

Managing time and planning shrinkages effectively

When you consider all the ways an advisors time is accounted for, the time spent talking to customers is often quite low, which can surprise people. The critical point is to analyse where time is going in your centre, plan accordingly and communicate with colleagues.

There are overheads that prevent each person from being available to actually complete the work they are employed to do; this is often referred to as shrinkage. We have to plan for it, as we know it happens, and categorise the way time is spent. Setting realistic expectations for this is of great importance – both in your resource plans and in how you communicate with colleagues. It's important to note that when you consider all categories, the time left spent

within this category is non-adherence or missing time – a 95% adherence target implies you are losing 5% straight away. Remember that a mixture of paid breaks, communication sessions and all these activities soon adds up. This section could total anything from 5% to 50%. Wait or available time is the gap between calls. If you plan to achieve a set service level, you will need to allow for this – that is what calculations like Erlang C estimate for you. Wait time can be reduced by

shrinkage, your customers, colleagues and the company will suffer. Customers will get frustrated as their calls won't get answered. Colleagues may get burned out, and/or morale may get affected as 1 to 1s get cancelled along with training and development.

If you do not build into your plan enough shrinkage, customers will get frustrated as their calls wont get answered. Colleagues may get burned out.

talking to customers is often quite low, which can surprise some people. Colm Maguire, Head of Planning for Amazon Europe uses the **shrinkage occupancy battery** to illustrate this.

In most instances holidays need to be planned, which can comfortably represent 10% to 15%, when including bank holidays. No one likes to consider high sickness but the reality is this can often be between 5% to 10% – the 2013 Merchants Benchmarking Report shows this as averaging 6.4% in the UK. This means that we can lose between 15% to 25% of each employee each year before they are in the office, without even taking account of off-site training.

Next we need to consider offline time whilst in the office. Which activities must go ahead? Compliance or product training, 1:1s, communication, annual appraisals, development, coaching and quality sessions. It's important to consider system updates/ changes and any extended periods of training. Also,

economies of scale, but low wait time often results from poor service levels. The higher the service level the higher the quantity of wait time. Wait time shouldn't be looked as wasted – in most situations, if you are not waiting for customers, they will be waiting for you.

Only after all this are we are left with work time – usually time speaking to or dealing with matters for our customers. If you do not build into your plan enough

The challenge when comparing organisations is that there isn't a universally recognised or agreed approach to categorisation and calculation. In addition with different organisations having different objectives and opinions to the amount of time spent in each category it devalues the relevance of a comparison. Ultimately shrinkage is the sum of the parts. We can't always benchmark accurately, but we can plan and track it.

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The Shrinkage Occupancy Battery

