

Planning and Managing Your Omnichannel Workforce

Developing a productive, engaged workforce through integration, routing optimization and automated, targeted training

Contents

Multiple channels improve engagement but complicate workforce management..... 1

Lack of integration is expensive 1

Business objectives drive the need for truly integrated, omnichannel workforce planning strategies..... 1

Business objective #1: Improve the customer experience 2

Business objective #2: Reduce costs 2

Business objective #3: Increase agent satisfaction and reduce turnover 3

Embrace the omnichannel revolution with state-of-the-art workforce planning..... 3

Putting together a strong workforce in an omnichannel world can be puzzling. When it comes to creating a strong, empowered workforce, many different elements need to fit together seamlessly for you to manage your workforce both efficiently and effectively, to keep costs under control, and to ensure agents and customers are happy. As competitive pressures increase and customers want to communicate with you across more channels, it has become critical to modernize your contact center so your team can effectively handle tasks and customer requests.

Despite this, recent research by Dimension Data shows that more than 57% of businesses surveyed still have no solution in place to accurately manage the forecasting, planning and adherence processes across all channels together.¹ So improving these business processes can help you beat your competition with a more effective and engaged workforce.

Multiple channels improve engagement but complicate workforce management

Technology-savvy consumers using multiple devices and communication channels in their everyday lives are bringing more complexity into the contact center. Your customers expect you to communicate with them through their preferred channels when it is most convenient for them.

The new technologies that enable complex customer interactions across multiple channels and multi-step business processes provide these advances at a price. The challenges of managing the contact center workforce in general, and a multi-skilled omnichannel workforce in particular, have multiplied exponentially. This makes planning, forecasting, scheduling, managing and training the workforce much more complicated and more expensive for your business.

Lack of integration is expensive

Too often, interaction channels are managed in silos. In addition, many businesses still maintain separate systems for routing interactions and tasks, and for workforce management. This creates complexity and manual work for the planning and operations teams. It can be a daunting task just getting relevant data from each of your point solutions, let alone trying to make sense of it across channels so you can plan for the future. Planning your workforce and developing an accurate forecast and effective schedule in this environment takes too much time and effort. With automation and tight integration with the contact center platform, however, you can reduce this time and effort.

Business objectives drive the need for truly integrated, omnichannel workforce planning strategies

A good omnichannel workforce planning strategy can help you meet three important business objectives: Improving the overall customer experience, reducing costs and reducing employee turnover through improved agent satisfaction. It is a three-pronged approach to having an engaged workforce, happy customers and a successful business.

“With Genesys Workforce Management, we’re able to combine key trends like call volumes and durations with factors like agent holidays and sickness, to the point where the accuracy of our forecasts constantly exceeds 90%.”

—Jakub Hlaváč, Senior Manager Client Center Development, CSOB

CSOB was able to cut service response time by 30% and increase agent productivity by 18%.

Business objective #1: Improve the customer experience

Improving the overall customer experience is quickly becoming the most important objective for many businesses across the globe. From a tactical perspective, this is where you need to think about meeting service level agreements and improving key performance indicators across touchpoints and channels. You need to be sure you have the right people with the right skills handling interactions at the right times.

Ensure customer interactions and tasks are going to the right resource

Misrouted interactions increase unplanned overtime costs, transfers and average handle times (AHT) — especially in an omnichannel environment. However, when your workforce management system, contact center platform and routing engine are integrated, the workforce schedule can be consulted in real time to prevent routing interactions to employees who are not scheduled to work on a specific activity. It can also save on unplanned overtime costs, since employees will not receive interactions when their shift has already ended or if there is not enough time left in their shift to complete certain types of work.

Boost efficiency and your bottom line

Efficiency is, in part, the result of accurate cross-channel planning and routing strategies that are based on real-time and historic information. These strategies allow for interactions and work to be distributed to the most appropriate, skilled and available agents, resulting in faster and more productive resolutions. For example, customer results have shown that accurate omnichannel planning and routing can save 37 to 50 seconds per interaction². These are tangible results that translate to a boost for your bottom line.

Enforce schedule adherence across all channels and work

As you well know, ensuring that your employees are doing what they are supposed to be doing when they are supposed to be doing it can be a constant struggle. An integrated workforce planning solution helps you fight that schedule adherence battle, because you can build multi-channel schedules with shifts that span multiple activities across those channels. Integration with your routing engine provides schedule-based routing that takes care of shift transitions automatically and puts the operations team firmly in control of task distribution logic. This ultimately means better experiences for your customers.

Business objective #2: Reduce costs

Driving operational efficiency is a necessary component of any well-run contact center that wants to reduce costs and stay in business. Through integration and automation you can centralize control, reduce operational costs and enable your processes and workers to be more efficient.

Simplicity, control and insight with a single platform

Having an integrated solution helps you plan, forecast and schedule your workforce more accurately. From a broad perspective, it just makes sense to integrate your communication channels into one platform and, furthermore, to have your workforce management system integrated with that platform for optimal work distribution and increased productivity. From a more technical standpoint, it enables unified administration of users and skills and provides a single source for statistics and reports so you gain cross-channel insight into how effective your team is, and a comprehensive view across the business.

Workforce planning accuracy and consistency through automation

The ability to easily execute skills and schedule updates in one place means you can dramatically reduce the time and costs associated with manual operations and painstaking daily skills and schedule changes. In addition, when all your channels, workforce management and routing engine work together, you have a wealth of information at your fingertips. The automated use of historical data makes it possible to have much greater accuracy in omnichannel forecasting, which makes it easier to schedule and maintain your workforce at the right levels across channels and time.

“Genesys worked very well with us as partners. Their strategy mirrored our strategy and our thought process, so it was a natural choice to go with Genesys. Together, we continue to strive for the best in customer service.”

—Paul Akister, Director of Contact Centres, British Telecom

BT was able to reduce average handle time by 10%.

Reality-based workload predictions and backlog handling

To be most effective, your workforce planning and management systems should support all communication channels and work items with accurate, reality-based forecasting and rules-based routing. An integrated solution enables you to define service levels based on business rules and gather required statistics for all channels automatically, so you can produce more accurate, channel-specific forecasts. More detailed insight into service levels and the ability to track work in the queue will help you ensure that defined service levels, workloads and backlogs can be managed consistently and effectively across all communication channels and business processes.

Business objective #3: Increase agent satisfaction and reduce turnover

Last but not least, you also need to increase employee engagement and satisfaction (and thus reduce employee turnover and its high costs). Ensuring that your employees are getting the right types of customer interactions and a variety of tasks throughout their shifts helps relieve stress. In addition, providing ongoing opportunities for skills and productivity improvements helps your employees stay motivated and engaged.

Make it easy for your employees

Providing team members with easy-to-use tools to request time off and list their preferences can be a big time-saver — especially an integrated, agent-oriented web application. Providing workers the ability to easily trade and bid on shifts helps organizations find the right balance between providing schedules that meet business objectives and allowing team members flexibility. In addition, with the ability to view schedules on their mobile devices, employees can stay engaged while away from the office.

Enable and engage your staff

Any good workforce planning strategy should include ongoing skills assessments and training so that your routing strategies can target the best available resource every time, based on an accurate, up-to-date skills database. The reality is that handling different communication channels often requires different skills, and agent capabilities and skill sets are constantly evolving. Typically, there is little alignment between the training department, the workforce planners and the department that builds the routing strategies. The key is having tighter integration and tools that automate the scheduling of training at times that do not disrupt service level objectives. This ensures agents get the training they need without impacting the needs of the business.

Ensure right work is provided to the right person at the right time

As mentioned, integrating your workforce management tools with your platform and routing optimization helps reduce costs associated with undesired overtime, as an employee will not receive work if they do not have time to complete the task or if their shift has ended. A related benefit is that the reduction of mis-routed interactions and work items also relieves stress for your employees. Providing employees with more variety of work (varying channels and tasks) helps relieve boredom and keeps them more interested and engaged. The end result is reduced employee turnover, which is good for them and good for you.

Embrace the omnichannel revolution with state-of-the-art workforce planning

The Genesys Workforce Planning solution tightly integrates Genesys Workforce Management with the Genesys Customer Experience Platform. This enables agents and skills to be administered in one place for both routing and planning, resulting in more effective forecasting and scheduling and providing more efficient distribution of interactions and work across channels. Genesys Skills Management tools also allow ongoing skills assessments and help automate training to drive the kind of behavior that represents the brand image you desire. In addition, Genesys Guru Managed Services are available to provide a truly unique team of business experts to help you plan, implement, analyze and optimize your business processes and workforce so you can provide the best possible customer experiences.

You want your business to be known for providing excellent customer experiences. Genesys Workforce Planning helps ensure your workforce is as effective as it can be. Find out how by visiting www.Genesys.com, or talk to your Genesys representative today.

¹ Source: Dimension Data 2015 Benchmarking Report

² Source: Genesys Benefit Benchmark Digital Engagement study

Partnering with Genesys for True Results

Genesys customers are enjoying:

- 10% reduction in average handle time
- 20% increase in agent productivity
- Agent utilization and productivity up 10 % and 18%, respectively
- 10% cut in staffing costs
- Total cost of ownership reduction of 5%
- 50% increase in planner productivity

ABOUT GENESYS

Genesys® powers more than 25 billion of the world's best customer experiences each year. Our success comes from connecting employee and customer conversations on any channel, every day. Over 10,000 companies in more than 100 countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes. Genesys on-premise and cloud solutions are built to be fluid, instinctive and profoundly empowering. Combining the best of technology and human ingenuity, we work the way you think.

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