

Quantifying the Impact of Schedule Adherence

It's just a few minutes a day. What's the big deal?

Can you quantify the impact that a lack of schedule adherence has on your call center?

This article will offer several approaches for putting some numbers to your schedule adherence or lack of it.

Impact on Service, Occupancy, and Cost

The table below shows what happens when we have 350 calls per hour with an average handle time of 320 seconds (or 62 erlangs of workload). Let's assume we had planned to have 69 bodies in chairs to handle those calls in order to deliver an ASA of less than 20 seconds. What happens if just 5% of our staff (in this case, just 4 people) are not adhering to their work schedule during this period? Note what happens with 65 staff in place.

Erlangs	Staff	ASA	Extra Tel Time	Extra Tel Cost/Hour	Occupancy
62	69	14	-	-	89%
62	68	21	7	\$4.08	91%
62	67	30	16	\$9.33	93%
62	66	45	31	\$18.08	94%
62	65	73	59	\$34.41	95%

The first impact is the obvious degradation of service, dropping from a 14 second ASA to a 73 second ASA, an extra 59 seconds of delay time per call. With 69 staff in place the occupancy would be a reasonable level of 89%, but when 4 people drop out, occupancy shoots up to 95%, a level that will be painful for those people that are actually on the phones. And finally, with an extra minute of time on each call due to queue time, we'll be paying the phone company almost \$35 per hour extra for the time our callers are waiting.

This situation is worsened by the fact that as delays increase and occupancy rises, the talk time and after-call work time will likely go up, causing a higher workload, and an even worse speed of answer, occupancy, and cost increase than what we've noted here. Therefore, you can view the impact of non-adherence as these three detrimental effects, or you can simply plan for the loss in the shrinkage calculation and pad in the needed extra staff. Either way, there's a significant cost to the center.

Other Approaches

Another way to look at the impact of non-adherence is to calculate the “lost time” cost. Assume that there is a loss of 15 minutes per day per agent in a call center that houses 100 staff. This 15-minute loss per person adds up to about 65 hours a year of lost time. At an average cost of only \$10 per hour, that’s over \$650 of lost time per person, or \$65,000 for the entire center. Simply vary the lost minutes per day, the wage rate, and the number of seats in the call center to arrive at what this loss means to your center.

Other centers may choose to look at the salary cost of doing business for a day. With 100 agents making \$12 per hour and scheduled to be on the phones 7 hours per day, that’s a salary cost of \$8,400 for the day. If your adherence is only at 90%, then lost time of 10% means a cost of \$840 for the day where people are being paid to be on the phones but not available. Translate this daily number into monthly and/or annual numbers for an overall cost. Is it something you can afford?

Conclusion

Regardless of how you add up the numbers, the end result is the same – poor adherence costs you money. Quantifying the loss may help you communicate the importance of adherence to frontline staff and supervisors. It can also help justify the tools needed to better track and report it, as well as fund reward programs to provide needed incentives to improve overall adherence.