Library Staff Scheduling Software Stretches Budget, Cuts IT and Admin Hours, and Pleases Staff

Customer:
City of Cerritos, Cerritos Library

Web Site:
http://menu.ci.cerritos.ca.us/

Location:
Cerritos, California

Industry:
Government

Customer Profile:
The Cerritos Library is the civic library for the City of Cerritos, California. Widely known for its futuristic design and world-class customer service, the Cerritos Library is open seven days a week. It houses more than 300,000 books, a conference center, and museum quality exhibits.

Modern technology supports all aspects of Cerritos Library. Public areas are filled with computers and Ethernet ports anyone may use. Library staff wears wireless headsets for easy communication when assisting library users. A computerized circulation system uses radio frequency identification to simplify the circulation process, including easy and convenient self-checkout. (Source: Company web site)

Software and Services:
- Snap Schedule Premium™ Employee Scheduling Software
- Windows® XP
- Windows® Vista
- Windows® 7

For more Information Call:
800-450-4230
sales@bmscentral.com

The Challenge

The City of Cerritos (California) Library is a visual and functional showpiece dealing with the same real-world budget and operational challenges that assail municipal libraries everywhere. Its aesthetically modern interior and exterior were designed as much to invite and inspire readers and reading as to foster public service. Indoor plants, soft woods, and Craftsman lighting evoke memories of traditional libraries.

Tighter city budgets now require all library departments to do more with less during 67 service hours, seven days a week. The library's modern, ever-evolving programs and exhibits must be continually conceived, created, staffed, and maintained by 91 employees—25 percent fewer than before. For staff convenience and interest, the library schedules 77 shifts, most of them offering a variety of desk assignments and tasks within a day.

Library staff scheduling was previously done in People Scheduler, developed for Microsoft Windows 95. Built on this older platform, using Microsoft's Access database, and allowing only one user, People Scheduler's support, upgrades, and bug-fixes faltered when the company was sold. Library IT staff kept the program alive long past its useful term. It was so cumbersome that scheduling library staff took 35 hours a week, then another six to ten hours repairing the program and re-entering data it had lost.

The Solution

The library's searches for modern employee scheduling software compared products' costs, feature set, performance, ease of use, and speed of learning. Business Management Systems' (BMS) Web site stood out in showing Snap Schedule's complete capabilities in scheduling library staff.

The library chose Snap Schedule Premium for several reasons:

- It has the most well-developed, well-thought-out, and intuitive user interface. This helps users become rapidly self-sufficient and less dependent on IT during everyday use.
- Its database, Microsoft SQL Server, is well proven, scalable, well supported, and an industry standard. IT staff would use SQL Server's software "hooks" to write reports, publish every employee schedule to an intranet, and develop most of the customizations the library would need.

- Other staff scheduling software that enables publishing schedules to the Web required a monthly fee per employee. That recurring cost was out of the question.

Cerritos Library chose multiple licenses of Snap Schedule Premium because this version enables several managers and supervisors to simultaneously schedule staff and to see each others' changes in real time, helping to avoiding conflicts or double coverage.

The Benefits

Today, Snap Schedule Premium saves 20 hours weekly of staff and IT time—one-half of a professional's fully loaded compensation:

- Ten hours that IT formerly spent shoring up old software has dropped to zero.
- Managers' previous 35 hours of scheduling has dropped to 25.

Initial setup went rapidly, then the software proved so intuitive that supervisors completed their own setups and customized the software to their needs for maximum staff scheduling efficiency. BMS's online tutorials sped up instruction and training. Staff's easy adoption verified that new supervisors will rapidly learn and exploit this new shift scheduling tool. Snap Schedule Premium's interface looks, feels, and works like modern Microsoft Office applications.

The most-used feature is its task assignment capability. With fewer staff, each person must wear more hats, so schedulers can divide any shift into sub-tasks, desk assignments, sub-duties, even exact lunch and break times. This feature facilitates offering a variety of assignments, yet verifies that desks, tasks and shifts are covered.

To expand on Snap Schedule Premium's many built-in, customizable reports, a third-party tool extracts data from SQL Server's open database to then create custom reports. Specialized Web reports become each employee's individual shift schedule published to the City's intranet. Staff appreciate the new convenience of accessing shift schedules online or receiving them by email. And coverage is no longer thrown off when staff trade shifts.

Snap Schedule Premium helps the library track individual behavior, retain deserving staff, and validate the most motivated employees. The software's tight categories for absences—planned time off, family reasons, sick days, etc.—enable very granular attendance reports. Management sees which staff members keep work commitments.

Business Management Systems also integrated several user suggestions into its next version. Snap Schedule Premium is being evaluated for wider use within the City of Cerritos.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS