A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is smiling and looking down at a laptop. She is sitting at a wooden desk. In the background, there are stacks of white boxes and a lamp. The image is partially covered by a dark blue overlay on the right side, which contains the title text.

Ultimate Guide to Effective Shift Scheduling

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Background

Effective employee scheduling is the most fundamental requirement of managing a shift-based workforce.

When working with blue-collar workers, your business productivity depends on workers showing up to their assigned shifts as planned.

However, shift attendance remains to be one of the biggest issues with blue-collar workers. Companies in industries such as warehousing, logistics and manufacturing struggle with getting visibility on who's showing up to work due to low reliability in their blue-collar workers. No-shows start to become common practice, causing downstream effects on overall operational efficiency.

What are the implications of having poor shift management?

Poor shift management may cause a high proportion of shift absences and a lack of visibility on tracking shift attendance. HR managers often do not have visibility on whether they have met Ops fulfillment targets until a few days later when doing reconciliation.

In addition, unfilled shifts cause HR or Ops to repeat the whole scheduling process in order to replace them with another worker. This process requires a lot of back and forth coordination and takes extra time that you have not accounted for.

In the long term, the overall efficiency and productivity of the business may decline, especially as companies manage a growing workforce to adjust to business demand.

Generally, this ineffective scheduling process occurs in manual scheduling processes, where automation and data are not well integrated.

There are two biggest challenges that businesses face due to ineffective employee scheduling.



Staff are 174% more likely to churn without real-time shift scheduling processes.



HR Managers spend 20% of their time on scheduling employees.

1. Loss of productivity from worker absence and churn

When workers do not show up to work, businesses can miss productivity targets for that day. But the issue extends even further- Deloitte found that employees are **174% more likely** to churn if there is a lack of effective real-time shift scheduling processes.

Keeping your workforce in-sync when it comes to shift scheduling is critical in managing job satisfaction and therefore, workforce retention. On the other hand, if workers frequently show up to the wrong shifts causing them to earn less income, they are nearly twice more likely to churn and find other employment.

2. Loss of efficiency related to internal processes

Data shows that on average, about 20% of HR managers time is spent on scheduling employees. That means that on average, one whole day of the week is already fully occupied by scheduling alone!

Between managing schedules changes and back and forth coordination with workers, supervisors and outsourcing agencies, there is a great deal of time wasted on manual scheduling processes.

Workmate also found other challenges with manual scheduling processes.

Not scalable for a large workforce

When you are managing hundreds of workers across different locations and positions, scheduling at this big of a scale is a challenge of its own, as there is a lot of data to be recorded and a lot of moving parts causing high potential of data entry errors.

Data is error-prone and can easily be manipulated

Manual systems are susceptible to both intentional and unintentional error. Data mismatch in shift schedules can create confusion around when staff are expected to come, resulting in shift no-shows, inaccurate attendance tracking and paying the wrong amount to workers.

Ineffective communication channels

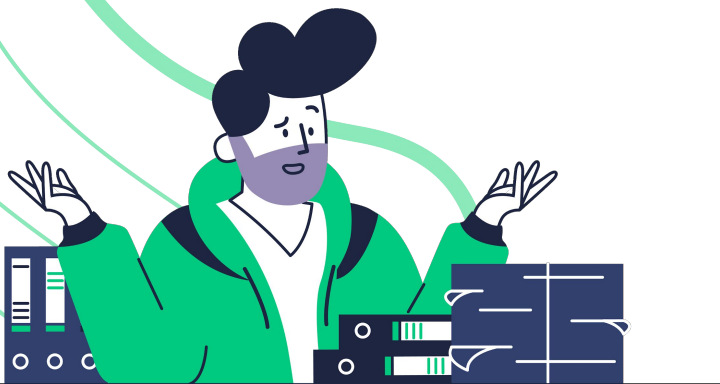
Managers or supervisors currently use two different platforms to create shifts and notify workers. The commonplace practice we have observed is to schedule shifts on Excel spreadsheets, and then take a picture of the printed copy to send to workers via Whatsapp groups. Communication via group chat is hard to control and is often filled with irrelevant messages from other workers, causing employees to miss out on the most important schedule updates.

Inability to handle last minute schedule changes

HR/Ops managers may need to factor in sudden changes to their roster schedule, either due to a change in business demand, or due to workers dropping out of schedules. The change needs to be manually logged and re-communicated back to relevant workers and on-ground supervisors, often resulting in missed information and no-shows.

Less time on higher value tasks

Creating and managing shifts manually can take up a lot of HR time, meaning there is less time spent on contributing higher value to the business, such as developing training, development, employee culture or appraisal programs.



Steps to build an effective shift management process:

Your Checklist

Some things that can be your reference in designing a more effective scheduling system for your workforce:

Creating a master shift schedule:

- ☐ Estimate the number of employees needed in each shift, and how many shifts are required in a week
- ☐ Full understanding of productivity targets / KPIs that need to be met
- ☐ Compliance with local labour laws, including maximum number of worked days and any required break periods
- ☐ Ensure access to stand-by workers, in case of unforeseen circumstances where you need additional or replacement support
- ☐ Can assist you in workforce size planning by giving an overview of shift trends

Assigning shifts to workers:

- ☐ Clear alignment of worker qualifications and job descriptions
- ☐ Assign shifts based on employee availability and past performance
- ☐ Effective communication channel to distribute schedule updates
- ☐ Visibility on worker absences across your roster
- ☐ Plugged in to your time and attendance system for easy reconciliation, accounting for any overtime



Scheduling with Excel Spreadsheets

Workers	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Working	Leave("L")	Sick("S")
Ant-Man	12am							1	0	0
Aquaman	8am							1	0	0
Batman	8am							1	0	0
Black Canary	8am							1	0	0
Black Panther	4pm							1	0	0
Captain America	L							0	1	0
Captain Marvel	S							0	0	1
Catwoman	4pm							1	0	0
Conan the Barbarian	4pm							1	0	0
Daredevil	12am							1	0	0
Doctor Strange	12am							1	0	0
Ghost Rider	8am							1	0	0

Date	01-02	02-02	03-02	04-02	05-02	06-02	07-02
Shift							
12am	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
8am	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
4pm	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Assigned	10	0	0	0	0	0	0



[CLICK TO DOWNLOAD FREE TEMPLATE](#)



Here are a few considerations if you are looking to schedule your workers manually through Excel spreadsheets:

Suitable for small business owners or just starting a business

If you are a small business owner or if you are managing a small team, starting off with a manual Excel spreadsheet system can help you save expenses while still maintaining a pretty good overview of your roster schedule.

Set up custom formulas according to your business needs

Spreadsheets are also more flexible, giving you the direct ability to manage and create formulas according to how you want to set up your workforce.

If this sounds like you, we have an Excel spreadsheet template below that you can download and use. This spreadsheet template is meant to kickstart your shift scheduling processes- [click here to download.](#)

How to use this scheduling spreadsheet template

- Create a list of your workers
- Identify how many workers you need for each shift and for each day
- Assign shifts to your list of workers accordingly by day of the week
- Distribute schedule to your team members so they know when they need to show up to work
- Record attendances directly on the spreadsheet under Working, Leave or Sick for an overview of shift attendance

However, while spreadsheets are great for beginners and are readily accessible, there are a couple of challenges that generally occur from using manual systems:

- Time required to manage schedule and attendance data, not to mention reconciliation time when there are changes or absences involved.
- Communication is not streamlined and relies on other mediums e.g. Whatsapp or text message
- Hard to get instant visibility on roster schedule for different locations



Automated shift scheduling solution

Why should you switch to a digital, automated scheduling solution?

Automating your shift management process is the only way to effectively manage schedules for a large workforce.

By switching to a digital system, you can cut down the time it takes to create and communicate schedules, while ensuring your workers receive the right information and therefore improving your attendance and overall productivity.

Several benefits of automated shift scheduling:

Efficiency with one, integrated system

By moving all of your shift management to a digital solution, you can manage schedules for hundreds of workers in one single dashboard, giving you a quick overview of your roster across all locations to be able to do better workforce planning.

Reduce human errors

Automating shift management processes also takes human errors out of the equation, as you do not have to double-check Excel formulas to ensure calculations are accurate. Create, edit, duplicate, publish and assign shifts in just a few clicks.

Real-time visibility on shift assignment and attendance

View real-time shift confirmation from workers without having to manually communicate with each worker.

When a worker drops out, the system automatically notifies you to re-fill empty shifts to ensure that your productivity is not impacted. The system also records attendances in real-time, which means you can instantly reconcile shift assignment and timesheet data.

Scheduling Shifts on Workmate

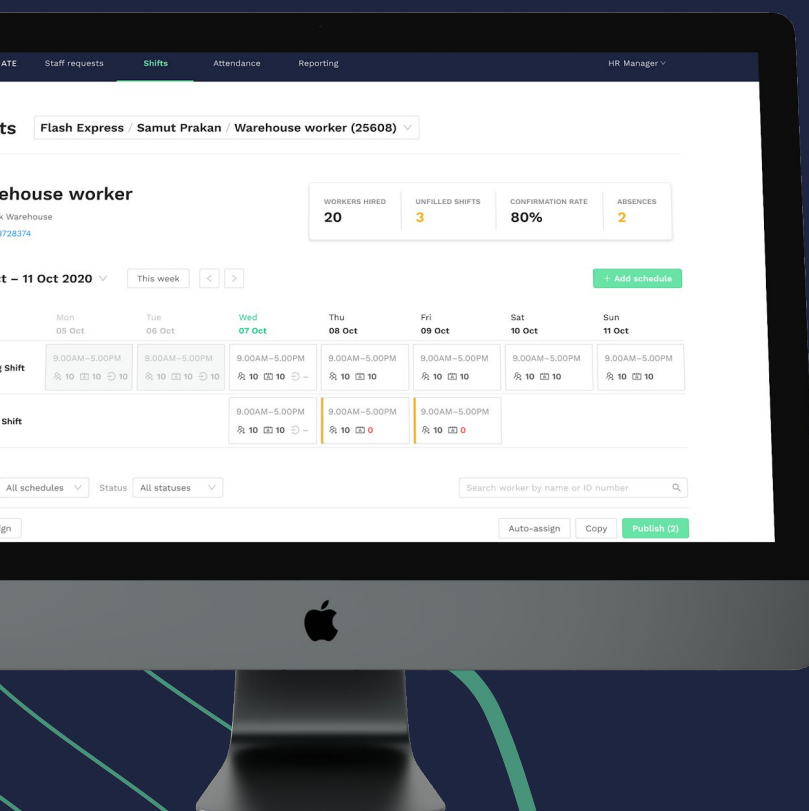
The leading workforce management software to automate your employee scheduling processes.

Workmate brings you a smarter way to schedule shifts. Instead of relying on messy spreadsheets and constantly having to go back-and-forth in Whatsapp groups, you can schedule hundreds of shifts in one, intuitive dashboard, and get reassurance that your workers will show up to their assigned shifts.

The shift management feature not only tracks shift schedules and attendance, but also is built to drive perfect attendance for your blue-collar workers.

How can you manage shifts on Workmate?

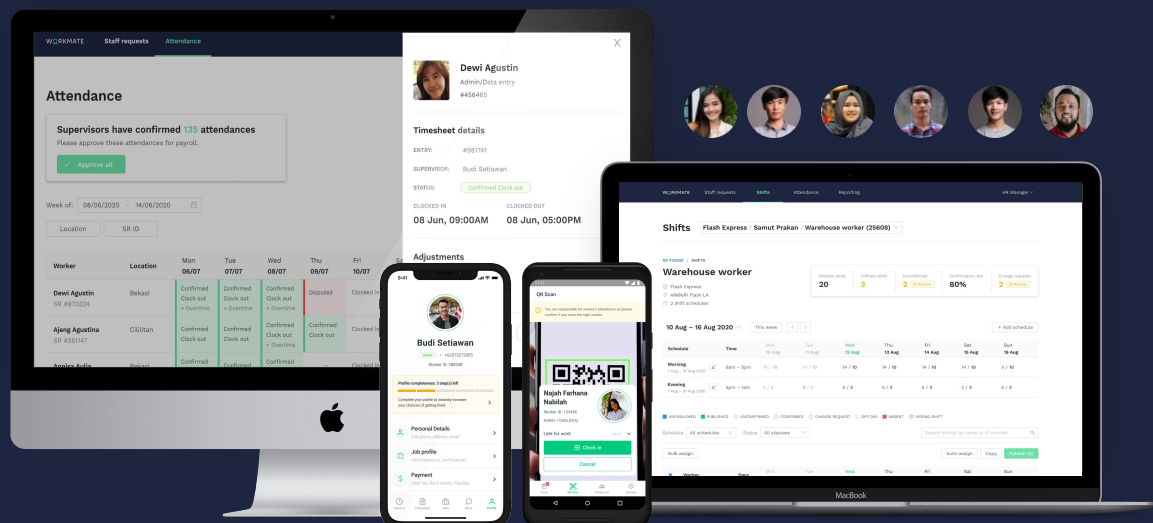
1. Create and edit hundreds of shifts in a matter of seconds to save time and effort
2. Gain a comprehensive overview of your entire roster across locations and positions
3. Automatically assign the right shifts to the right workers in the click of a button- ensuring compliance with labour laws.
4. Communicate with workers and supervisors directly on the platform, so your entire workforce is always aligned on shift schedules
5. Workers are prompted to confirm their assigned shifts, allowing you to foresee future attendance rates even before the shift starts
6. Get notified when you have unfilled shifts for your immediate action
7. Monitor accurate shift attendance records on the same platform in real-time, ready to approve and send to payroll
8. Manage worker-reported absences, all in the platform



End-to end workforce management, simplified.

Workmate is an the leading workforce management platform designed to enable better performance from your blue-collar workforce. Manage thousands of workers in one platform while driving better shift attendance and worker retention.

Workmate automates your workforce management processes, starting from scheduling and assigning staff into shifts.



Once your staff shows up to work, on-ground supervisors clock them in using a secure QR attendance system that directly feeds into automated timesheets, ready for approval and payroll.

Gain full visibility across your entire workforce with real-time analytics dashboards that monitor your shift attendance, worker retention, overtime and manpower expenses across all locations.

By converging all your workforce management processes and leveraging on rich data to predict and shape worker behaviour, Workmate unlocks higher productivity from your workforce while minimizing the time and resources it takes to manage workers.



WORKMATE

A Better Way to Work

Book a free demo of our workforce
management platform today.

Click the link below:



bit.ly/WorkmateShiftMgmtEng

