RLDatix

OneView

Unlocking Success Agile Workforce

Strategies for Today's Dynamic Landscape

Contents

Introduction

Using your valuable skilled resources optimally seems like an unattainable nirvana, an illusion that can never be achieved. Just when you believe you have the right mix of skills and experience - at a cost that allows for a respectable profit margin or meets key business targets / measures of success - events conspire to spoil the party. For global events like recessions or pandemics, it spoils everyone's party!

or organisations that operate in highly competitive and/or regulated industries, this balancing act between resource demand and supply is never-ending. It is not just commercial organisations that face this challenge. The public sector and government funded organisations must balance needs against local and central government funding. Regardless of where you operate, the penalties are the same. Failure to deliver can result in fines, loss of reputation or worse, if lives are placed at risk.

That puts the onus on planners and management to resolve immediate issues and problems. Placing greater effort in the near term is bound to impact longer term planning. A lack of focus on trends, future organisational requirements, and the needs of those precious resources that cost so much – your people – plus the need to maintain and replace expensive assets and equipment further erodes available time. Just another set of variables for an organisation to contend with. Welcome to the day-of-the-life of a workforce planner, trainer, manager, executive.

> **For organizations that operate in highly competitive and/or regulated industries, this balancing act between resource demand and supply is never-ending.**

The need for Agility

All industries face ongoing workforce challenges beyond profitability and regulatory compliance. Overcoming these challenges often involves strategies that involve over-resourcing or 'borrowing' skilled staff when internal resources fall short. Outsourcing skilled staff through third-party agencies can become extremely expensive.

Consider the cruise industry's rapid growth from the late 1990s onwards, with each new build floating out from the shipyards, a larger, more diverse skilled crew was required. Recruiting skilled staff for such roles proved challenging; leading cruise lines to employ agencies to fill gaps or take over entire departments, like managing gift shops and gyms. This approach is still very much in use today and the over-resourcing strategy ensures safe operations and positive passenger experiences on mega ships launched annually.

If over-resourcing is a costly solution, under-resourcing can be equally detrimental. Insufficient resources compromise efficiency, leading to staff dissatisfaction and impacting the end customer. Despite this, organisations often face a Hobson's choice between the two. Finding the optimal balance and reacting swiftly to changing requirements is critical for long-term success.

Insufficient resources compromise efficiency, leading to staff dissatisfaction and impacting the end customer.

What makes this complex?

For large, diverse workforces in complex operations, managing regulatory compliance and varied projects can present numerous challenges. This complexity is amplified in sectors like maritime, offshore engineering, defense and first line emergency services, security forces and utilities, where reacting to unforeseen events disrupts well laid plans. Additionally, managing staffing alongside physical resources is crucial for delivering capability effectively.

Consider the utility companies in the UK. Their primary task is to provide supplies of water and energy, yet they must also balance this with rising regulation and oversight, re-invest in infrastructure to support growing demand and react appropriately when supplies are interrupted – for example, ensuring the most vulnerable are looked after until supplies are reinstated.

This happens much more frequently the most of us realise and can place demands on those staff that falls outside of their typically role, like providing bottled water or manning phones to contact the elderly or manage those on the ground resolving supply issues. This is a scheduling nightmare that can impact an organisation far longer than the event itself.

All 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. Having the ability to make changes, understand the impacts and react optimally can bring significant benefits to both organisation and staff.

For organizations that operate in highly competitive and/or regulated industries, this balancing act between resource demand and supply is never-ending.

Why is agility such a challenge?

For organisations with large or mobile workforces, agility in workforce planning is essential to maintain a competitive edge, especially in industries reliant on people. However, maintaining agility becomes challenging as businesses grow. Growth often leads to the introduction of new systems and practices, which can hinder agility. Standardising on best practices and implementing new IT systems can be costly and time-consuming, causing organisations to lose their agility over time.

Once key IT systems are in place, there is often a reluctance to further integrate or innovate, fearing diseconomies of scale. This reluctance can result in siloed planning departments and reliance on outdated tools like spreadsheets. Despite starting out agile, many large organisations find themselves constrained by inefficient processes and lack of integration as they grow.

Siloed operations are the de facto way of working in global industries such as engineering. Each part of the business hires local contractors, blissfully unaware that similarly skilled resources are sitting on the bench in another part of the business. Coupled with the tendency to lay off the middle tier of experienced staff during downturns and then rehire them during up turns, this has resulted in the cost of engineering staff skyrocketing.

In the public sector, where services are typically provided at a regional level, there is still a requirement to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, other local services, and central government, for example policing major events or during national emergencies such as severe weather and flooding. The need for joined up thinking extends across private and public organisations. Workforce agility can be complex to achieve, but it can help reduce costs and help organisation become more resilient in challenging times.

Once key IT systems are in place, there is often a reluctance to further integrate or innovate, fearing diseconomies of scale.

What does agile require?

Having the capability to dynamically plan and replan based on changing requirements while ensuring full compliance is a complex task that demands accurate data. Integration with key systems is essential, yet it does not guarantee data validation or accuracy, especially when much of the data resides outside the planning team.

Even with the necessary information, the scale of the task and time constraints often prevent full evaluation before implementation, leading to sub-optimal solutions. While advances in artificial intelligence offer potential solutions, organisations remain cautious about relying solely on machine decisions due to concerns about bias and transparency.

True agility in workforce planning requires a combination of human expertise and machine capabilities on a platform that provides a single source of truth. Utilising accurate and reliable data from internal resources can motivate staff to keep it updated, enabling organisations to respond quickly to changing needs.

Agility in our armed forces is evident in their ability to transition from peacetime to wartime through scenario planning. Peacetime operations allow for observation and improvement, while wartime scenarios are validated through drills and exercises, enhancing responsiveness and preparedness. Businesses can learn from this approach to improve their own agility.

True agility in workforce planning requires a combination of human expertise and machine capabilities on a platform that provides a single source of truth.

Overcoming the challenges with OneView

In industries striving for margin and service improvement while ensuring regulatory compliance, attention has increasingly turned to resource planning agility. Accurate staff data and addressing optimisation issues can positively impact business performance and agility.

Sophisticated resource optimisation systems like OneView consolidate necessary information, enabling scenario planning, budgetary analysis, and compliance management. With this capability, management can make informed decisions, streamlining operational planning and deployment while ensuring compliance.

Comprehensive workforce capability management requires understanding existing capability, forecasting resource demands, and bridging the two.

OneView provides full workforce, personnel, and training management, empowering senior teams with insights for responsive decision-making. Involving staff in managing their own data is essential for agile workforce planning.

Utilising systems like Allocate OneView, which marries the capabilities of planning, forecasting with self-service access to underlying personnel data, enhances scheduling efficiency for management teams, resulting in improved business performance across margin, customer service, and compliance management.

Once key IT systems are in place, there is often a reluctance to further integrate or innovate, fearing diseconomies of scale.

Overcoming the system barriers to change

As set out, the nature of workforce planning and resource optimisation carries vast information management requirements, from overall customer service planning right though to payroll and travel authorisation.

Agility hinges on understanding available resources, their skills, career paths, and regular scenario planning. The dynamic nature of requirements and capabilities, often involving multiple systems, contributes to manual processing burdens in scheduling departments.

These challenges hinder change, with new scheduling systems often overlapping and necessitating replacements of existing applications. While new technologies offer solutions, true progress involves integrating core personnel and planning data into a single source of truth. OneView adopts this approach, significantly reducing barriers to deployment and cultural change when deployed as a Software as a Service (SaaS). This enables organisations to navigate changing landscapes seamlessly, keeping everyone aligned.

Agility hinges on understanding available resources, their skills, career paths, and regular scenario planning.

Conclusion OneView

The use of advanced scheduling and resource optimisation solutions such as 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 OneView can help address these challenges.

Get in touch with us to see how we can save your organisation **millions.**

+44 (0) 20 7355 5555

rldatix.com

@RLDatixUKI