



NUCLEUS  
RESEARCH

# WFM SATISFACTION SURVEY 2022

## ANALYST

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

Nucleus surveyed 113 managers on their level of satisfaction with their current workforce management solution and found that more than half of respondents with a bundled HCM-WFM solution would move to a standalone platform for WFM if given the opportunity. Standalone WFM vendors are at more liberty to invest in granular WFM capabilities while full-suite HCM platforms must spread investments across a broader range of HCM functionality. Nucleus found that standalone WFM platforms return \$12.24 for every dollar spent. As organizations adjust to the changes in workforce regulations over the last 18 months, WFM vendors have focused their investments on scheduling and compliance management capabilities, representing the most critical requirements of the organizations surveyed.

## OVERVIEW

Workforce management (WFM) solutions include functionality for time and attendance, forecasting, scheduling, and workforce analytics. These solutions drive workforce efficiencies, enabling organizations to allocate labor hours better, manage complex compliance standards, and track frontline employee productivity. Further, some solutions allow managers to automate their scheduling process and assign employees to shifts based on their specific skills and proficiencies. Modern WFM solutions have become increasingly critical to an organization's success over the past two years. Industries with a large hourly workforce are facing historically high turnover and have seen heightened difficulty in attracting and retaining quality talent. This creates a domino effect, leading to more complex staffing scenarios and a need to reduce labor costs. Nucleus found that implementing dedicated solutions for WFM can decrease turnover by 30 to 60 percent, thus eliminating associated expenses.

**WFM returns \$12.24  
for every dollar spent.**

## COMMON BENEFIT DRIVERS

Nucleus found the three most common benefit drivers for WFM solutions include labor optimization, scheduling automation, and employee self-service.

### LABOR OPTIMIZATION

Labor scheduling solutions are the best way to optimize staffing and labor spend. They provide organizations with prescriptive analytics and reporting capabilities which aid managers in creating schedules that fit daily operations. Customers utilizing WFM solutions can leverage the analytics capabilities of WFM platforms to set optimal shift lengths, define overtime rules and exceptions, and allow users to see how much their actual labor spend is versus planned labor spend. Nucleus found that customers who utilize labor optimization functionality can reduce labor spend by more than 5 percent on average.

## SCHEDULING AUTOMATION

For organizations with a large hourly workforce, scheduling represents an area where a significant amount of time is lost. Automated scheduling remedies these issues by allowing managers to set rules for schedules and automatically assign employees to shifts based on productivity, hours worked, and skills. Nucleus found that organizations who use scheduling automation can reduce the amount of time spent creating and adjusting schedules by an average of 75 percent. Additionally, users who do not leverage this functionality and manually schedule their workforce typically spend 3 to 6 percent more on labor because of unexpected overtime costs and schedule padding. Automated scheduling helps reduce schedule padding and unplanned overtime by alerting managers to employees who are close to their maximum hours and removing the use of error-prone spreadsheet processes.

## EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE

Organizations that employ Employee Self-Service (ESS) capabilities significantly reduce the need for users to reach out to HR teams by calling or emailing managers to resolve an issue. These issues can range from anything as simple as updating availability to something complex, such as explaining changes in pay stubs. This seemingly simple process can take up a significant amount of an employee's and manager's time. ESS improves engagement by increasing information flow between employees and managers. Nucleus found that ESS functionality can reduce the number of questions made to managers by more than half and improve employee satisfaction by providing access to a broader range of information. The need for ESS becomes increasingly evident to organizations who have lengthy onboarding processes. With ESS, a new hire can start the onboarding process from any device and allows users to upload relevant documents and even complete basic training before stepping into the office. ESS also helps employees request time off, inquire about changes in paystubs, and even pick up open shifts without calling or interacting with managers. In the case of paystub inquiries, employees can view detailed explanations of line items without the need for managers to spend time analyzing and explaining complex changes. ESS also enables managers to accept time off requests and upload shift availabilities without having to cold call employees to check their willingness to work an open shift. Nucleus found that the average shift manager can save approximately 15 minutes every week by implementing ESS, with one organization saving \$1.2 million annually.

**Implementing ESS  
functionality saved one  
organization \$1.2  
million annually**

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Nucleus surveyed 113 US-based managers using some sort of WFM solution to analyze how the value of WFM platforms has changed over the past 18 months. All respondents reside within the United States and currently use WFM functionality either through a standalone solution or within a broader human capital management (HCM) suite.

### BEST-OF-BREED DELIVERS VALUE

Of the 66 respondents who reported using WFM capabilities bundled into a broader HCM suite, more than half noted that they would move to a standalone, best-of-breed WFM solution if given the opportunity. Standalone WFM providers have a greater capacity to focus their investments on granular WFM functionality, rather than having to spread across a wider range of capabilities. While Nucleus does not typically recommend a best-of-breed approach, specialized expertise in verticals such as retail, hospitality, and food and beverage set standalone vendors apart from their counterparts due to the complex requirements.

### SCHEDULING IS KING

Nucleus found that the most valuable WFM capabilities in order of importance are scheduling, employee self-service, compliance management, analytics and reporting, and labor forecasting. The importance of scheduling comes as no surprise to Nucleus because efficient scheduling is the best way to optimize labor spend. Employee self-service is also important to managers because it reduces the amount of time managers must spend on manual tasks for onboarding and answering frequently asked questions about payroll and scheduling issues. With ESS, employees can set their availability, request exceptions and time off, and add extra shifts. Compliance management is another area where costs can quickly explode. Having a solution that automatically handles the compliance regulations an organization must adhere to is extremely important in reducing costs and time spent managing compliance.

### OVERALL SATISFACTION IS ON THE UPSWING

Nucleus found that among all respondents, 81 percent reported that the value of their WFM system either increased or remained the same. This can be attributed to vendor investments in pressing needs facing customers, including regulations, schedule automation, ESS, and



analytics. Investments in these areas have greatly improved the usability and functionality of WFM platforms which supports the positive change in value for such products.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

As WFM vendors continue to build out functionality, users have begun to take notice of the shortcomings of their full-suite HCM platform's WFM offerings. Nucleus expects leaders in the space to continue to build out capabilities such as automation, which enable organizations to further reduce costs and time spent on manual processes. Best-of-breed approaches in complex environments, such as retail, healthcare, and food service will make increasing sense as standalone vendor investments outstrip the platform players.