CASE STUDY |

Region of Waterloo Fills Shifts with Vocantas Automated Shift Callout™

Summary

The Region of Waterloo, located in the heart of southern Ontario's greenbelt, needed to replace its existing communication system used to communicate with the paramedic services department regarding the availability of open shifts. Waterloo selected Vocantas Automated Shift Callout™, an interactive system using text, voice and email, to find relief for open shifts.

Background

The Region of Waterloo is a midsize community with a population of approximately 530,000 people spread across a geographic area of 1369 square kilometres and is one of Ontario's fastest growing communities. Three cities, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, comprise the region along with four townships, North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. The region has a vibrant local economy with many industries, such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace, automotive, food processing and technology and digital media.

The paramedic services operates with a mix of full- and part-time staff consisting of primary care and advanced care paramedics and fleet services staff operating out of a central deployment station.

Problem

The Region of Waterloo's contract with their incumbent system ended in September 2017. Therefore, the region had a short timeframe for implementing Automated Shift Callout to handle communication with their paramedic services staff. The Region of Waterloo's incumbent system was US based, making it difficult to connect with Canadian telecom providers, resulting in an unreliable system to fill

Photo credit: Aimee White from Creative Multi-Media

shifts as some employees would not receive calls or texts in a consistent manner.

The Region of Waterloo and Ontario-based Vocantas teamed up to provide a system that filled shifts in an efficient and effective manner with the provisions of the collective agreement and in keeping with employee preferences. Vocantas provides a uniquely Canadian-only cloud-based environment with its exclusive SMS gateway partner that is the only Canadian SMS gateway that ensures that organizations can meet the federal privacy regulation for protecting their employee data.

Solution

The power of Automated Shift Callout provides the Region of Waterloo's scheduling office with the automated communication tools needed to efficiently and effectively fill open shifts.

Schedulers increase efficiencies related to filling shifts each day as they no longer need to call each relief staff member manually to ask them if they want the shift. Vocantas was able to work with the region's team to deliver a solution that was on time for implementation and live deployment.

Open shifts are offered via interactive text, phone call and email. Staff are notified of available shifts using their preferred method of contact and can even view and bid on available shifts. The next step is for the Region of Waterloo to enhance the end-user experience by implementing the Employee Portal, a feature of Automated Shift Callout. The Employee Portal enables employees to select preferred time windows for receiving shift offers on each day of the week and employees can opt out of shift offers for the day or select whether they would like to be notified if they were awarded the shift. Additionally, the Region of Waterloo plans to roll out the Vocantas solution to more of its other 24/7 operations, including its longterm-care facility, since the time saved by having an automated callout for high volume scheduling is so immense.

"Vocantas has provided top-notch service both during the initial deployment period and on an ongoing basis. The staff at Vocantas have been responsive and highly engaged," said Daun Fletcher, Director Citizen Service, Region of Waterloo.

The ASC Scheduler Portal
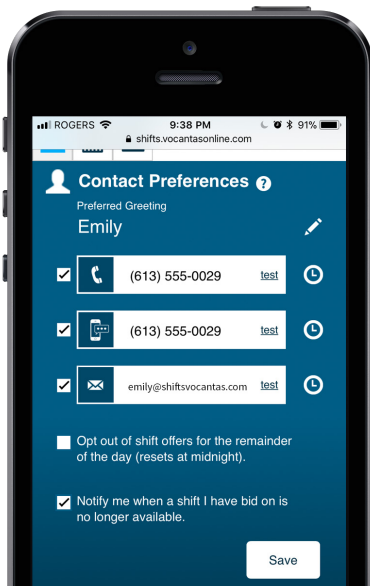
One of the many features of Automated Shift Callout is intelligent scheduling – complete control always remains with the scheduler. The notification system can be stopped at any time and reverted to manual phone calls, if required, and schedulers can manually edit callout lists and award shifts.

Every activity performed by a user is timestamped whether it is an employee making a change or accepting a shift to a scheduler sending a callout. All this information is available in real-time reports that can be easily accessed and exported.

Benefits

The beauty of Automated Shift Callout is no more painstaking manual phone calls. Other features of Automated Shift Callout include:

- Real-time interactive responses
- Details of each interaction are saved for report and auditing purposes
- Integration with existing scheduling software (standalone version also available)
- Staff manages their own preferences in the secure web portal
- Call display will show that your organization is calling
- Highly configurable to meet the needs of any scheduling environment
- The system operates 24/7
- Overtime costs reduced
- Grievances reduced – shifts distributed according to collective agreement