

CASE STUDY: BLOOMINGTON HOSPITAL

Bloomington, Indiana

The Scheduling Challenge

Located in south central Indiana, Bloomington Hospital is a growing, regional medical center that operates two hospitals and five physician practices.

With nearly 3,000 employees, Bloomington exerts a great deal of effort in scheduling. Because it was using manual methods enterprise-wide, the hospital realized the process was too time-consuming. In addition, scheduling data was not captured centrally, further limiting management options.

“Every scheduler used his own method, typically an Excel® spreadsheet,” recalls Peggy LeVora, project manager at Bloomington. “One byproduct of this variation in scheduling was managers’ different interpretations of the hospital’s policies and procedures. In a number of areas — definitions of tardiness, for example, or the ground rules for employees on “flex” time — we probably had as many different interpretations as we had schedulers.”

These variations caused confusion when staff moved from department to department. And, inconsistencies like these often led to a perception of unfairness, diminishing staff morale over time.

Most importantly, directors and supervisors lacked the reliable, up-to-date employee scheduling data they needed to manage day-to-day issues. Were hours on the clock matching what was scheduled? Were employees on-call when they were scheduled to be? There was no practical way to respond to questions like these without the help of automation.

A New, Centralized Process

“Early in the process, our project team identified a number of key objectives,” explains Vicki Griffey, systems analyst. “One of the most important was the ability to truly manage the workforce with capabilities like tracking tardies, matching actual time worked to scheduled time or rounding to pre-set points based on the clockings.” Another priority was capturing the data with which to plan budgets more accurately.

To meet these objectives, Bloomington decided to automate the process of staffing and scheduling as part of a larger initiative that also included time and attendance tracking, as well as, the deployment of a human resources solution.

“One of our first key decisions regarding scheduling was to fully centralize it,” says Deb Otte, systems analyst, adding that only nursing had previously been a centralized function. “We knew it would be a lot of work to bring the various shareholders together, but we anticipated deeper, broader benefits as a result.”



*Bloomington Hospital,
Bloomington, Indiana*

AT A GLANCE

Problem: Manual scheduling processes time-consuming and inefficient

Solution: Integrated scheduling, time and attendance, and payroll/human resources system

Results: Cost savings, more efficient scheduling, increased access to information

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Peggy LeVora, Project Manager,
Bloomington Hospital



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Vicki Griffey, Systems Analyst,
Bloomington Hospital

Bloomington was working toward four primary outcomes: cost savings for the hospital; more efficient scheduling processes for managers; greater access to information; and more control over schedules for employees.

At the conclusion of an intensive RFP process outlining its need for integrated time and attendance, staffing and scheduling, and payroll and human resources systems, Bloomington selected API Healthcare. “The deciding factors for us,” says LeVora, “were the systems’ high degree of integration and the strength of the software package itself.”

Bloomington started with API Healthcare’s Payrollmation® time and attendance system, going live in May of 2004. The pilot group launched the ActiveStaffer® staffing and scheduling system fourteen months later and the go-live for the Navigator payroll/Human Resources application took place in January 2007.

Results for All

Through its automated approach, Bloomington has seen benefits accrue at many levels. The ActiveStaffer system supports manager scheduling, self-scheduling or “core scheduling,” a combination of the two. With roughly 80 percent of employees now on core scheduling, staff have taken a more active role in their schedules. Remote access to schedules has also been well-received by staff and managers alike.

“With the ActiveStaffer system in place, departments can track attendance in seconds and see employees’ real-time scheduling changes as they happen,” reports Griffey. “Managers have a more current view of possible schedule shortages.”

More centralized staffing gives the hospital more accurate records of absences and a better handle on PTO. “There’s less confusion among the staff, and the standardization has improved communication and overtime projections,” says LeVora. At the organizational level, the processes behind the ActiveStaffer system helped Bloomington globalize and standardize terminology, policies and procedures, such as what constitutes “flex” time.

Also on the managerial side, Bloomington uses daily roster reports. Unscheduled absences, employee schedule histories and schedule audit summary reports are generated weekly or monthly. With the ActiveStaffer system, past schedules are also more readily accessible, satisfying a requirement of the Joint Commission.

“Sometimes we forget how much the hospital relies on the ActiveStaffer system, but we’re reminded when the system is down for scheduled maintenance because the staff gets vocal very quickly,” says Jill Trinkle, staff scheduling manager. “People at Bloomington Hospital have really come to appreciate the ActiveStaffer system.”



Experts in optimizing human capital