

Scheduling During Times of Disruption

Flexing the Workforce While Keeping Employees Safe and Engaged

Shifting production requirements, fluctuations in labour availability, and enhanced health and safety procedures are just a few of the challenges manufacturing organisations are facing as they continue to manage the complexity of workforce planning during these uncertain times.

During times of disruption, manufacturing operations must pivot, and may have to work with a reduced talent pool. Employees may be working longer than typical shifts and, in some cases, working several consecutive days. This can lead to fatigue or burnout, and in turn, reduced productivity and increased costs. In order to keep employees safe and reduce the risk of fatigue or burnout, it's important to closely monitor schedules, provide breaks, and pay attention to hours worked.

With today's complex demands, existing labour scheduling processes are often inadequate and can have negative impacts on productivity, compliance, and employee engagement. It's important for manufacturers to adopt digital scheduling tools that not only comply with new and constantly evolving health and safety requirements, but also help to boost productivity through an engaged and efficient workforce.

Scheduling technology enables employees to feel safe at work, while keeping operations running smoothly.

The manufacturing work environment doesn't always lend itself to the concept of social distancing. At times, workers may have to come in close contact with one another, which could contribute to potential exposures and unexpected absences. Three scheduling strategies manufacturers should consider to ensure shift coverage and keep operations running smoothly are:

1. Adjusting employee shift schedules
2. Cohorting (or grouping together) workers
3. Shift swapping



75%

of employees trust their employer to create a physically safe and healthy work environment*

* UKG (Ultimate Kronos Group), Employees Set High Bar: Workplace Safety, Transparent Communication, Contact Tracing Nonnegotiable, Find Kronos Surveys (August 5, 2020).

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Adjust employee shift schedules

Manufacturing workers often work closely together on the production line, but they may also come in to close contact at other times, such as entering the facility, clocking in or out, during breaks, or in locker/ changing rooms. By optimising employee schedules, organisations can promote social distancing requirements and allow workers to clearly follow health guidelines. For example, consider staggering shift start and end times, and breaks.



Cohorting (or grouping together) workers

By ensuring that groups of workers are always assigned to the same shifts with the same coworkers, you can increase the safety of normal shift schedules. Cohorting can also help to reduce the spread of illness by minimising the number of individuals who come into close contact with each other over a period of time. Another benefit of cohorting? It helps simplify contact tracing procedures should an employee fall ill.



Shift swapping

Empower employees with the flexibility they need when it comes to time away from work. The ability to swap shifts on their own not only promotes employee well-being but also helps prevent unexpected absences, allowing manufacturers to keep operations running smoothly. Through the device of their choice, employees can request to swap a shift with another qualified employee, and get a response in a matter of moments, allowing them the time they need to care for family or themselves.

Enable your employees to feel safe and supported

Transparent methods for scheduling employees that maximise safety and boost engagement are fundamental. You need scheduling processes that can help track teams, mitigate exposure risks, and give employees visibility into when and where they're needed.

Manufacturers need tools that help them efficiently utilise the workforce they have, as safely as possible. With an automated scheduling solution from UKG, manufacturers are more resilient, compliant, and efficient, while employees feel safer and more supported.

To learn more about how UKG can help to keep your workforce safe, take a look at our [Workforce Wellness Toolkit](#).