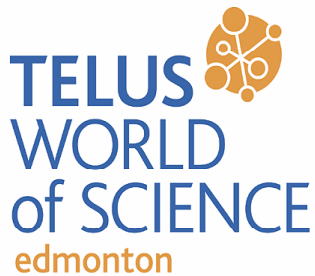


a Celayix success story for non-profit organizations

Science and technology centre moves beyond spreadsheets to advanced scheduling system



“Having information at our fingertips has made us much more productive.”

— Karin Dowling
Director of HR

Solution Review

Organization

TELUS World of Science
Edmonton, Alberta

Challenges

Scheduling 80 FTE staff was difficult and time-consuming... but the budget for a new system was modest.

Solution

Celayix streamlined the scheduling process with enterprise scheduling software and electronic time clock system.

Benefits Summary

Centralized scheduling eliminated errors including double booking and coverage gaps

Reduced Overtime Costs

TELUS World of Science -Edmonton is a bustling centre devoted to offering interactive programs and exhibits to enhance visitors' enjoyment of science and technology.

The science centre has 80 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff that do every-thing from selling tickets at the box office to presenting science programs to school children.

But like most non-profit cultural institutions, the science centre's budget is limited and spending is careful.

Limited Budget

“We do as much as we can with the resources we have,” says Karin Dowling, the director of HR and a 20-year veteran of the science centre. “Being a non-profit, we have to work within our budget guidelines.”

Karin points out that the TELUS World of Science earns the major share of its revenues from admissions and services, unlike similar institutions that are completely funded by governments.

Opened in 1984, the science centre now features a planetarium, an IMAX theatre, a computer lab, and six galleries for science exhibits.

As the science centre's offerings grew over the years, scheduling the staff shifts turned into a major headache... but there wasn't a lot of money available to find the perfect solution.

“As we started to increase our programming, our staffing needs started to increase as well, and it was becoming

a challenge to ensure we were able to meet our required staffing levels,” recalls Karin.

The limits of spreadsheets

In those days, several different departments were doing their own schedules with Excel, and then posting the file on an employees-only section of the science centre's web site.

But these efforts ran into many limitations. The spreadsheets couldn't check, for example, if a staff member was double-booked between departments. The spreadsheets could also not pro-actively detect certain overtime situations as per the collective agreement, resulting in unnecessary overtime.

On the payroll side, all staff were manually scribbling out time sheets.

“Then our payroll coordinator would have to go through and decipher what they were doing, and code it all into our accounting system,” says Karin.

She thought all these chores could be simplified with a more up-to-date process.

So she started looking for a system to reduce the headaches in doing schedules and tracking payroll.

Flexibility

Karin looked at everything on the market for scheduling. But most of the software she found was clearly unsuitable for a science centre.

“Most of our staffing requirements are based on our programming, so if we

The spreadsheets could also not pro-actively detect certain overtime - the new system helps to identify any overtime, so managers can review and correct that before the schedule goes out.

“Before we may not have realized that there wasn’t enough available staff to work a specific day of the week. Now any gaps in our staffing are glaring at us, so we can see that and hire appropriately.”

have a heavy week on programming, we have to increase our staffing,” she explains.

She found that many scheduling systems didn’t work that way, but simply assigned every employee a specific number of hours per work week.

That wasn’t nearly flexible enough.

Her system also needed to tell who was trained for certain tasks, such as operating the IMAX theatre, leading demos, or giving science presentations for schools.

“We offer about 70 different programs that we can present to schools. If a staff member hasn’t been qualified to present a certain program, we can’t afford to make the mistake of scheduling them to present it,” says Karin.

Competitively Priced

Eventually there were only two vendors left on her short list. And the other one was several times more expensive than Celayix.

The science centre chose eTime Xpress, a workforce scheduling application from Celayix, with an Amano electronic card reader to serve as a time clock at the front door. “Celayix did what we wanted, and the price was reasonable,” she says.

The new system went live at the end of 2005.

It’s now used by six different departments, with about 15 people involved in making or approving schedules.

Each department still makes up their own schedules, but the new system keeps track of every staffer. That means no more double-booking by different departments.

“Our time clock at the entrance has worked out well,” says Karin. “Now all our staff come in and just swipe their tags,

and they’re on the floor. We don’t have to worry about paper timesheets any more.”

Less confusion, better information

What other differences has the new system made to the science centre? Karin says the new system helps to identify any overtime, so managers can review and correct that before the schedule goes out.

“It really has cut down on human errors, and on the amount of manual calculations people were doing,” she says.

What’s more, any gaps in the schedule are now very obvious.

“Before we may not have realized that there wasn’t enough available staff to work a specific day of the week. Now any gaps in our staffing are glaring at us, so we can see that and hire appropriately.”

And the new system saves Karin time chasing down various managers to ask them questions.

“Being in HR, I’ve got information now that I can just pull up on the screen. I can see what’s happening, so it’s a great system in that way.”

Analysis of staffing situations were very difficult in the past, it was very time consuming to sort through, organize and summarize archived paper information.

“Now we can just run reports, and there are the results,” says Karin.

Since the science centre’s mission is to encourage interest in science and technology, it’s quite fitting that it now uses the power of technology to manage its own schedules, saving time and avoiding confusion in the process.