



Scheduling in Dynamic Environments

Transforming resource optimisation for a changing world

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Introduction

It may be a truism but in complex, resource intensive industries, change really is the only constant. From the perspective of activity scheduling, resource optimisation and compliance management, such change presents challenges on multiple levels: How do you ensure resources are optimised as demand changes? How do you cope with changing regulation without impacting performance? And how do you adapt resourcing to meet the changing requirements in ways which enhance customer service, efficiency, and margins? Fortunately, leading resource optimisation and scheduling systems such as Allocate OneView have been specifically developed to address these challenges and, as a result, offer the potential to unlock new performance improvement opportunities.

Resource Optimisation in Dynamic Environments

In complex, resource intensive industries the pressure to drive margin improvement, whilst enhancing customer service and ensuring full regulatory compliance, is ever present. With resourcing normally being one of the largest variable cost drivers, and also a major contributor to customer service delivery, ensuring resource optimisation is therefore essential.

The challenge in achieving resource optimisation for large, distributed, multi-skilled workforces is, however, far from simple. It involves a vast array of variables, few of which are static. In particular, for many organisations, demand (in terms of capability, location, and time) may be subject to potential or actual change throughout the pre-deployment phases of a project.

Whilst adaptation of an existing activity schedule may be appropriate for minor changes, it is unlikely to remain compliant and effective in dealing with constant and major change. To ensure optimum and fully compliant solutions, the full range of potential scenarios need to be evaluated and selected on an informed basis. This demands scheduling systems which can handle the complexities of frequently changing environments by providing the analytics to enable accelerated and informed decision making.

Traditionally, many scheduling systems were insufficiently agile to react to new opportunities, changing demand or indeed wider circumstances such as meeting new regulatory requirements. Fortunately, the latest systems, such as Allocate OneView, have been developed specifically for such environments by being able to cope with multi-tiered change and provide rapid analysis to inform business critical decisions.

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Informed and Accelerated Decision Making

Resource optimisation in complex industries is a data and process intensive task involving a vast array of variables. Without advanced systems undertaking such activity, the time and effort required by planning teams can be significant. When changes need to be considered and different scenarios evaluated quickly, the scale of the task and the time required frequently means full evaluation is not possible before having to proceed to implementation. As a result, sub-optimal solutions may be implemented which although compliant, are likely to miss potential margin and service improvement opportunities.

To overcome these challenges, leading solutions, such as Allocate OneView, bring together all of the required information in one core platform, which includes interfacing with other relevant systems, to provide an enterprise-wide view of resourcing and demand. Building on this information and combined with sophisticated analysis capabilities, fully evaluated scheduling decisions can be made with clarity on the financial implications.

The capability provided by Allocate OneView enables management teams to make fully informed, timely and accelerated decisions that could significantly improve business performance.

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Regulatory Change

Coping with regulatory change is a major and costly management challenge, made more difficult by the relevant regulatory bodies continually seeking to refine or enhance requirements to improve safety and working practices.

With multiple tiers of regulation typically being in force, in aggregation there can be near constant change in regulatory compliance requirements. This can have a major impact on workforce scheduling effectiveness as processes are adapted to cope with the new requirements. As a result, dealing with regulatory change has become a major challenge in many resource intensive industries that also seek to minimise the risks to financial and service performance.

One of the major challenges is how scheduling systems and processes are adapted to reflect the new requirements, whilst also ensuring optimal use of resources. The more traditional scheduling systems were frequently developed based on the rules in force at the time but altering them to cope with the complexities of present-day circumstances can be time consuming and costly.

In contrast, advanced systems, such as Allocate OneView, are designed specifically to cater for ongoing change through flexible configuration of the applicable scheduling rules. Not only does this overcome the barriers otherwise experienced, but the system can also be used to analyse potential future changes. As a result, organisations can remain agile and are able to adapt quickly to regulatory change and thereby maintain and indeed improve business performance.

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Allocate OneView is designed specifically to cater for ongoing change

Optimising Overall Workforce Capability

Ensuring effective workforce management and deployment that can be reviewed and altered on an ongoing basis is a complex task, evermore so in constantly changing environments. This requires comprehensive and real time understanding and analysis of the existing workforce capability, forecast resource demands, and the regulatory regime. To support management teams in this task, Allocate OneView provides a complete workforce management solution that covers personnel management, training management, compliance management, as well as core activity scheduling. The system's advanced modelling capability enables comprehensive investigation of different costed options for workforce management and deployment. As a result, by being able to draw on and assess all available data, senior management teams have the depth of insight and analysis to make fully informed workforce related decisions.

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Conclusion

In dynamic situations, activity scheduling, ensuring compliance and achieving resource optimisation are ever more demanding and complex tasks. As a result, there is a danger that legacy or ad hoc systems will produce sub-optimal solutions which fail to capitalise on potential margin and service improvement opportunities. Fortunately, Allocate OneView can directly assist management teams and handle frequently changing requirements to overcome these challenges. As a result, organisations are better able to make the most efficient use of resources to deliver sustained and enhanced business performance in both the near and longer term.

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 Allocate OneView can help address these challenges.

To find out more about any of the topics discussed in this report, please email: marketing@allocatesoftware.com
