



Automated Workforce Management *Why Invest & Where's the Payback?*

During economic downturns management's first instinct is to eliminate all but the most necessary capital and discretionary spending. New computer software systems are typically seen, regardless of industry, as unnecessary and most certainly discretionary during any time of declining revenue and profit. From our experience, forward looking and industry leading companies use these opportunities to implement business changes and automate processes, supported by computer software that will save money now and position the company for future growth.

The right automated workforce management system is a key tactical execution piece in support of supply chain integration, regulation compliance and lean strategy success. Automated workforce scheduling, tied to business demand, is the first step to workforce right-sizing and cost savings for any organization. Effective workforce management solutions are designed to pull data from and feed data to your ERP, Time Keeping and Human Resources management systems. ScheduleSoft's workforce management software is precisely such a tool.

Workforce Right Sizing

Over the past twenty years, manufacturers have been called on to improve customer satisfaction by delivering quality products with ever decreasing lead times and significantly reduced staff and inventories. Mounting costs in healthcare and the service sector have forced cost reduction while delivering improved quality and service levels. Taxpayer revolts are forcing state and local governments to deliver police and fire protection services with fewer dollars.

Workforce Right-Sizing is more than simply having bodies fill work station vacancies. It's having the right person in the right job at the right time. To meet customer satisfaction and on-time delivery of products and services with a downsized workforce, managers and supervisors have become expert at maintaining a "just-in-case" labor pool within their departments to meet unexpected absences or changes in demand.

Right-sizing is about using the skilled "stranded labor" in one department, line or shift to fill gaps in another department, line or shift. This may only be accomplished with workforce scheduling systems that allow managers to view the labor resources available within the entire organization, rather than just a single department, line or shift. Using an automated workforce scheduling system facilitates an organizational view of the labor pool. Once implemented, the features of automated scheduling will reduce labor costs across the organization without damaging customer satisfaction or on time product or service delivery. In fact, satisfaction and delivery are likely to



improve.

Identifying Automated Workforce Scheduling Cost Savings

For obvious reasons, most managers and supervisors are unwilling to admit “just-in-case” labor practices when preparing a justification for an automated workforce management system. The following identifies additional sources of cost savings to justify the new software.

- 1. Recruitment, Hiring and Training** – Automated workforce scheduling provides a view of the entire labor force, their training and certifications. The existing labor pool is better matched to business demand, distributing work hours more uniformly across the entire labor pool. Increased visibility to employee training and certifications allows the system to assign the best available worker to the demand. There is no longer a need for “make-work projects” for workers included in the schedule just in case there is change in demand or worker availability. Our clients see a reduction in the number of temporary workers, excessive hiring and training.
- 2. Double Time Payments** – Visibility into the entire business labor pool and automation of straight and overtime rules allows managers and supervisors to monitor overtime assignments. By linking business demand and employee scheduling, managers are able to evaluate an uptick in overtime vs. the cost of adding additional staff. If double time payments are made and continue, they do so as a result of an immediate conscience decision rather than a surprise at the end of the job, week or month.
- 3. Shift Rotations** – Automated workforce scheduling facilitates a variety of employee work schedules. Workers may be grouped and assigned to a job, department or line for only the hours they are needed rather than assigning them for a full shift. In a manufacturing environment this may apply to lines that have mixed production or to maintenance staff. Cleaning crews may be assigned and rotate between specific jobs or departments rather than maintaining a crew to cover each area.
- 4. Compliance Risk** – Automated workforce scheduling provides documented evidence of compliance with business and union rules and regulations. It links workers and their training and certifications to comply with government rules and regulations. Documentation of compliance issues is easily achieved through automated updating of the database.
- 5. Accurate Time Keeping** – With automated scheduling, employees are paid for hours worked within the hours scheduled. Employees may be limited to punching in and out based on the work hours defined in the schedule. For employees who “clock” in or out outside the parameters of the scheduling system, variances must be documented and approved by a supervisor authorized to make such a change.
- 6. Scheduling Process** – The scheduling process itself is the source of cost reductions and a more productive use of employees at all levels of the



organization.

- a. *Master Data Duplication and Errors* – Duplicate entry of information and manual record keeping is costly and a prime source of errors with any data. An automated scheduling system will pull data from and feed data to your existing ERP, Time Keeping and Human Resources systems. Employee master data (including training, certifications, worker preferences, etc) is entered once, maintained in one location and shared with the scheduling system.
- b. *Data Accuracy* – With electronic master data sharing, accuracy of the data is now the responsibility of one individual. New master data, data changes or corrections are made quickly and available for immediate access by the scheduling system.
- c. *Manager Productivity* – Department managers no longer spend time, they should devote to productivity, process and customer satisfaction, developing and modifying schedules, responding to worker requests for vacations and leave time and job swapping. ScheduleSoft's kiosk system allows employees to make these requests without supervisor interface. As long as the requests fall within the established business rules, such requests may be accepted and implemented without supervisor input on each individual request. Exception reporting allows supervisors to deal with these matters during the time they devote to administrative duties. Because the scheduling system tracks these requests and changes, supervisors no longer need to keep manual records.
- d. *Schedule Accuracy and Consistency* – With careful entry of business and contract work rules and policies, an automated workforce system delivers a schedule which accurately matches the labor needs defined by demand. The system administers worker assignments uniformly in line with business and contract rules. Employee grievances and turnover are greatly reduced when employees know that the rules are fairly and evenly applied across the workforce.
- e. *Schedule Visibility* – Management, line supervisors and hourly workers have full visibility to schedules which are updated immediately upon request or due to demand changes. An automated workforce scheduling system allows system users to track worker scheduling changes. This eliminates the perception of manager/supervisor bias in setting the schedule and has proven to reduce worker grievances and turnover.

Terminology may vary from application to application. Regardless of application, all of our clients have found cost savings in a majority if not all of the above areas. The ScheduleSoft mission is delivering flexible, automated employee scheduling that supports and enhances the business objectives of our clients.

To speak with an automated scheduling expert, contact ScheduleSoft Sales at 866-416-9006.