

Why Workforce Management Is Vital To Your Business



Executive Summary

With growing demand for a consistent experience regardless of channel – in combination with more complex customer requests – implementing and using a sophisticated Workforce Management (WFM) solution is crucial for contact center profitability.

Keep in mind though that Workforce Management is not just a software or a technical solution: it's an entire business-process solution that needs the support of all those involved – e.g. WFM managers, resource planners, users – in order to guarantee its success. Sound internal work processes and methodologies are essential. In other words, apply the same focus on the latter as on the software features.

Having said that - with an advanced WFM software, contact center managers and planners will be able to deliver more accurate volume and call-duration forecasting. When precisely forecasting the workload for the various skills sets, scheduling resources accordingly and ensuring close monitoring of scheduled activities in production, operational efficiency will be optimized at the end point of customer service delivery.

Cutting-edge WFM solutions allow for tweaking and fine-tuning the forecasting process. Never underestimate the value of accurate forecasting. Forecasts are always just that: a forecast. A variance threshold of +/- 10 percent of the actual call volume ends up being very costly because scheduling will only be as accurate as the forecast.

Too high a forecast and agents are idle, as are the workstations - a waste of resources. Too low a forecast and customers get annoyed by long waiting times. Agents become overworked and drained, negatively impacting performance and absenteeism. With supervisors jumping in to cover for understaffing, their duty of driving performance gets neglected. Training is also frequently cancelled. Worse, we run the risk of losing customers; acquiring new ones requires much more work and resources – a vicious cycle.

Another area that can be addressed is overtime. It's easy to reason that a few minutes here and there can't make much difference, but that number adds up quickly and significantly, affecting pay raises and performance bonuses in the long run. With a forward-thinking WFM solution, management can set a threshold that keeps an eye on scheduled time, and keep track of overtime, taking measures if necessary. The solution also makes it easy to determine whether it makes more sense to add staff or plan for a few hours of overtime a week.



Further on down the road, forecasting, scheduling and piloting production: all three areas can be perfected simultaneously by finding a balanced improvement process among deployed efforts; a key vector for improving the overall contact center's performance. But weighing areas that need to be addressed first is a sensitive process, requiring a clear, benchmarked view of the overall target and the impacting parameters entering in the equation.

Thanks to the WFM tools, you'll be able to monitor, measure and carry out simulations in order to test and evaluate the range of parameters so as to identify those that are key to your organizational performance. Should you invest more resources in improving the already, very good forecasting accuracy to make it as close to perfect as possible OR will this result only if you succeed in improving the schedule adherence that's suffering from a dip in early morning peaks? Where should you act first for the best results at a minimum cost?

This is why we at Mitel invest in offering our customers even more advanced WFM technology: ensuring customer and agent satisfaction while maintaining efficiency and profitability.