

Executive Briefing #19: When Weekend Work Becomes The Reality



Building the Bridge Between Operational Best Practices and Employee Morale

“Monday Through Friday” vs. Monday Through Friday

When we ask executive management teams about their labor strategies, they often tell us how it is supposed to be rather than the reality of how it is. We hear about 3-shift operations working Monday-Friday with weekends off. As we dig deeper, we learn that employees are working at least 20 weekends a year, morale is low, absenteeism and turnover are high, and that the current schedule is broken.

The First Step is Admitting You Have a Problem

We ask management teams how it is possible that the demand for their products and services equals exactly 120 hours of labor coverage. They usually smile and say, “Of course not, but this is what we have had forever and we change it all the time to make it work”.

Although labor strategies with no weekend work are often simple, easily understandable, and predictable, they often do not provide adequate production capacity during the “traditional” workweek. The lack of planned capacity forces managers to constantly move people around to meet the actual demand. In principle, labor strategies with no weekend work allow managers and business to operate within their comfort zones. However, on the shop floor last minute production changes cause last minute schedule changes. As a result, employees are “voluntold” to work overtime on their Saturdays and Sundays, causing the destruction of employee morale and motivation.

Warning Signs “Checklist” To Determine Whether The Current Schedule Is Broken

- Rapid company growth
- High amounts of Saturday and Sunday overtime
- High levels of absenteeism and turnover
- Events drive demand (outside of management’s control)
- Inaccurate forecasting
- Impossibly low inventory
- Increasing reliance on temporary employees to cover off-shifts

Core Practice is a leading provider of operational and labor strategy consulting services with over 20 years of experience designing, developing, and implementing innovative labor solutions. Core Practice’s labor strategies combine the best people with the right equipment at the right time and provide clients with a competitive advantage. Core Practice works extensively with companies with significant amounts of shift work operations. To learn more about Core Practice and what we do, please contact:

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Strategies To Address Broken Monday-Friday Schedules

Awareness is the first step in addressing the realities of broken schedules. The next step is to review solutions to mitigate the symptoms.

- Alternative shift lengths that provide more days off even with weekend work
- Alternative day on day off patterns to share the burden of weekend work
- Reaching out to employees to learn what they like and do not like about their current schedules
- Built-in overtime for employees that want more hours – predictable overtime hours each week
- Technology – scheduling tools, analytics, and activity management
- Longer periods of time off, allowing employees to recuperate and enjoy quality time with their families and friends

Transitioning from traditional Monday-Friday labor strategies to alternative labor strategies is an emotional process. Changing employee schedules is something that very few companies do well and many companies do very poorly. Although challenging, getting out of your comfort zone and coming to terms and embracing the fact that you are no longer a Monday through Friday operation is the key to turning your company into a more responsive, agile, and resilient operation. To learn more about alternative labor strategies and how to design and develop the best labor strategy for your actual demand requirements, contact Core Practice at 212-534-0539.

Notes: