

Shift and Rotation Scheduling for Large Work Forces



SECURITY

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Jason Ramsey, Scheduling Supervisor, Mississippi Security Police

An example of the high degree of trust customers place in Mississippi Security Police (MSP) is the company's protection of the Pascagoula Chevron Refinery. With 1,000 acres of production capabilities on a 3,000-acre property, it is Chevron's largest U.S. refinery and one of ten largest in the country. The facility produces 330,000 barrels (13.9 million gallons) of crude oil per day, and employs more than 1,300 workers.

Ensuring coverage

To protect this highly visible property, MSP deploys nearly 140 guards on a 24/7 work schedule in eight- or twelve-hour rotating shifts. Staff scheduling is arranged so employees working the longer days have three consecutive days off every other week in addition to the normal two on alternate weeks.

“Our shift work scheduling is very well thought out,” says Jason Ramsey, Scheduling Supervisor. “Our real-world problem with work force scheduling is that people are people. Things change constantly. Someone gets sick, has car trouble, a special event—there's time-off scheduling—all of which made us crazy when we used Excel templates for shift and rotation scheduling. It was doable, but that was the hard way. It took too many steps, largely because different employee schedule functions all had to go on different Excel worksheets.”

Comparing shift scheduling software

When the unnecessary burdens, limitations and staff hours involved in using Excel for shift scheduling became obvious, Ramsey found a free trial download of Snap Schedule on the Web.

“Its visual interface was modern and clear,” says Ramsey. “I use a Mac at home so I appreciate visually clear screens, and the look of this Windows product is very clean. It has complete drag-and-drop scheduling. Most of its competitors hadn't been modernized since Windows 98.

“When I showed Snap Schedule to management, they were immediately impressed. Two things hit them. The sensible screens told them it was modern software, so it would have all the new tools and people would understand it. It would also be easy to teach and spread to other facilities.

Customer:

Mississippi Security Police

Web Site:

<http://www.mssecuritypolice.com>

Location:

Pascagoula, Mississippi

Industry:

Investigation and Security Services

Customer Profile:

Mississippi Security Police is a total professional security management company with headquarters in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Mississippi Security Police has over 200 employees, primarily in security guard operations, but also in executive protection, investigations, and employment matters. Among its clients are county, city, education, tourism, healthcare, financial and sports venues.

Software and Services:

- Snap Schedule™ Employee Scheduling Software
- Windows® XP
- Windows® Vista

About Business Management Systems

Business Management Systems develops and supports software that optimizes schedules and staff time in every business sector. BMS software streamlines laborious scheduling that consumes thousands of management hours every day.

- **Employee Scheduling Software:** Snap Schedule employee scheduling software drastically shrinks manager and scheduler time. It simplifies creating, modifying, reporting, and publishing employee work schedules. Users earn praise for stretching payroll dollars by more-efficient employee shift scheduling and rostering.
- **Managing Staff Appointments, Billing:** Business Appointment Manager focuses on appointment-based businesses. It reduces time spent scheduling employees, rooms and equipment, then in billing for services and reporting. Those tasks now take minutes or seconds, not hours.
- **Who Is Business Management Systems?** The engineering and software professionals running BMS rocked business software by winning five Microsoft awards for software excellence over four years. Their software products were acquired by the world's largest software company, which still actively markets and expands them.

From this heritage of modern software development excellence, Snap Schedule employee scheduling software and Business Appointment Manager continue to optimize staff scheduling, appointments and management for businesses around the world.

Web site:
<http://www.BMScentral.com>

“But the payroll projections and people-tracking capabilities sealed the deal. We have a fixed budget to work with, yet we’ll never short-change a customer. We have to ensure that our shift schedule has covered all the bases, yet not pay for superfluous staff. Now we can do all that—and predict the financial results.

“We learned the product by using its help files and watching Snap Schedule’s online tutorial videos on their Web site.”

Daily use

Bryan Williamson, Assistant Scheduling Coordinator, came to MSP from mall security management, and is the company’s heaviest Snap Schedule user. “I wish I’d had this employee scheduling software years ago. In malls, we used Excel templates and I was always fiddling with them for time-off scheduling and filling holes. In Snap Schedule, it’s easy and fast to make the changes to accommodate the human side of things. Those changes would get out of hand without it.

“It also compiles every speck of your information in one place, versus going through all those Excel worksheets to find a replacement. When you’re scheduling a large work force, it’s important to see photographs, phone numbers, work schedules, and overtime. It’s good at managing information in one instant-access spot. It’s all interlocked, interrelated, so I get what I need in seconds.

“It has to be easy to maintain, because your staff and phone numbers are always in flux. In Excel, you enter the same info three times into different worksheets for different purposes. Here, you enter it once and it pops up everywhere it should. And I’m guaranteed the person’s phone number is the same in my call-in sheet as in the employee record.

Putting information to work

“Then I run reports that include or exclude whatever that report needs. I make employee lists with all the correct info. I track time off, or see people approaching overtime or whom we owe for overtime. I make monthly assignment calendars and work assignments by employee. It lets us know where somebody has missed or come in late. We use it to head off any disciplinary patterns. Then we can send reports to managers or staff as needed. And there’s a daily on-call list.

“We send its information to payroll now. We expect we’ll begin to use it more interdepartmentally, then export it to other job sites. We use nearly all of Snap Schedule’s resources as it’s very feature-packed and we get benefit from each one.”

Summary

Williamson says, “Snap Schedule is a hundred times better than doing all that manual labor with Excel. I love this software. If we were still on Excel templates for staff scheduling, I could never deliver this level of service and management visibility to my bosses or to Chevron. It has all you need, everything a shift and rotation scheduler could possibly want.”