Brandon Hall Group

workforce
SOFTWARE

Connecting the
Dots from
Fully Automated
Workforce
Management
Systems to
Business Results

2022

Brandon Hall Group | 2021-2022
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Introduction

It can be difficult to find a direct causal relationship between HR efforts and the bottom line. While improved productivity on a manufacturing floor can be linked to profits, what is the true value of automated scheduling for an entire workforce? That depends on the value your organization places on trust or on the employee experience as a whole. The efforts made in seemingly minor areas of workforce management (WFM) can have profound implications for the business's ability to meet its objectives.
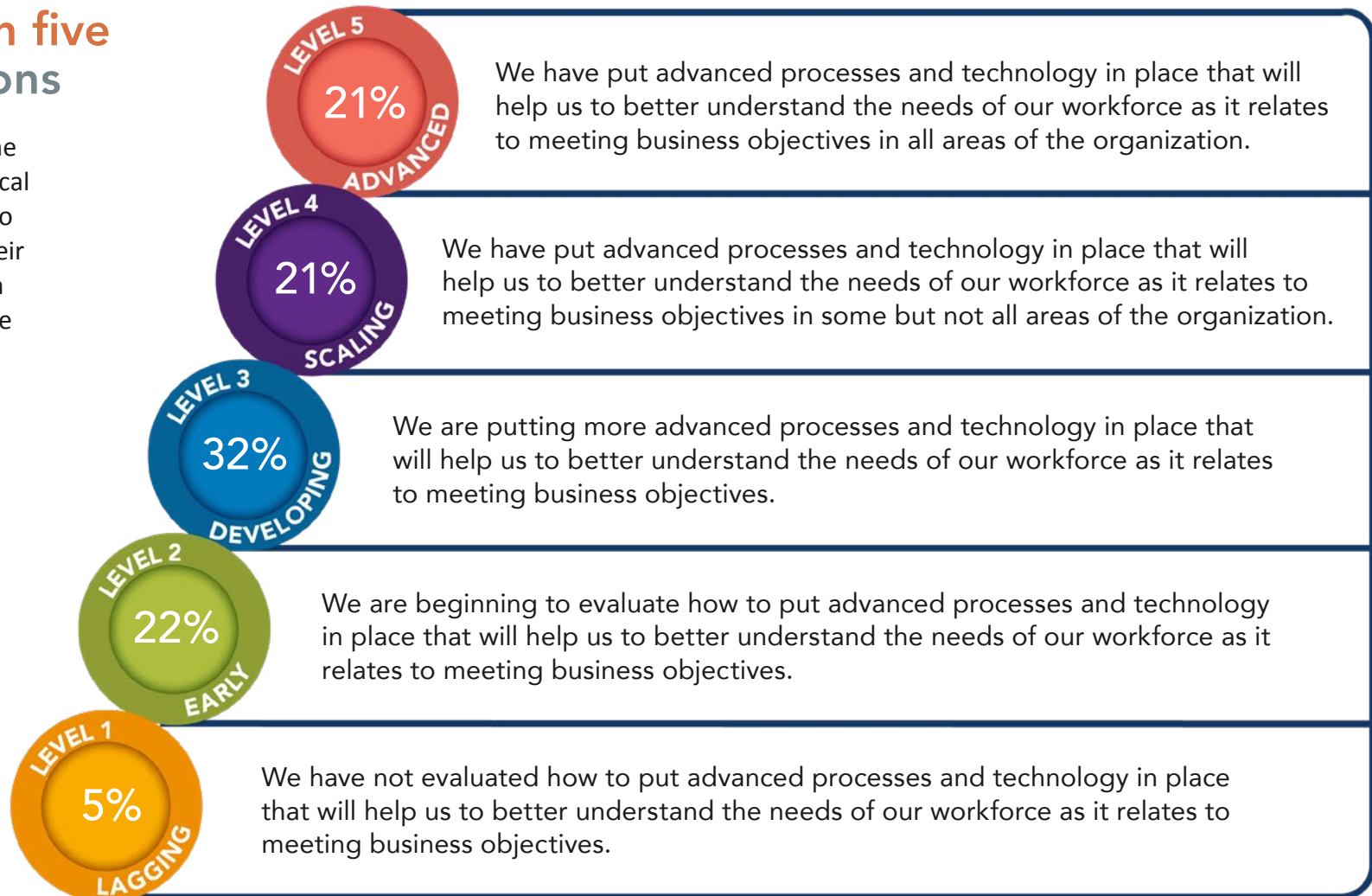
Current State

Only one in five organizations

believes they have the advanced technological capabilities needed to consistently meet their business needs when it comes to workforce management.

Workforce Management Maturity Model
What is the workforce management maturity of your organization?

LEVEL 5 — ADVANCED — 21%
We have put advanced processes and technology in place that will help us to better understand the needs of our workforce as it relates to meeting business objectives in all areas of the organization.

LEVEL 4 — SCALING — 21%
We have put advanced processes and technology in place that will help us to better understand the needs of our workforce as it relates to meeting business objectives in some but not all areas of the organization.

LEVEL 3 — DEVELOPING — 32%
We are putting more advanced processes and technology in place that will help us to better understand the needs of our workforce as it relates to meeting business objectives.

LEVEL 2 — EARLY — 22%
We are beginning to evaluate how to put advanced processes and technology in place that will help us to better understand the needs of our workforce as it relates to meeting business objectives.

LEVEL 1 — LAGGING — 5%
We have not evaluated how to put advanced processes and technology in place that will help us to better understand the needs of our workforce as it relates to meeting business objectives.

Source: Brandon Hall Group

With such low numbers on advanced WFM technology, it may not come as a surprise that employee satisfaction is waning and turnover is increasing to the point that many have dubbed it The Great Resignation.

Most organizations are aware of the issue they face but struggle to know what they need to do — and the most impactful place to begin. This limits HR's ability to justify the purchase of the AI and WFM-driven technology that could play a big role in creating a more equitable workplace with an improved employee experience throughout, as they are unable to pinpoint the business value of those efforts.
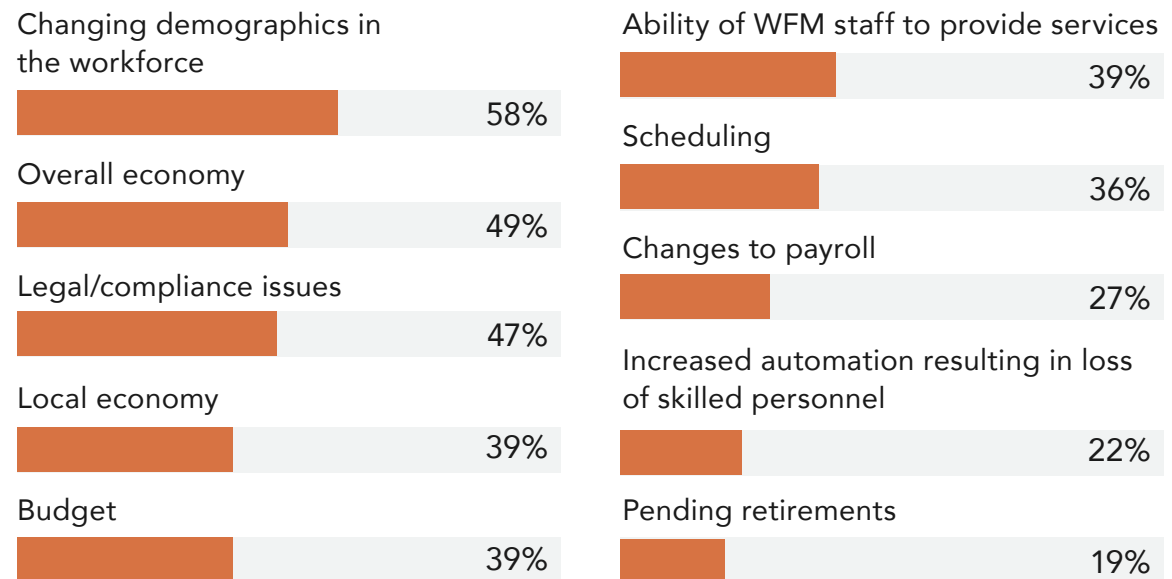
Complications

There are multiple challenges to creating a more business-minded WFM service delivery model, but a major one is the wildly fluctuating nature of the global workforce itself. As mentioned earlier, budgetary issues are a big concern; 43% of organizations cite this as their most significant barrier.

This problem is compounded by the lack of executive engagement in the process, the next most-common barrier (33%). The true issue now reveals itself: Top-level leadership does not believe in the business value of workforce management.

That must be addressed before anything else can happen and could have long-lasting repercussions due to the effects of having a technology solution that is powered by business-objective-oriented AI and is scalable for the diverse and changing workforce.

What are the most significant (WFM) concerns for your organization?

Changing demographics in the workforce
58%

Overall economy
49%

Legal/compliance issues
47%

Local economy
39%

Budget
39%

Ability of WFM staff to provide services
39%

Scheduling
36%

Changes to payroll
27%

Increased automation resulting in loss of skilled personnel
22%

Pending retirements
19%

Source: Brandon Hall Group

The move toward more workers having either a full work-from-home (WFH) or hybrid workplace means there are challenges in automated communications for workers who may not have a traditional corporate email address and/or access to a desktop terminal, use third-party apps or face other technological impediments that aren't addressed through older workforce software solutions.

Consequences

For most organizations (58%), the biggest positive opportunity that improved workforce management will have on the workplace is in **automated scheduling**.

But it can be difficult to quantify its true business benefit. There are impacts throughout the organization from something as (seemingly minor) as effective automated scheduling. But remember that the line employee is affected due to their schedule being done immediately and correctly. And managers who had previously been given tasks that could be done more efficiently and effectively by specialized software now can use their time more wisely with strategic-level tasks or jobs that can only be performed by humans.

Then there is the all-important dynamic of employee experience, as employees have more of a chance to engage in meaningful work rather than menial tasks. Adding to that is increased time for employees to focus on learning and development, upskilling, career-pathing and social networking (within the organization), all of which increase employee retention and decrease employee burnout.
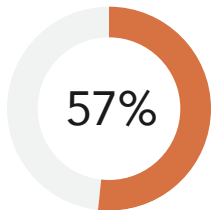
**Which of the following best describes how WFM will change for your organization in the coming year?**
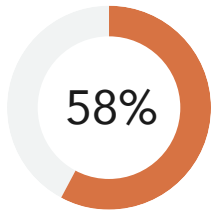
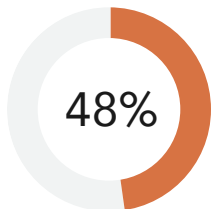**58%** Automated scheduling will create greater efficiency in workforce management.
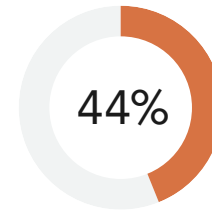
**44%** A more efficient WFM system will allow for a more cost-effective workforce.

57% A more efficient WFM system will allow for quicker adoption and execution of organization-wide initiatives.
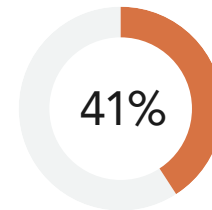
41% Automated scheduling will free up managers to focus on people skills/soft skills.

48% Automated payroll processes will allow for more adaptability in how your organization pays employees.
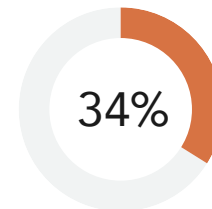
34% The employee experience will improve directly due to changes made to your organization's WFM technology.
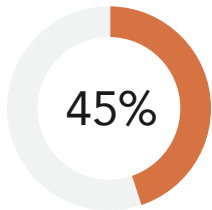
45% The employee experience will improve directly due to changes made to your organization's WFM processes.
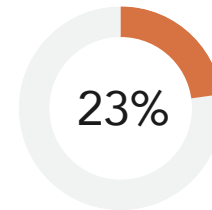
23% Your organization will make improved personnel decisions due to more complete data and analytics.

Critical Questions

For an organization to connect the dots between WFM technology and business outcomes, it must first decide what its specific business needs are and whether it can prove the ROI of its workforce management activities. Key questions leaders should be able to positively answer are:

Are there data sources that your organization can access to measure the results of your workforce management efforts?

Does your current technology solution provide a tailored ROI forecast based on that current state and expected benefits?

Can you work cross-functionally to identify your current workforce management state?

Can you identify current baselines and challenges in hard costs, process improvements, revenue/margin improvement, and improvements to the employee experience?

Brandon Hall Group POV

When it comes to WFM maturity — especially as it relates to AI and ML-driven technology — it isn't as simple as moving up the maturity curve by purchasing the newest technology. Specific to WFM, there are three major stages of using WFM technology.

Stage 1:
Using AI-enabled technology to support manager efforts

In this stage, managers transition from using WFM technology as a means of creating schedules for their employees manually, to using their technology to gain greater insights into how employees use their time best, what schedules create the most value for employees and the business, and monitor trends that may signal necessary changes in the future.

Included in this stage is the removal of risk from possible regulatory mishaps, as the automation will routinely keep any compliance violations from occurring and warn relevant parties of potential conflicts.

Stage 2:
Using AI-enabled technology to support the entire workforce

In this stage, employees are interacting with the technology in ways that give them a sense of being heard and valued by their organization. From giving feedback in the form of pulse surveys, to providing comments and communication directly to interested parties, employee communication is processed and delivered as individual and group insights.

Managers can see how changes to processes and policies impact the productivity of the workforce and how those changes affect the employees themselves, cutting off any potential roadblocks of employee burnout or resentment.

Stage 3:
Using actionable insights from fully developed systems

At this final stage, automated feedback from WFM technology shows trends and insights that can be used by the employee to improve their own scheduling, work productivity, communication methods and much more. Managers can receive recommendations on when and where to deploy their workforce, identify ways to improve employee morale and run "what if" scenarios to model possible futures.

As mentioned previously, the most common challenge in improving workforce management is budget issues (43%). Being able to model a workplace that is optimized for the present but also able to plan for minor and major disruptions will go a long way to proving the ROI for a WFM technology purchase.

Conclusion

The future is truly where the real value of automated WFM technology lies. The most common workforce management concern, cited by 58% of respondents, was changing demographics in the workforce. The workplace is changing for obvious reasons but the workforce itself has been also going through a dramatic shift in the last few years. Demographics (there are five generations in the workforce for the first time ever), changing geographies, evolving attitudes, and technological advancement has meant that organizations have their work cut out for them in the near future. But those who take advantage of automated, AI-enabled WFM technology will be better suited to giving their employees the tools needed to meet those challenges and prove their value to the business as a whole.

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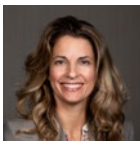
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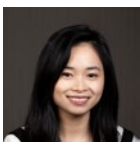
Emma Bui (emma.bui@brandonhall.com) is the Graphic Design Associate at Brandon Hall Group and created the graphics and layout for this report.

About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 28 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.

About Workforce Software

WorkForce Software is the first global provider of workforce management solutions with integrated employee experience capabilities. The company's WorkForce Suite adapts to each organization's needs—no matter how unique their pay rules, labor regulations, and schedules—while delivering a breakthrough employee experience at the time and place work happens.

Enterprise-grade and future-ready, WorkForce Software is helping some of the world's most innovative organizations optimize their workforce, protect against compliance risks, and increase employee engagement to unlock new potential for resiliency and optimal performance.

Whether your employees are deskless or office workers, unionized, full-time, part-time, or seasonal, WorkForce Software makes managing your global workforce easy, less costly, and more rewarding for everyone.

For more information, please visit

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