



Optimal Resourcing

Overcoming the barriers to effective resource optimisation

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Introduction

For all industries, resource optimisation is important; however, for complex multi-skilled service organisations with varying demands and a constant need to ensure regulatory compliance it is critical. Achieving and maintaining optimal resourcing is far from straight forward, involving extensive and dynamic information management and processing. Frequently, the scale of this task prevents full analysis, frustrates fully informed decision making and thus constrains effective optimisation. However, the latest scheduling systems such as Allocate OneView overcome these barriers, offering new opportunities for margin and service improvement whilst ensuring full regulatory compliance, and commensurately reducing the risk of corporate litigation for non-compliance.

The need for resource optimisation

In resource intensive industries the pressure to drive margin improvement whilst enhancing customer service and ensuring full regulatory compliance creates a pressing demand for resource optimisation across workforce, equipment, activity, and logistic support. The process is not simple, however, and the risk of either under or over-resourcing can be high. Although over-resourcing may most obviously incur excess expenditure, under-resourcing can also be costly. When insufficiently resourced, the ability to efficiently operate can be quickly compromised through reduced workforce effectiveness and consequent staff dissatisfaction, with both further impacting customer service. Resolving such issues as they occur can be costly in the immediate term as well as creating longer term adverse impacts on multiple levels. As a result, under-resourcing can thus become just as costly as over-resourcing. The need to find the optimal balance is therefore critical and pressing.

What makes this complex?

For large, distributed, multi-skilled workforces where regulatory compliance and equipment availability is complex and where demand (capability, location, and time) varies over time, the range of variables to be managed is vast. In many sectors the issues can extend further, for example, when operating in remote locations and where travel to deploy people and equipment also needs to be considered. And it is not just human resourcing. Very frequently, staffing also needs to be combined with physical resources, facilities, and assets to deliver the required capability at the right place and the right time.

All of these aspects create an environment where scheduling and resource optimisation becomes increasingly challenging, but also where the potential opportunity for margin and service improvement motivates increasing focus in this area.

Why is optimisation such a challenge?

With all these variables in play, dynamically planning requirements and scheduling the optimal resourcing solution whilst ensuring (and being able to demonstrate) full compliance, is a data and process intensive task. It is only through analysis of the compliant options and their implications (for the activity being scheduled as well as overall capability) that fully informed and financially evaluated scheduling decisions can be made. All too frequently, however, the scale of the task and the time required to process the options means full evaluation is not possible before having to proceed to implementation. As a result, sub-optimal solutions which are compliant but miss potential margin and service improvement opportunities may be deployed by default.

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Overcoming the challenges with OneView

In industries demanding margin and service improvement whilst ensuring regulatory compliance, attention has increasingly focussed on resource optimisation as a critical means of performance improvement. If the issues involved in optimisation can be addressed, then the potential to positively impact margin and service delivery can be leveraged for improved overall business performance.

By using sophisticated resource optimisation and scheduling systems such as Allocate OneView this potential can now be realised.

OneView brings together all of the required information in one core platform (interfaced with other relevant systems) and enables scenario planning including budgetary analysis alongside full demand planning and compliance management. With this capability, management is able to make fully informed decisions which facilitate optimised resourcing. Flowing from these decisions, operational planning and deployment are catered for in one streamlined process covering aspects from the resource deployment itself through the allied logistics to ultimate payroll impacts, with full compliance management at its core.

When it comes to overall workforce capability management, comprehensive understanding, and analysis of existing capability, forecast resource demands and the options to bridge the two, are critical. Accordingly, OneView provides full workforce management, personnel management and training management alongside core scheduling and compliance management capabilities. The system's advanced modelling enables comprehensive investigation of the cost and capability impacts of alternative approaches, investments, and policy options across the workforce. As a result, senior management teams have the depth of insight and analysis to make fully informed decisions at each level of the resource optimisation process.

Use of systems such as OneView can thus greatly improve the efficiency of scheduling for management teams; but the ultimate benefit is at an outcome level with improved business performance through enhanced margin, customer service and compliance management.

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Overcoming the system barriers to change

As set out, the nature of scheduling and resource optimisation carries vast information management requirements, from overall customer service planning right through to payroll and travel authorisation. Of course, adding to the challenge, the situation is also dynamic with requirements and capability varying over time, frequently with multiple and different systems involved from service planning, workforce data through ERP to payroll etc. Indeed, it is often the scale and number of systems involved that has contributed to the significant manual or offline processing that scheduling departments have to address.

Beyond the processing implications, these aspects can also create a barrier to change with new scheduling systems frequently overlapping and potentially needing to replace existing individually effective applications. To overcome these barriers, solutions need not replace all aspects but instead enable interfacing across the myriad application systems involved. OneView takes this approach, and when combined with deployment on a Software as a Service (SaaS) basis this radically reduces the barriers to deployment, use and cultural change.

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Conclusion

The use of advanced scheduling and resource optimisation solutions such as Allocate OneView opens new opportunities for margin improvement, service improvement and compliance management. In increasingly competitive markets each of these can be critical to delivering sustained and enhanced business performance in both the short and longer term. OneView provides a unique capability to help ensure the right resource capability can be consistently delivered at the right place, time, and cost.

About this paper:

This is one of a series of papers exploring key business issues faced by complex organisations in resource scheduling and discussing the ways in which Allocate OneView can help address these challenges.

To find out more about any of the topics discussed in this report, please email: marketing@allocatesoftware.com
