

a Celayix success story for libraries

Michigan Library System Cuts Weekly Scheduling Time



“Now, with the help of the Visual Scheduler, posting a schedule only takes a couple of hours a week compared to no less than 10 hours a week previously.”

– **Kelly Richards**
Branch Operations Manager

Solution Review **Organization**

Genesee District Library,
Michigan

Challenges

The library struggled with creating employee schedules manually each week, while trying to balance union requirements, staffing needs and staff preferences. Three different Excel spreadsheets were used to coordinate the library staff. Balancing those spreadsheets was a time consuming task.

Solution

Celayix Web Xpress and eTime Xpress apply sophisticated business rules such as qualification rules for key holders and employee preferences, and it auto-fills schedules accordingly.

Benefits Summary

- Employees are more likely to receive their preferred availability, improving morale.
- The library reduced the time to create a weekly schedule in Visual Scheduler.

Across the country, libraries have lost funding due to lower tax revenues. Genesee District Library is no different. The 19-branch system in Genesee County, Michigan must continue to serve patrons with fewer resources.

So simply scheduling staff and part-time pages for work each week using an Excel spreadsheet was not sufficient and the library knew it needed a better way. Across more than 150 employees, the process became a puzzle that had to consider the needs for each branch, employee requests, vacation and sick time, and union requirements.

“It was just taking up too much time. We couldn’t get our work done,” explained Kelly Richards, branch operations manager. “We were looking for something that could schedule our staff automatically based on certain criteria.”

The manual approach also left room for error. If vacation wasn’t properly considered or one location was double-booked, the Genesee District Library risked the chance of a branch not opening on time.

Simplified Scheduling with Auto-Fill

In the search for a way to simplify scheduling, Richards knew what he wanted – autofill capabilities. The library sought a solution that would merge employee desires and availability with

branch needs to come up with optimal schedules automatically. Celayix Web Xpress would enable collaboration among employees and managers to ensure that schedules balance the many required elements and do so without hours and hours of work.

“Celayix was the only solution we could find with auto-fill capabilities,” Richards said. “Others said they could add it as a custom feature, however, with Celayix, it was already a built-in feature.”

For implementation, Celayix consultants guided the library on conference calls and webinars. With the help of Celayix, the library established its business rules in the software, such as maximum hours employees can work, types of staff that must be at a branch, and ensuring that an employee with key privileges is always scheduled at a branch. Going forward, the library team makes such changes to business rules on its own.

Celayix then combines the library’s requirements with the preferences of employees. From any computer, employees log onto the self-service portal to enter their availability and time off requests directly into the system. The scheduling manager uses a schedule template to start the auto-fill process. The auto-fill option reduces the amount of time spent on the entire scheduling process.

With automated scheduling, the Genesee District Library has made the process faster, fairer and more resistant to errors.

Greater Staff Control, Morale

The solution's sophisticated engine helps the Genesee District Library and the scheduling process. For example, approximately 30 employees are not assigned to specific branches; instead they are floating to various locations as needed. The library utilizes the auto-fill option to assign staff according to availability preference first. The staff realize though, preferences aren't always a guarantee. The Genesee District Library still has to make sure the staff scheduled at a branch can open and close the branch.

"Preferred availability doesn't guarantee employees get what they want but it allows for employee input with the scheduling process," said Andrea Smiley, scheduling coordinator.

A Real-Time, Online View

As with many organizations, employees were initially hesitant about the change. But a trial with a handful of staff members largely eliminated concerns. They appreciate the ability to look online on Web Xpress at any time to see the current schedule and any changes immediately after they occur.

Celayix also gives managers and staff the ability to look at different views of schedules. On one, they can see staffing for an entire branch for an entire week, so everyone knows who's supposed to work when and where. Another shows just the library assistants. For the latter, if someone calls in sick, Smiley can quickly reallocate the floating library assistants.

Color coding on schedules gives managers in particular important insight. For example, key holders show up in a certain color. Also, those presenting programs at specific branches are highlighted in another color, indicating they cannot be moved from that location.

Faster and Fairer Scheduling

With automated scheduling, the Genesee District Library has made the process faster, fairer and more resistant to errors. Before, it was possible to double-book a staff member at two locations, meaning one location was not covered when the shift started.

Most importantly, the library saves much-needed time and resources every week in creating a postable schedule.

"Now, with the help of the Visual Scheduler, posting a schedule only takes a couple of hours a week," Richards said.