How to build your business case for moving to employee scheduling software.

Introduction: How to build a business case for employee scheduling software.

You only have to ask your managers how many hours they spend scheduling to understand the potential benefits of an AI driven, digital scheduling solution. But whilst this technology is proven to save time, make your workers happier and reduce labour budget, the bottom line your boss wants to know about is the numbers. What ROI will a solution have for your business?

Whilst every company is different, each experience a selection of common pain points when it comes to workforce management. A lack of visibility, payroll errors, poor flexibility and many more issues that affect both revenue and retention. But you can easily justify improvements in these areas by pairing each with an indicative statistic.

In this guide, we'll take you through how you can prove a best of breed scheduling solution will deliver ROI, highlighting some of the obvious (and not so obvious!) ROI stats you'll be able to include in a business case.

Plus some real life stats our customers have reported...

Where do I start?

This is one of the most daunting parts of your workforce management journey. You can't truly get to grips with what the market has to offer unless you have an idea of what the perfect world in your organisation looks like.

This doesn't mean you have to have everything clearly defined in a presentation with a sign-off from the C-suite. But it does mean being clear on what challenges you are trying to solve within your business. If you're reading this guide, you probably have a good idea that a new workforce management solution is what you're going to need, but there's a little more that you need to consider.

We'd recommend being clear and being able to have answers to these three areas:

1.

Identify your current challenges

The very first step of the process is to review your current scheduling processes and tools to identify what's working and what needs improvement. Are you struggling with filling gap shifts, managing employee availability, or spending too much on labour? Aim for a list of bullet points capturing the challenges you're experiencing and any metrics to back up your anecdotal feedback; the result will form the basis of a business case and the building blocks of your future strategy. It'll also be a handy resource to have when you do start meeting with salespeople!

2.

Engage all your stakeholders

Don't forget about your other stakeholders. It's likely your employees, managers and HR personnel are experiencing similar challenges with the incumbent solution. So, gather feedback from different user perspectives, spend time talking to future users about what they need, what they'd like and what frustrated them about systems in the past. You could consider a short survey (SurveyMonkey, for example, is free to use) to make the whole process easier and quicker. You'll probably end up with a long list of "wants" and "dislikes", but hopefully you'll be able to detect some of the common themes.

3.

Define your goals – What does good look like?

Alongside solving the specific challenges your business deals with, it's also important to define goals around what your ideal solution looks like. Of course, you want to fix all the functionality grievances, but given a magic wand, what else would your new workforce management solution be able to do? Increase sales, improve labour margins, help with staff retention? You might not think that software is able to help with these types of objectives, but a good workforce management provider will be able to solve most issues around a broad spectrum of workforce goals.

Before you start meeting with vendors, there's plenty you can borrow from them to inform your strategy. Every vendor out there is creating content that you can download and review to see what kind of solutions exist. For example, our free RFP template download is a great way to have an itemised list of what a scheduling and workforce management provider should be able to do functionality-wise. Remember, suppliers are the ones at the helm of the ship: to thrive and survive, they need to understand what their customers' challenges are, deliver the solutions to fix them and work hand in hand with those customers to help them make that cultural change. So content like this is well-researched and 'gold dust' for your search.

"Don't forget about your other stakeholders. It's likely your employees, managers and HR personnel are experiencing similar challenges with the incumbent solution. So, gather feedback from different user perspectives"

What figures can I include in my business case?

It's not enough just to highlight the obvious benefits of a digital scheduling solution based on the challenges you have identified. You need to back it up with some stats.

Here are some examples of ROI stats you could include in your business case . We've also included some ROI figures our customers experience when they moved to Rotageek:

Better customer demand match

Automatic scheduling produces rotas that are dramatically better at matching demand than manual rotas - Rotageek customers have reported up to 27% closer customer demand match, when compared to manually created rotas.

Total revenue growth

Each of our retail clients have demonstrated a measurable growth in revenue directly due to their automatic scheduling solution. Our accumulated data suggests that for every 5% better match to customer demand, retailers will see up to 1% sales growth. For one leading store, this was an annual increase of up to £629,640.

Improvement in customer NPS

Better labour alignment is proven to better your customer service. No longer are stores left with too little staff to serve demand - or faced with unmotivated teams from overstaffing. One Rotageek customer gained a 5-10 point increase in NPS, which directly correlated to a 1% growth in their revenue.

Increase store footfall conversion rate

Using the footfall data within our scheduling solution, we are able to demonstrate increases in conversion points due to better labour matching. Once staff are better deployed to real customer demand, stores are much more likely to be tidier, better merchandised and better serviced during peak times when customers have a heightened awareness of lengthy queues or chaotic displays. This additionally has a positive impact on reducing walk-outs and abandoned baskets.

Rotageek customers have reported up to 27% closer customer demand match.

Save **80%** of your schedule related admin.

Increase average transaction value

Every improvement made to labour matching either per week, day and even per hour directly affects a store's average transaction value. The rota automatically accommodates for peak times meaning more hands to keep a tidy, well stocked store. People are more likely to spend time and money when staff are available for queries, till queues are under control and shelves are replenished.

Save 5-10% of labour cost

Matching staff to your demand curve cuts up to 10% of your labour cost, whilst only using 0.5% of your staffing budget -a ten-fold return on investment. This presents an opportunity for retailers to not only reduce inefficient spend but also to reinvest savings into areas that benefit ROI further such as training and development, the service experience or employee engagement.

Save 80% of your schedule related admin

Do you know how much time your teams spend creating rotas? In retail, managers can spend up to nine hours per week on schedule related admin. It might sound surprising but when you consider the volume of ongoing employee requests, shift swapping, availability inputs and schedule amends for multiple teams, it takes a lot of valuable time that could be reinvested into much more important tasks.

This benefit has been proven time and time again. Managers will automatically save between 2-4 hours per week, giving back nearly three weeks of work time every year.

After swapping spreadsheets for targeted, data-driven scheduling, O2 were able to identify 6,300 hours per week of staff time that was reinvested in the customer experience without increasing costs. Similarly, managers across The Perfume Shop's 220 stores now save at least 3 hours a week after implementing Rotageek's digital scheduling solution.

Remove time theft through T&A

Time theft is an all too common issue in retail, costing businesses billions in pounds and productivity every year. The only successful solution is to implement advanced time and attendance software, a feature of optimised scheduling technology that digitises the clock in process. Doing so has immediate return on investment with visible financial savings.

In one case study, we found that one leading retailer was losing an average of 1.5 hours per store every week across over 100 locations. But with automatic scheduling, they were able to eliminate this cost, immediately saving £100,000. This is due to geofencing technology which only allows employees to clock in and out for shifts onsite, directly from theirs.

With automatic scheduling, they immediately saved £100,000.

Reduce turnover and absenteeism

Happy employees are more productive. We no longer need numbers to know this in today's world, where mental health and wellbeing are a top concern in the workplace. One way to inadvertently improve this is with optimised software that nurtures an autonomous approach to scheduling.

95% of retailers receive shift related complaints, a reason why the industry has one of the poorest turnover rates in the UK. But by focusing on fair employee rotas, companies can not only benefit from a more engaged workforce but will also drastically reduce staff turnover and overall absenteeism for reasons belonging to flexibility, employee wellbeing and work/life balance.

Eliminate human errors that cost your company thousands

A third of employers make payroll errors, at a rate of 1-8% for those who use traditional timecards, and up to 40% in small businesses. This not only costs businesses thousands in time and inaccurate payments - it can have legal ramifications too.

However, data-driven scheduling software seamlessly integrates with payroll workflows to automate required cross-checks, eliminating any human error that would otherwise occur. If an employee works longer than legally permitted, the system won't allow it. If they work a set of hours as confirmed by time & attendance functionalities in-app, then those hours are directly submitted to the payroll system. Benefit from automated accuracy and enhanced scheduling compliance.

What if you already have a solution in place?

With employee wellbeing, financial pressure and the increased difficulty catering
to unpredictable footfall to consider, pre-pandemic scheduling platforms are no longer up to scratch. Retailers in particular must re-evaluate how their current systems stand up in the new normal and the ever changing environment of the high street.

There has therefore never been a better time to upgrade your employee scheduling software. Using the results of a prominent UK retailer, in this section we share five key areas that are greatly optimised by automatic scheduling.

Demand forecasting as it should be

Firstly, let's examine the issue at hand in more detail. In a typical retail store, customer arrival patterns vary by week, by day and by hour. And that's without considering the ongoing variations to footfall and opening hours as per the repercussions of Covid-19. So, how do you staff for the customer highs (reducing queue times and improving service), and save costs when it's quieter?

A common problem with employee scheduling apps is a lack of accurate forecasting. The system typically focuses only on assigning a set of predefined shifts to colleagues, meaning they can't efficiently fit demand, especially if that demand changes week on week. This result either goes one of two ways; unnecessary labour costs caused by overstaffing, or poor customer service and unhappy employees.

Enter automatic scheduling solutions. Using machine learning to find the perfectly optimised schedule, this technology factors in demand, availability and work preferences, as well as business constraints, fairness rules and legal requirements to deliver a plan that works for the individual company and their people.

Let's take a look at our high street retailer's experience

Below we can see the manager has had trouble creating shifts for a typical day of varied demand, resulting in a wide error margin between the labour allocated (pink line) versus the actual footfall in store (blue line).

Manager staffing vs demand

Now let's examine an automatic approach. Here Rotageek's Autoscheduler has done a far better job staffing for the peaks, making sure customers are served without wasting labour spend when the store is quiet.

Autoscheduler staffing vs demand

So how does this improve overall business performance?

1

Up to 8% savings in labour spend.

In this case study, our automatic employee scheduling app matched staff to target 14% better than manual rotas. And this labour match usually results in a 4-8% reduction in labour spend for retailers. These costs can be saved, reducing overall budgets, or reinvested to improve customer experience and conversion.

This British retailer also saw a 7% improvement in their Net Promoter Score, as well as significant wins in conversion, basket size and in total revenue.

2

Automating manual processes.

What's more is the time saved spent scheduling. Retail managers must attempt to create perfectly optimised rotas that cater for demand and employee preferences. This results in two common errors:

1. **Managers under-staff peak times:** when the most customers are in store, there is not enough staff there to serve them.
2. **Managers over-staff the areas around the peaks:** they aren't able to create a complex combination of shifts that overlap to provide enough staff at the peaks but no extra staff around the peaks.

This task is as frustrating as it sounds, costing retail managers valuable time that could be better spent on the shop floor with customers. Therefore the only reputable solution is to automate the manual process.

3

A simple solution to flexible working.

Flexibility in a deskless workplace is easier said than done. Remote working is not an option in a customer-facing environment and shifts still need to be filled in advance. Yet we must still meet the needs of employees, particularly as 73% of staff now request flexible hours.
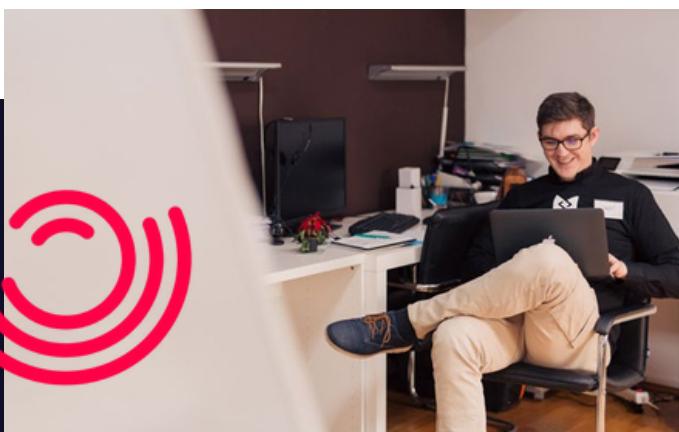
Thankfully, an automatic solution provides the perfect balance. By scheduling overlapping shift lengths to accommodate for store footfall, the technology dynamically creates varied start and end timings.

This not only allows more precise labour matching but provides greater options to employees.

Original Rota			
Person	Start time	End time	Shift length
44	07:00:00	11:00:00	04:00:00
60	07:00:00	16:00:00	09:00:00
69	07:00:00	16:00:00	09:00:00
72	07:00:00	16:00:00	09:00:00
41	08:00:00	12:00:00	04:00:00
52	09:00:00	18:00:00	09:00:00
65	09:00:00	18:00:00	09:00:00
48	10:00:00	19:00:00	09:00:00
58	10:00:00	19:00:00	09:00:00
59	10:00:00	19:00:00	09:00:00
54	11:00:00	20:00:00	09:00:00
55	11:00:00	20:00:00	09:00:00
64	11:00:00	15:00:00	04:00:00
68	11:00:00		
42	12:00:00		
46	12:00:00		
47	12:00:00		
53	13:00:00	17:00:00	04:00:00
66	15:00:00	19:00:00	04:00:00
49	16:00:00	20:00:00	04:00:00
75	16:00:00	20:00:00	04:00:00

All shifts start on the hour varied start and end times allow demand to be met more precisely

Autoscheduled Rota			
UserId	Start time	End time	Shift length
143199	07:00:00	14:00:00	07:00:00
143186	07:00:00	17:00:00	10:00:00
143182	07:00:00	17:00:00	10:00:00
	08:00:00	18:00:00	10:00:00
	10:00:00	19:00:00	09:00:00
	10:00:00	20:00:00	10:00:00
	10:45:00	20:00:00	09:15:00
143198	11:00:00	16:00:00	05:00:00
143170	11:00:00	17:00:00	06:00:00
143181	11:00:00	17:00:00	06:00:00
143195	11:00:00	18:15:00	07:15:00
143180	11:15:00	18:00:00	06:45:00
143196	12:00:00	18:00:00	06:00:00
143193	12:00:00	20:00:00	08:00:00
143165	12:15:00	17:00:00	04:45:00
143177	12:30:00	20:00:00	07:30:00
143171	13:00:00	17:00:00	04:00:00
143172	13:45:00	20:00:00	06:15:00
143175	14:00:00	18:00:00	04:00:00
143172	14:00:00	18:00:00	04:00:00

All shifts are either 4 or 9 hours varying shift lengths allows more flexibility

4
A fully optimised workforce.

A typical scheduling system handles shift generation and assignment separately. So shifts are created but not filled since there aren't employees available without violating business rules. And, when these shifts aren't filled, the schedule isn't really optimised.

However, an automatic scheduling app does both, combining shift generation with shift assignment, so all the important shifts and tasks are covered without violating a single scheduling rule.

5
Boost your employee wellbeing.

We've covered flexibility, but employees want more, and rightfully so. They want control of their working hours, the ability to swap shifts or take annual leave without continuously chasing for approval. Scheduling platforms might put shifts in place, but an automated workforce management app takes a holistic approach, giving employees autonomy over their work/life balance. The self- service technology is cloud based, making it accessible to all users across a variety of devices. Staff can therefore view, swap and request shifts on the go.

Ready to build your business case?

We hope this guide has give you some food for thought when it comes to building your business case for digital scheduling. Whilst it's difficult to prove the exact ROI you'll gain before you've implemented a new solution, a best of breed provider will be able to give you a good indication of the ROI you're likely to see in these areas, using the data you have to date and case studies of their customers like you, experiencing similar challenges.

So go forth and fight for your smarter, more productive, more profitable digital scheduling solution...

About Rotageek

Rotageek is a data-driven workforce management solution creating staff schedules using cloud- based technology to effectively manage and engage employees. More than just digital scheduling, Rotageek uses machine learning algorithms to create millions of shift possibilities in seconds, to deliver a perfectly optimised schedule that meets business rules and legal requirements.

Today Rotageek is used by leading businesses and organisations:

4.6/5   **4.6/5**   **4.7/5**   **4.4/5**