

CASE STUDY |

Island Health Automates the Last Mile of Shift Scheduling

Automated Shift Callout: The Game Changer



TRADITIONAL SCHEDULING: MANUAL PHONE CALLS

The Vancouver Island Health Authority was facing a challenge common in scheduling offices. Filling relief shifts involved schedulers making manual phone calls in a sequential manner. The amount of time to fill a single relief shift could be significant, tying up schedulers while new relief shifts were being added to the pile often resulting in minimal notice for relief staff, and in the worst case, short staffed hospital units. To meet record keeping requirements, schedulers would simultaneously have to manually record every phone call transaction into the scheduling software - a process that was labour intensive and error prone.

To demonstrate the difficulty facing schedulers at Island Health, consider this example of one day of work for 33 schedulers. The schedulers started the day with 342 unfilled shifts to fill and received 260 new absence calls for the next 3 days. They made 3228 calls in one day attempting to fill these shifts and were able to fill 270 - leaving 332 shifts unfilled. Only 767 calls resulted in a live connection, representing just 24% of the calls made, while 2208 messages were left, and 253 phone calls actually ended in no connection at all due to overloaded voice mail.



AUTOMATING THE LAST MILE OF SHIFT SCHEDULING

In 2015 Vocantas launched patent pending software - and deployed its Auto Shift Call out Solution at Island Health. Vocantas' Auto Shift Callout - or ASC - is integrated with Kronos staff scheduling software, allowing schedulers to launch relief shift callouts in just seconds using **interactive voice automation, text and email**, and enabling schedulers to award relief shifts quickly and fairly – better able to meet required staffing levels in support of quality patient care.

Hospital relief staff are notified of available shifts using their preferred method of contact, and can even view and bid on available shifts via the web using Vocantas' integrated Employee Portal. Island Health schedulers have doubled and in some cases even tripled their efficiency related to relief shifts filled each day, as they no longer need to call each relief staff member manually to ask them if they want the shift. ASC will also automatically call staff back when the shift has been awarded - notifying staff that they did or did not receive the shift.



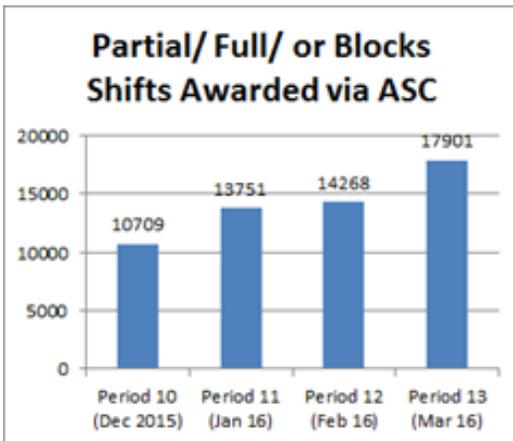
INTEGRATION WITH KRONOS STAFF SCHEDULING SOFTWARE

Vocantas has worked closely with the Kronos team to ensure that information crossing between the robust scheduling system and our multi modal communications platform is taking place in real time, so that schedulers can maximize efficiency filling relief shifts, and employees can rely on our interactive voice, email and text solutions to bid on shifts and receive shift awards.



THE NEW REALITY

Before using ASC, the scheduling office was in a perpetual state of facing a queue of unfilled short-notice shifts to call out. The ASC system came online in December 2015 and immediately efficiencies were realized. Now, after four months since deployment, the short-call unfilled shift queue has disappeared, schedulers can be relied on to call out unfilled shifts almost immediately. Through the month of March 2016, schedulers awarded approximately 500 partial, full, or blocks of shifts per day.



THE SCHEDULER PORTAL

The task ID from Kronos is pre-loaded into ASC. All the information the scheduler needs in order to set call outs, award shifts and move to the next task are available right in the Vocantas ASC solution; the data is pulled from Kronos in real time, and as the scheduler works in ASC, Kronos is also being updated in real time.

All columns in the main Scheduler Portal interface are sortable by clicking on the header - and most importantly, every transaction in ASC is trackable and auditable. In the event of a query or grievance, the date and time of when calls were placed and exactly how an employee responded is at the fingertips of your schedulers.

THE EMPLOYEE PORTAL

For the first time, staff can select specific times of day and specific modes of communication - such as *call me during business hours, text me in the evenings and email me on the weekends*. Employees love the flexibility this provides them.

