

# Case study

Compagnie du Mont-Blanc

Improved social climate  
thanks to Protime  
Virtually unlimited  
configuration possibilities



“How to start  
with seasonal  
workers?”

**Christine Chamel**  
HR & Training Director

**Ludovic Quentin**  
Time & Attendance Manager

660 staff of which 403 are full time employees with lots of seasonal contracts (depending the climatic conditions), many different work schedules on annual basis and different sites where staff are being deployed. Time and attendance is for Compagnie du Mont-Blanc, the leading ski lift company in France, no easy task. Emerging in 2000 from the amalgamation of three entities operating in totally different ways, it was obliged to review its time management from top to bottom.

## Who?

Compagnie du Mont-Blanc S.A.

## What?

Emerging in 2000 from the amalgamation of the three entities Société touristique du Mont-Blanc (STMB), Satal (Société d'aménagement du téléphérique Argentières-Lognan), and Compagnie du Montanvers/Mer de glace, Compagnie du Mont-Blanc, based in Chamonix, is the leading ski lift company in France. Operating on the territory of the municipalities of Chamonix and Vallorcine, it runs three ski resorts (Les Grands Montets, Balme and Brévent-Flégère), the Aiguille du Midi cableway, the Montanvers-Mer de Glace rack railway, and the Mont-Blanc tramway. Besides its catering branch with 70 employees, it employs 553 people in winter and 440 in summer. Compagnie du Mont-Blanc also has a controlling stake in the company LHSG, which operates the Houches ski resort.

## Info

[www.compagniedumontblanc.fr](http://www.compagniedumontblanc.fr)

Two of those three entities were equipped with an older version of the ProTime software. “At the time, however, ProTime did not operate directly in France,” explains HRM Christine Chamel. They all had different working time arrangements. A company-wide harmonisation concomitant with the adoption of the law on the 35-hour working week was implemented and led to a new framework agreement on the 35-hour working week in November 2004 and to a harmonisation of the compensation elements (uniformity in salaries, and other).

Although certain staff members were already accustomed to ProTime, no outline view existed of the use of the software. Each site edited its own time management file. In 2006-2007, more and more problems with time management emerged; union delegates began to ask questions, complaints multiplied, and employees began to distrust the way their working time was calculated.

## A fresh start

“In 2011, the site managers wanted to find a solution to those dysfunctions,” Mrs Chamel continues. “We therefore called in the former supplier of the ProTime software in France and Protime itself on

the spot to make a diagnosis. At the same time, we prepared a set of specifications for a cleanup of the personnel records at the start of the winter of 2011-2012.” One of Protime’s consultants working on site found a substantial number of considerable disparities in the use of the software.

“In view of this diagnosis by ProTime and the consultant’s field knowledge, we decided to carry on with Protime, but we needed to start again from scratch and forget all the old practices,” Mrs Chamel explains. Given the necessity of this radical restructuring, Ludovic Quentin was appointed in July 2012 to the position of area manager for time and attendance management. His first objective was to write two manuals, one for the users and another for the directors, to harmonise and organise the use of ProTime and ProTeam.

**“Monitoring absenteeism used to take us more than three hours; now one click suffices”**

“We had to arrive at a consensus on the terminology used for the time sheets in order to harmonise them between the different sites,” Mr Quentin recalls. In order to make a fresh start, the clocking equipment was entirely renewed. Training of the three directors (Mr Quentin and two site managers) began. At the same time, the



**Christine Chamel, Human Resources & Training Manager, wanted to optimise the ProTime system already in place. She asked Ludovic Quentin, then area manager for the summit of the Aiguille du Midi, to steer the project. In 2012 he became area manager for time & attendance management. Since then, most of the sites have been working with ProTeam.**



configuration phase started for Ludovic in close collaboration with the Prottime team. This phase stretched from the end of August to the beginning of December 2012. "We had to clean up and redefine all the timetables and draw up a glossary, which we then distributed together with the pay-slips in order to make the system easier to use; at the beginning of December, after having worked together with the staff representatives and having instructed them in the use of the new application, we instructed all the winter staff (553 people) in the use of ProTeam and the new clocking machines," Mr Quentin recalls. This was followed by two months of adjustments to the terminology of the time sheets and specific adjustments (such as the management of the night-time working hours of the snow groomer operators, who are also dependent on weather conditions).

## Transparent benefits

"Today, the employees have regained confidence in the time and attendance management software," Mrs Chamel points out. "The industrial climate in the firm has improved. We have no more complaints from staff about their recorded working time, and it has become easier for us to explain to the union delegates and employees their time sheets or the recording of overtime. Since we operate an annual working hours model, this has implications for the calculation of overtime. The configurations were adjusted to incorporate this factor on the basis of a fully transparent company-wide agreement between unions and management. Everyone now has confidence in the configuration of the system, which means a lot less pressure and stress for the management." For Ludovic, this configuration should be as complete as possible: "In the past, we had only one counter for the paid holidays. With this new version of ProTime, we can include all the details: the different types of contracts, holidays, compensatory time off for overtime, absences, missing time sheets, overtime, pay, etc. The number of filters is virtually unlimited for reporting purposes. This allows us to avoid manual adjustments by managers, which can be a source of errors, while simplifying the procedures to a far-reaching extent." Salaries can thus be exported by a single click and without the need for subsequent checking. The monitoring of absenteeism used to take one hour in Excel every Monday; now, with export in ProTime, this job is done in one click. "However,

the biggest time saving which we accomplished with our new version of ProTime is in the annual planning of all the sites," Mrs Chamel notes. The annual planning of all the sites, including paid holidays and compensatory time off for overtime, must be drawn up by the first of June. "Before, this used to involve nearly 600 timetables to be managed and one month's work; this year, this was reduced to 195 timetables, as one timetable can be used for several sites, and it took just two people to finish the job in two days," Ludovic Quentin points out.

## The partnership with Prottime

"Following the diagnosis and close consultation with a Prottime consultant in the autumn of 2011, we got a great deal of help from Prottime with the calculation and export of the timetables," Mr Quentin recalls. "The follow-up has also been particularly intensive on account of the specific features of the Compagnie. The proactive quality of Prottime's support extends not only to the technical side of things, but also to the expertise and the commercial aspects," Mrs Chamel adds. "Today we feel properly coached, which was not the case before. Communication is fast by telephone or by mail, and afterwards we can together find a slot in which to handle any issues we have."

## The future with Prottime

As anomalies were eliminated and confidence in the system was regained, there came a change in the mindsets, and the employees came up with new demands. "Today, every user wants the software to produce more information," Mr Quentin laughs. "We therefore fitted out the clocking machines with the facility for employees to consult their record of hours worked so that they can keep track and they have access to as much information as possible." So far, not all sites are equipped with new clocking machines. "We are currently working on the time/pay management interface with our two service providers," says Mrs Chamel. "We are also looking into the matter of acquiring ProNet for the next financial year."

## Problems

- Diversity of operating sites
- Numerous errors in the management of the planning, resulting in an ever increasing loss of confidence of the company's employees in the time management software
- Arduous labour involved in the preparation of the annual planning by the 1st June
- Diversity of contracts (permanent, seasonal, bi-seasonal, two-site, fixed-term replacement contracts)
- Complex timetable management, annual working hours model
- Complicated monitoring of absenteeism

## Causes

- Diversity of the initial firms
- Outdated configuration of the old ProTime version used by two of the three entities forming Compagnie du Mont-Blanc
- Data management using Excel and manual export

## Benefits

- Harmonisation of the time sheets
- Elimination of errors associated with manual data input
- Time saving in the preparation of annual planning (two days for two persons instead of one month for two persons)
- Proactive quality of support given by Prottime
- Configuration possibilities
- Exports facilitating the management of absenteeism (about 10 hours saved each month)
- Less pressure on managers in the matter of keeping track of absences and hours worked
- Management of seasonal contracts made easier

## Solutions

- ProTime: time and attendance registration and management of hours worked
- ProTeam: handling of planning, holidays, absences, compensatory time off for overtime