

Case Study: Vodafone Optimizes Agent Scheduling with Workforce Management

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Benefits:

- Reduced 300 FTE while improving service level
- Lowered average overtime costs from £50k/month to £3k/month
- Improved adherence from 65% to 95%
- Enhanced schedule efficiency

Vodafone in the United Kingdom is part of the Vodafone Group, which provides a full range of mobile telecommunications services, including voice and data communications, to over 100 million customers across the world. The Group has interests in 27 countries and Partner Networks in a further 27 countries with almost all their mobile subsidiaries operating under the familiar 'Vodafone' brand name.

Business Challenges: Vodafone turned to IEX Corporation, a subsidiary of NICE Systems Ltd., to improve their organization's approach to workforce management. The aim was to boost scheduling efficiencies, increase adherence and gain much needed visibility into operations to ensure they had access to information needed to make timely decisions. At the same time, Vodafone wanted to cut down on the amount of overtime required to meet service level demands, and when they did have to pay overtime, they wanted to ensure agents were paid quickly, fairly and accurately.

"Originally, we didn't have flexible shifts and all of our teams were on fixed rotations created in spreadsheets, which meant we were vulnerable to changes in call pattern arrival. Also in our credit centers, we could only do outbound dialing in periods when the shifts and availability dictated," says Andrew Hyde, planning manager at Vodafone. "At the time, there was little use of virtual routing, which could mean low service levels in one center with availability in another.

We were also unable to have any view of how our outsource partners were contributing on an intraday basis. Overtime was tracked manually by team managers and reported on timesheets, resulting in a heavy workload for supervisors and the payroll department."

Effective In-house and Outsource Resource Sharing: With the TotalView® Workforce Management System, Vodafone now has the ability to schedule agents using historically accurate data and reliable forecasts, generated over an 8-week period. Those models are in turn linked to schedules provided by outsourcers, which are mapped inside TotalView. This gives Vodafone a complete picture of available agent resources and enables the company to effectively allocate calls throughout the internal and outsourced organization.

Internally, agent schedules are built using a bidding system together with a process that takes into account historical working times to ensure fairness. Agents control their holiday booking directly through TotalView WebStation, which has reduced the strain on Vodafone's workforce planning specialists. By building a connection to its outsourcing partners' ACDs through TotalView

SmartSync, Vodafone is also able to build a complete and instant picture of agent availability everywhere in its customer contact organization, both within the company's four walls and at the outsourced sites.

Now plans can be adjusted with as little as 30 minutes notice in order to account for any marked shortfalls or surpluses in contact center resources. Instead of managing overtime by hand, Vodafone now uses automated database scripts to quickly extract all overtime and shift premium exceptions, by coded reason, into a single file which payroll can expedite, a 20-minute process for just one member of staff.

Better Agent Schedule Adherence: The results have been good. By implementing the TotalView Real-Time Adherence (RTA) module, Vodafone has boosted adherence from 65 percent to 95 percent within 3 months. This was achieved in spite of moving from fixed to flexible shift patterns.

Vodafone also got its desired drop in inefficiency, a reduction of more than 50 percent down to just 13 percent of the overall schedule. "This has resulted in direct cost savings and improved service levels," Hyde says. "We are also able to target our outbound agents to the prime outbound times for dialing. With this, we hope to improve our connect rate by 30 percent."

Flexible shifts have greatly improved service level performance as well, with a running record of 8 straight months on target even with a reduction in the number of full-time agents. "We wanted to introduce flexible shifts because we knew it would increase our scheduling efficiency. But we were worried that the change would reduce adherence," commented Hyde. "Using TotalView with RTA enabled us to achieve greater schedule adherence and scheduling efficiency."

Insight Into Outsourced Operations: The company is also better able to manage and benefit from its outsourcing relationships because they are more accurately accounted for in the overall workforce management plan. "Having no visibility into our outsource partners left us extremely vulnerable and unable to see any potential hotspots," Hyde says. "We now have a 2-week intraday view across all business units, allowing us to slide shifts or assign overtime well in advance of a problem." On an intraday basis, Vodafone can also see if their outsourcers are not delivering their committed staffing targets and re-arrange their plans accordingly.

Improved Customer Service: Vodafone's quick turnaround in workforce management has resulted in dramatic savings while also providing much greater customer coverage and service. The change has given customer care managers back the time they need to ensure delivery of great customer service. "Now that all of our exceptions are handled by the scheduling team, it allows our team managers to concentrate on their people," Hyde says.

Company: Vodafone

Sector: Telecommunications

Contact Types: Inbound and outbound voice, e-mail

Sites: 12 UK sites - 3 internal, 9 outsourced

Contact Volume: 32.5 million

Agents: 4,200 – 2,000 internal, 2,200 outsourced

Type of ACD: Avaya and Aspect

Website: www.vodafone.co.uk

Reseller Partner: QPC of the United Kingdom