

Control Labor Costs With Web-Based Scheduling

This company streamlined staffing by implementing an automated Web-based scheduling application.

by Erin Harris

Creating your schedules by guessing the correct number of employees needed to fill a shift is riddled with inefficiencies and complications. By automating employee scheduling and timekeeping, you can reduce overstaffing, lower administrative costs, and drive efficiency. Life Time Fitness, a health and fitness club chain with 84 locations in 19 states, continues to grow its business by using technology to drive efficiency. John Schuele, senior operations analyst at Life Time Fitness, wanted to streamline staffing by expanding the company's time and attendance solution to include an automated scheduling application.

Don't Stunt Growth With Manual Scheduling

Like many health and fitness companies, Life Time Fitness operates several departments within each location, including general operations, facility operations, reception, and children's activities department. Chainwide labor forecasting and scheduling was a manual task, as each location had access to an Excel spreadsheet, which served as the company's scheduling infrastructure. "We operated the same system throughout all our locations, but we used it in different ways because clubs have different business models," says Schuele. "We built a tool using Excel and then posted it for the locations to use as a scheduling resource. The Excel scheduling system worked well for a while, but we are a company that continues to grow. We needed to expand our scheduling functionality to meet our needs and the needs of our members. We needed appropriate staffing levels in all departments at all times."

Not only did Schuele want to implement an automated scheduling solution throughout the company, he wanted a Web-based solution that would allow managers to accurately create schedules that align labor with anticipated demand while adhering to all company and regulatory scheduling policies. Therefore, Schuele researched several vendors last year, and he chose Kronos Workforce Scheduling with Optimization solution. Life Time Fitness has been operating Kronos Time and Attendance solution since 2004, and the

company was able to integrate the vendor's Web-based scheduling solution with it. The Workforce Scheduling with Optimization solution partners with Life Time Fitness' systems to determine when labor is needed. Since the scheduling application is Web-based, each Life Time Fitness location has access to the Workforce Scheduling with Optimization solution.

Apply Labor Rules To Generate Accurate Schedules

To generate an accurate schedule, the application requires preliminary information, including hours of operation and staffing preferences (e.g. full-time versus hourly). Also, the Department of Labor issues rules that should be applied to the application. Indeed, Kronos' application minimizes compliance risk, because scheduling-related rules and policies are applied with automated enforcement. "The solution uses optimization algorithms that automatically converge on the best fit schedule to meet the needs of the business and our employees," explains Schuele. "From that forecasted demand, the solution runs rules that generate an optimal schedule for our workforce."

Life Time Fitness employees use terminals located in break rooms and other common areas to log onto the Workforce Scheduling with Optimization application. Schuele explains that employees can review schedules daily if they choose. Or,

employees can check the application on a weekly basis, as schedules are created in one-week increments.

Life Time Fitness considers this implementation a success, as the Web-based scheduling system allows all employees to access scheduling information. Prior to implementing the application, managers had to access time and attendance and scheduling data in different systems. Now, one Web-based tool provides that information.

"By aligning employee scheduling with actual member demand at our centers, we are able to drive member loyalty and retention and minimize redundancies related to labor costs," says Schuele. ■



Kronos Workforce Scheduling with Optimization solution allows Life Time Fitness to align employee scheduling with member demand.

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