

CASE STUDY |

Island Health Automates the Last Mile of Shift Scheduling

Automated Shift Fill: The Game Changer



TRADITIONAL SCHEDULING: MANUAL PHONE CALLS

The Vancouver Island Health Authority was facing a challenge common in scheduling offices. Filling relief shifts involved schedulers making manual phone calls in a sequential manner. The amount of time to fill a single relief shift could be significant, tying up schedulers while new relief shifts were being added to the pile often resulting in minimal notice for relief staff, and in the worst case, short staffed hospital units. To meet record keeping requirements, schedulers would simultaneously have to manually record every phone call transaction into the scheduling software – a process that was labour intensive and error prone.

To demonstrate the difficulty facing schedulers at Island Health, consider this example of one day of work for 33 schedulers. The schedulers started the day with 342 unfilled shifts to fill and received 260 new absence calls for the next 3 days. They made 3228 calls in one day attempting to fill these shifts and were able to fill 270 – leaving 332 shifts unfilled. Only 767 calls resulted in a live connection, representing just 24% of the calls made, while 2208 messages were left, and 253 phone calls actually ended in no connection at all due to overloaded voice mail.

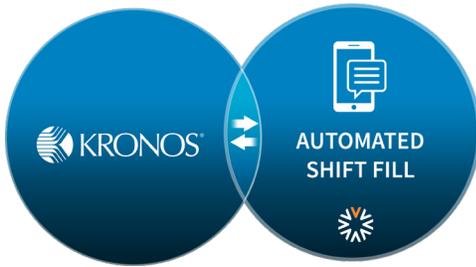


AUTOMATING THE LAST MILE OF SHIFT SCHEDULING

In 2015 Vocantas launched patent pending software – and deployed its Automated Shift Fill Solution at Island Health. Vocantas' Automated Shift Fill - or ASF - is integrated with Kronos staff scheduling software, allowing schedulers to launch relief shift callouts in just seconds using **text**, **interactive voice automation** and **email**, and enabling schedulers to award relief shifts quickly and fairly – better able to meet required staffing levels in support of quality patient care.

Hospital relief staff are notified of available shifts using their preferred method of contact, and can even view and bid on available shifts via the web using Vocantas' integrated Employee Portal. Island Health schedulers have doubled and in some cases even tripled their efficiency related to relief shifts filled each day, as they no longer need to call each relief staff member manually to ask them if they want the shift. ASF will also automatically call staff back when the shift has been awarded – notifying staff that they did or did not receive the shift.

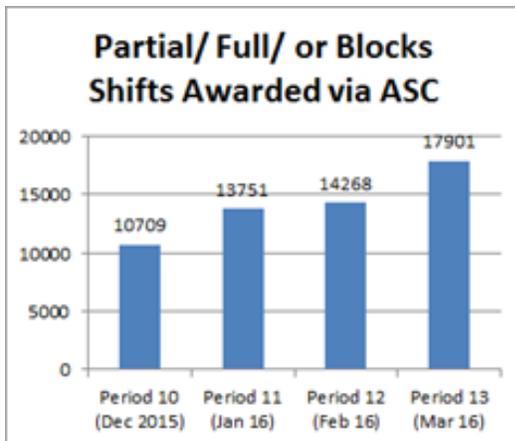
INTEGRATION WITH KRONOS STAFF SCHEDULING SOFTWARE



Vocantas has worked closely with the Kronos team to ensure that information crossing between the robust scheduling system and our multi modal communications platform is taking place in real time, so that schedulers can maximize efficiency filling relief shifts, and employees can rely on our interactive voice, email and text solutions to bid on shifts and receive shift awards.

THE NEW REALITY

Before using ASF, the scheduling office was in a perpetual state of facing a queue of unfilled short-notice shifts to call out. The ASF system came online in December 2015 and immediately efficiencies were realized. Now, after four months since deployment, the



short-call unfilled shift queue has disappeared, schedulers can be relied on to call out unfilled shifts almost immediately. Through the month of March 2016, schedulers awarded approximately 500 partial, full, or blocks of shifts per day.

THE SCHEDULER PORTAL

The task ID from Kronos is pre-loaded into ASF. All the information the scheduler needs in order to set call outs, award shifts and move to the next task are available right in the Vocantas ASF solution; the data is pulled from Kronos in real time, and as the scheduler works in ASF, Kronos is also being updated in real time.

All columns in the main Scheduler Portal interface are sortable by clicking on the header – and most importantly, every transaction in ASF is trackable and auditable. In the event of a query or grievance, the date and time of when calls were placed and exactly how an employee responded is at the fingertips of your schedulers.

Task ID (KSF #)	Shift Start	Shift E	Class #	Occupation #	Callout ID (KSF #)	Activity	Status	Priority	Withdrawn	Ends #	SI / OI #	Ref # #	Scheduler #
12020	Dec 08 08:30	Shift 1	Rn	OutCall_Class	1	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 28 15:35	57	9589			Occur
251845	Dec 01 08:30	The Broad Line	000	OutCall	2	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 31 10:15	57	9590			Occur
261462	Nov 28 08:30	Shift 2	Rn	OutCall_Class	2	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 29 10:00	57	9591			Occur
490889	Dec 02 08:30	Shift 1	Rn	OutCall_Class	1	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 31 13:58	57	9594			Occur
79999	Dec 08 07:25	Medical P	Rn	OutCall	2	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 31 13:57	57	9595			Occur
89999	Dec 08 11:25	Shift P	Rn	OutCall	2	Status: Pending	Partial Interval	Aug 31 13:57	57	9596			Occur
99999	Dec 24 08:30	Medical Q	VRN	OutCall	2	Status: Pending	Partial Interval	Aug 31 14:33	57	9597			Occur
12111	Dec 01 07:25	Shift R	Rn	OutCall	11	Status: Pending	Awarded	Aug 31 14:39	57	9601			Occur
12112	Dec 01 08:30	Shift R	Rn	OutCall	12	Status: Pending	Partial Interval	Aug 31 15:12	57	9602			Occur
12113	Dec 01 09:30	Shift R	Rn	OutCall	13	Status: Pending	Handing Award	Aug 31 15:23	57	9603			Occur

THE EMPLOYEE PORTAL

For the first time, staff can select specific times of day and specific modes of communication – such as *call me during business hours, text me in the evenings and email me on the weekends*. Employees love the flexibility this provides them.

