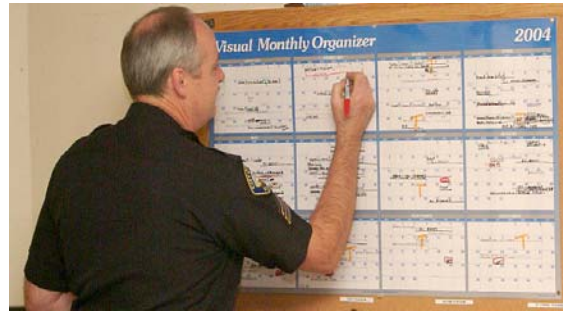


Shift Schedule Design

How to Find the Best Schedule for Your Group's Unique Requirements and Employee Preferences



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Scheduling Assistance

Free feasibility analysis. Do you have enough employees to meet your coverage requirements? Can you switch to fixed shifts or 12-hour shifts? What changes would enable your employees to get more weekends off? Get answers to all of your scheduling questions now!

Schedule examples. We offer a large assortment of the most popular 24/7 schedules in use today: 8-hour fixed shifts, 8-hour rotating shifts, 12-hour fixed shifts, 12-hour rotating shifts, and 8&12-hour rotating shifts. These packages are the quickest and easiest way for you to see the full range of possible schedules.

10-hour shift schedules. With today's fuel prices, everybody wants to adopt 10-hour shifts to reduce the number of commuting trips. Unfortunately, 10-hour shifts are not well suited for most 24/7 operations. They have six major limitations you should be aware of.

Customized schedule design. If you don't need 24/7 coverage or your coverage is different on certain shifts or days of the week, you will need a custom-designed schedule. Professional assistance can save you time and money. It can also provide the most efficient schedule for your situation (coverage, staffing, employee preferences, etc.).

Scheduling Considerations

General considerations. There are four points to keep in mind when searching for a new work schedule: (1) your group is unique, (2) schedule changes may require tradeoffs, (3) five factors are involved in any schedule change, and (4) implementation is the most difficult step.

Efficient coverage. The first step in schedule design is to determine how to achieve the desired coverage as efficiently as possible. Two pieces of information are needed to do this: (1) the number of employees needed at different times of the day throughout the week, and (2) the number of personnel available to work the schedule and the hours they are able to work each week.

Shift length. If you are thinking about changing the length of your shifts, there are five things you should be aware of: (1) scheduled days off, (2) weekends off, (3) staffing requirements, (4) distribution of the workload, and (5) health and safety issues.

Fixed vs. rotating shifts. There are four things you should consider before making the decision to adopt fixed (permanent or steady) shifts or rotating shifts: (1) employee preferences, (2) health concerns, (3) business needs, and (4) staffing requirements.

Staffing calculator. Use this tool to calculate the number of employees you'll need to achieve your desired level of coverage. Want to see how many people you would need if you changed shift length? Want to see if your employees would have to work overtime to meet a different set of coverage requirements? This is the place to go.

Shift Schedule Articles

Schedule change process. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) published a white paper on the steps to follow when changing an organization's work schedule. If you think designing a new schedule is tough, wait until you try to implement the change. Anyone who has done it will tell you that gaining support and buy-in from the people who will be working the new schedule is the most difficult task. The change process must be thoroughly planned and managed to have a successful outcome.

Is your shift schedule depriving employees of their sleep? Published in a recent issue of *Occupational Health & Safety*, this article examines three major shift schedule attributes that affect employee sleep: (1) shift length, (2) fixed vs. rotating shifts, and (3) shift start times.

Shiftworker schedule preferences. Published on the *Industry Week* web site, this article discusses what the typical shiftworker wants from his or her work schedule. Results are based on surveys of over 20,000 shiftworkers.

Other Information

Additional support. Larger organizations often need more than a new schedule. They may need: (1) a cost analysis to justify the schedule change, (2) a business analysis to verify the coverage requirements, (3) someone to determine the preferences of the workforce and help them reach a consensus, (4) a change process that ensures widespread support from corporate management, supervisors, support functions, affected workers, and union representatives, (5) revision of the pay, vacation, and holiday policies, and (6) help with implementation of the new schedule. We recommend Shiftwork Solutions at www.shift-work.com. They specialize in this type of support, and they have more experience than anyone else in this line of business.

Scheduling software. We don't sell software, and we don't use it to design schedules. That's because most software programs are intended to *manage* an existing schedule rather than to *design* a new one. However, if you're just looking for a simple program to ensure sufficient coverage for vacations and other absences, check out VSS Pro at www.abs-usa.com.

About us. Shift Schedule Design began in June 2004. The company's founder, Bruce Oliver, has over 25 years of business management experience, including eight years with a leading shift work consultant. He has written articles for *Industry Week*, *Occupational Health & Safety*, *Plant Engineering*, *SHRM*, *Law & Order*, *Emergency Number Professional Magazine*, and *Public Safety Communications/APCO Bulletin*. He started this service to help small organizations with their work scheduling issues.