record this information so payroll can load/re-load the cards with funds. "Using IssueTrak also helps us monitor payroll deductions for travel advances issued through the card," says Bramble. "And of course, storage is always an issue. IssueTrak's secure, offsite housing of our data was a key selling point."

Customized Reports Give Management Much Needed Visibility and Metrics

Payroll's latest IssueTrak system helps Hudson monitor and communicate issues relating to deductions. "If an employee in our Houston office discovers that there is no benefit deduction on his payroll check, he'll contact his local front office, who will in turn notify payroll of the error," says Bramble. "We then have to notify the benefits department, who will tell us how much we should deduct from the employee's next pay check."

Rapid Implementation Leads to a Winning Solution

"I must say that I was amazed at how quickly everything was deployed," says Bramble. "We literally went from design, to implementation, to launch within days. Our first system was out within weeks. We did a staged rollout, and within a two-week period, all 50 offices were on the system. With all the changes taking place at Hudson, many departments were scrambling to keep their arms around their operations. IssueTrak gave us the operational processing edge to help payroll perform at its highest level."

T r a k T i p s



HTTP 500 - Internal Server Error

By Mike Messina
IssueTrak Technical Support Manager

When troubleshooting any Web application, there are times where you may receive a generic error message like HTTP 500. While this may be "friendly," it is not informative.

HTTP 500 is a generic error message that Internet Explorer sends for many different reasons, and it is not helpful for debugging and troubleshooting. Unfortunately, the HTTP 500 message causes grief to those unfamiliar with troubleshooting Web applications.

If you want to see the specific error message and troubleshoot the root cause of the issue, it's as simple as updating a setting within the browser. From Internet Explorer, simply go to Tools > Internet Options > Advanced. Then go down under the "Browsing" category and uncheck the option labeled "Show friendly HTTP error messages." This option will be checked by default.

Once this option has been selected, the real error message will come up when the Web page is refreshed. From this point forward, debugging your Web application will be much easier.

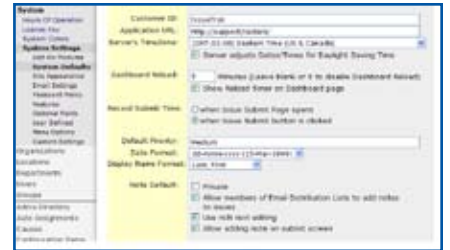
For a complete list of HTTP status codes, please refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_HTTP_status_codes.



Suggestion of the Quarter

By LaDonna Beauregard
IssueTrak Vice President of Development

Picture this: you activate rich text editing in your instance of IssueTrak. Your customers begin to paste images and error messages directly into notes and issue descriptions. You find it easier to resolve problems after you review this new information and begin to create informative knowledge base articles with impressive screenshots. Self-service soars. You do a happy dance.



Are you dreaming of some future version of IssueTrak? Nah. We've got that! If you don't already have IssueTrak 8.0.2 installed, download it and check it out. We've just added the ability to embed images directly into notes and knowledge base articles to our rich text editor. Brilliant? Heck yeah.

The home team gets excited about each new enhancement to our product, but we couldn't do it without those of you who take the time to share your comments, suggestions and enthusiasm for IssueTrak! I regret that I cannot credit everyone who may have suggested this particular enhancement in this short column, but I will name a few. So, here's to Brad Walker of Meketa Investment Group Inc. and Vicky England of Howard Kennedy – great idea! We know that Rhonda Adkins (Unipres USA Inc.) and Matt Kamerer (MTK Technologies, Inc.) will be excited to "paste away" once they have IssueTrak 8.0.2 in their hands. Authentec's John Stimpson – genius! Thanks so much for helping us build a better IssueTrak, one suggestion at a time.

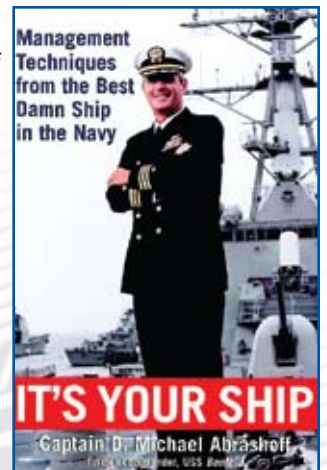
Recommended Read



By Elysa Dickinson
IssueTrak Marketing Manager

At the Inc. 500 conference this year I had the opportunity to hear D. Michael Abrashoff, author of *It's Your Ship* and founder of GrassRoots Leadership. Abrashoff is a retired US Navy Captain and former commanding officer of the USS Benfold. On the Benfold, Abrashoff transformed one of the poorest performing ships, with the lowest retention rates among its 310-person crew, to one of the best in the entire Navy.

At the end of his tour, the USS Benfold saw its retention rate rise from 8% to nearly 100%. Sailors from other ships and areas of the Navy were lined up to be part of its success, and its sailors advanced at three times the Navy average. According to an April 1999 Special Report in *Fast Company* magazine, the Benfold was "the best ship in the Pacific Fleet."



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Abraham's basic principles, outlined in *It's Your Ship*, are not rocket science, but a combination of commonplace techniques applied each day. He spent a lot of his time talking to his crew, rewarding sailors for hard work and jobs well done and frequently asking for suggestions. He instilled a sense of pride and ownership in each of his crewmembers and took steps to eliminate micromanagement. In addition to polishing his own leadership skills, he encouraged sailors in management positions to become better leaders as well.

It was his 180-degree shift from standard operating procedure along with a serious focus on each member of his crew that made Abraham successful. If you are a new manager or are looking for ways to enhance your leadership skills and need some motivation, this book is for you.

The Featured Feature



If a Tree Falls in the Forest...

By Douglas Christian
IssueTrak COO

For me, IssueTrak is more than just an issue-tracking package; it's a communications hub. When you think about it, the communication that surrounds an issue is just as important as the issue itself. It isn't enough to solve an issue. Resolution must be communicated. If it isn't, it didn't happen.

The automated communication that accompanies IssueTrak has always been one of the most compelling features for me. With the latest release of IssueTrak, we have beefed up e-mail notifications to include custom messages. These messages use tokens to represent vital bits of issue-related information, which can be inserted into the subject or body of the automated emails. They can be moved around and clarified with amplifying text, allowing you to create rich, informative messages in the style that suits your particular situation.

Email notifications can be sent when a note is added to an issue, and can be customized to contain the type and amount of information you desire, giving you the power to control the message sent to a specific audience.

Custom messages can be found in [Administration > Email Notification > Custom Messages](#).



Easily Control Issue Visibility

By Hank Luhring
IssueTrak Founder and CEO

When IssueTrak is used for tracking general issues in an organization, one question that often arises is "who is allowed to see certain issues?" The answer uncovers a surprising amount of configurability in our IssueTrak product.

In a simple environment where employees submit issues about computer problems, IssueTrak is often set up so individuals can see what they submit, but not the issues provided by colleagues.

A more involved scenario might be in a B2B environment where a company uses IssueTrak to track the issues of customers. The employees at Customer A would be able to see each other's issues, but not the issues of Customer B. This is easily accomplished in IssueTrak with just a few checkboxes.

Restricting the viewing of issues by department within a company is also possible. For example, you can set things up so that in general, all issues within a company are visible; but issues assigned to the payroll department can only be seen by payroll staff.

The Projects feature offers additional control. A project can be marked "Exclusive" so that the only people who can see those issues are those who are members of the project. Whether a user is searching for issues, running reports, or looking up issues one-by-one, with IssueTrak, they will only be able to see the authorized issues.

But that's not all. You can also indicate whether you are restricting the viewing of issues to the users of the department submitting the issue, or to users in the department in which the issue has been assigned.

Here at IssueTrak, we do our best to ensure that our customers have options, and configurability is just one more way we do this.

QUOTE of the Quarter

"I'm just a plow hand from Arkansas, but I have learned how to hold a team together. How to lift some men up, how to calm down the others, until finally they've got one heartbeat together, a team. There's just three things I'd ever say: If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, then we did it. If anything goes real good, then you did it. That's all it takes to get people to win football games for you."

-Paul William "Bear" Bryant

Each quarter, IssueTrak will feature a quote that speaks to the importance of leadership, teamwork and customer service. If there's a quote that you would like to share, just email Elysa Dickinson at elysa.dickinson@issuetrak.com.



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