



Getting Back to the Shop Floor

Retail is undergoing a transformation. The pursuit of operational excellence, with customer-centricity at the core, has led to heightened awareness at the store level. Many retailers are discovering that the focus on delivering better customer service is a unique differentiator, and leads to long-term customer retention and satisfaction.

In a labor-intensive industry like retail, empowering retail managers to efficiently manage the workforce ensures the availability of the right people for the right activities at the right time. This is a critical component of enriching the customer experience. The speed at which retail operators can react to changing customer demands and reflect those requirements in store schedules needs to be agile. To meet these challenges, retail industry leaders are looking to improve their businesses with workforce scheduling applications that forecast the demand for labor and drive more accurate decisions on staffing and scheduling - while also keeping an eye to operational costs.

Striking the Right Balance

Striking the right balance between customer service levels, payroll budget and employee preferences can be a challenge for even the most seasoned retail operations professional. In an era where the customer has many choices on where to shop, the imperative for many retailers is to staff their stores with the right people with the right skills, who are ready to help the customer. Creating the perfect balance may be a far-fetched goal. However, retailers can improve the process and ultimately control labor hours while improving service levels. To strike the right balance, retailers seek solutions that can help them forecast and deploy the workforce more efficiently and cost-effectively - and aligned with business needs.

Complexity Made Simple

Store management tasks are varied and change at short notice. Deploying tools that reduce the time spent on creating and updating schedules will take the complexity out of this task. The benefits can be compelling when a store manager can automatically create a schedule based on store forecasts and budgets along with employee schedule preferences. All steps - from forecast to scheduling - which are

automated give the operations staff even more flexibility and control. Empowering a store manager to include trend information at a local level also improves the final schedule. By providing insight and analytics to scheduling, once complex tasks are now routine and simple. Human resource processes such as labor scheduling should support the organization's strategic goals and initiatives and ensure compliance, helping companies deliver more value. Striking the right balance between strategic and operational goals is key to optimizing the workforce schedule – thus controlling operational costs.

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Retail store managers spend hours on routine workforce related tasks like hiring, training, payroll management, and scheduling. Time spent off the floor means less time with customers. In an age where the traditional retail store is being challenged by alternate options, it is a critical time for managers to discover and learn from customers and store associates on the front lines. By providing easy-to-use applications with better visibility, built-in flexibility, and intuitive features, store managers can now spend more time on the shop floor, instead of endless hours with tedious calculations and staff scheduling plans.

In competitive markets, 70% of customer decision-making is based on how we are treated, with only 30% being determined by the product itself. Yet surprisingly, only 10% of company resources are invested in how “humanly” the organization interacts with its customers, as cited by John McKean, author of *Customers are People*. As retailers undergo the transformation to be more competitive and to provide better, more unique experiences to customers, they will realize that the art of the human touch, complemented with information that will help them make better decisions about staffing will lead to improved performance.

Conclusion

As the number of shopping options continues to mushroom, customers have become more selective. To stay ahead, retailers must transform their operations for better business value and customer satisfaction. The first step towards the transformation of the retail business is to look to Oracle for Human Capital Management solutions, including workforce management – a flexible, scalable and proven foundation. It empowers retailers to optimize their businesses, and manage store operations with more insight, resulting in better financial performance while improving customer service.

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