



The New Rules of Workforce Management



What can today's **Workforce Management** solutions do for your contact center?

- ∴ Provide advanced functionality, including leave management, self-service, mobile features & more
- ∴ Deliver flexible deployment options for premise, cloud & hybrid environments
- ∴ Function as part of an integrated contact center toolset to improve forecasting, planning, QA, decision support, & overall center management
- ∴ Support blended, multi-skill and multi-channel customer contact activities, wherever your agents are located

Introduction	4
The New Rules	6
Conclusion	10
About Noble Systems & Noble® ShiftTrack WFM	12



Introduction

Workforce Management (WFM) planning and software for contact centers has been available, in some form, for more than 30 years. The term itself was likely coined inside a contact center, the high-activity hub where proactive staff planning and optimization can show dramatic and almost immediate results. Labor often represents up to 70 percent of contact center operating costs and meeting those needs accounts for most capital expenditures. It has never been a secret that better planning, forecasting and reporting can lead to huge savings and increased efficiency.

Today, a new generation of innovative and easy-to-use WFM solutions are here. Led by Noble Systems' **ShiftTrack™** solution, this new class of contact center WFM solutions is designed for managers to quickly implement and realize immediate benefits. They come with self-service modules that empower agents, changing the dynamics of contact centers and freeing supervisors to dedicate their time to helping customers rather than managing agent schedules.

For technology decision-makers, there is a whole new world of options, features and opportunities. The rules have changed. This paper is designed to help clear away the marketing clutter of more than three decades and explain what is most important about WFM moving forward.



The New Rules

Rule #1

Yesterday's feature-rich suite is today's minimum offer. Look for functionality beyond the core set of services.

In the past, vendors who offered a solution with scheduling, time and work data collection, leave management, task/activity management, and time and attendance tools were considered robust and feature-rich. Today, that list serves as industry analyst firm Gartner's description of a WFM product's "core capabilities." While these functions remain critical, WFM innovation has opened new possibilities for the multi-channel, multi-site, multi-skill user. Expect well-designed core functions and demand something more – key differentiators that add speed, efficiency and ease of use.

Noble® [ShiftTrack](#) offers short and long-term forecasting tools, campaign modeling, multi-skill and team-based scheduling, availability and leave management, and much more. It delivers on all the core functions expected in a tier-one solution. But [ShiftTrack](#) extends beyond these capabilities to include mobile-friendly management tools designed for tablets and smartphones, built-in wizards that walk managers through the forecasting and scheduling processes, and a faster scheduling engine than those found in most competitors' systems.

Rule #2

The speed of business has outpaced brick and mortar. Look for a solution with cloud and hybrid delivery methods.

Hosting has become an important deployment method for some contact center infrastructure segments, especially routing and CRM. For many, it may make sense to hybridize the technology environment, keeping some core systems on premises, but adding new modules through SaaS (software as a service). Regardless, look for a provider that can deliver WFM through the cloud.

Noble [ShiftTrack](#) is available through the cloud in concert with Noble® *Enterprise Hosted*, a complete contact center technology solution with all of the advantages of a cloud-based Communications-as-a-Service (CaaS) infrastructure. Moreover, it can be delivered as part of a premise/hosted hybrid solution that pairs Noble Systems' award-winning premise-based offerings with the unlimited capacity and flexibility that comes with untethered services.

Rule #3

In an increasingly interconnected contact center environment, standalone solutions can cause headaches. Consider WFM in the context of a broader suite.

In the past, WFM was overwhelmingly purchased as a solo product that operated independently of call recording, quality assessment and other key activities. Today, such segmentation can severely hamper the effectiveness of a WFM solution by leaving it outside of critical information cycles that allow for better planning and forecasting. Connect the dots for better results.

In an ideal implementation, [Noble ShiftTrack](#) is tightly integrated with the full suite of contact center solutions, including inbound and outbound campaign activities, desktop management tools, mobile functionality, and more. It also plays a central role in Noble's *Workforce Optimization (WFO) suite* featuring quality assurance, recording, scorecard, speech analytics tools and business analysis to impact sales and service, customer retention, agent attrition, and productivity for agents and managers.

Rule #4

The solution must meet the demands of a blended, multi-tasking environment, supporting inbound and outbound activities for multiple media channels.

Most contact centers manage both inbound and outbound programs to maximize efficiencies, including contacts received across multiple media channels. Offline tasks, such as data entry, training, skip tracing, etc, also compete for an agent's time. For a WFM platform to be truly beneficial to a multi-tasking center, it should be able to forecast call and non-call contact volumes and schedule resources for blended, multi-media environments.

With more than 70 percent of its global client base operating in blended environments, Noble Systems offers industry-leading tools that seamlessly integrate inbound and outbound communications. While many WFM systems focus on inbound activities, [Noble ShiftTrack](#) differentiates itself by targeting outbound and inbound schedule management and forecasting for blended environments. The solution also takes into account multi-media activities, such as email and SMS, to schedule the necessary skilled agents to handle each type of contact. [ShiftTrack](#) can also incorporate non-call activities, so you can optimize service delivery and manage your resources more effectively.

Rule #5

Find a partner with a proven track record on service, not a drop-off vendor that leaves you to solve every problem on your own.

This can be very important to contact center managers, especially as WFM tools merge into broad-based WFO suites. Making sure that a vendor offers true collaboration and partnership with the center, rather than merely dropping off the software and leaving you alone until the next upgrade cycle, is a big plus and can be critical to the success of the project and to realizing your return on investment (ROI).

Founded more than 20 years ago by call center veterans, Noble Systems has grown to be a global market leader by forging true partnerships with clients. With award-winning service and support operations dedicated to service WFM needs, Noble Systems' model relies on long-term relationships, not short-term sales cycles.

Rule #6

Consider the product roadmap and invest in a forward-facing solution that will benefit from continued innovation, investment and support from its provider.

Commoditization and consistency in core needs have led to certain levels of overlap among WFM solutions. Many products offer similar feature sets, but dedication among providers to supporting the product can vary a great deal. Seek out a partner that demonstrates a strong commitment to the space and will offer helpful upgrades, not a dead-end technology that will eventually need to be replaced.

With its acquisition of Open Wave and the [ShiffTrack](#) product line in 2011, Noble Systems sends a clear signal that it intends to compete and win in the global WFM marketplace. Already a significant WFM player with the Noble® WFM product, Noble Systems' leadership saw that an investment in Open Wave would improve its WFM offering, present more options for WFM clients and provide a broader platform for future development. The move also added significant talent and experience as Noble Systems retained 100 percent of Open Wave's award-winning workforce and management.

Rule #7

Your next agent may live around the corner...or across the globe. Make sure your WFM solution meets the needs of a worldwide workforce.

As the modern contact center evolves from single locations to multi-site, home-based networks and even overseas operations, WFM platforms need to consider all the nuances that come with diverse ecosystems.

Noble Systems supports WFM platforms on five continents and across countless cultural, linguistic and regulatory environments. Product innovation and implementation are not limited by geography, an advantage that empowers clients to explore international growth with the knowledge that Noble Systems technology can support and even enhance the process.

Conclusion

Analysts, opinion leaders and frontline contact center managers agree – the world of WFM has indeed changed. Gone are the days of monthly spreadsheet meetings, laborious data dumps and cost-prohibitive standalone solutions. At the same time, WFM marketing and sales noise can confuse the issue and leave decision-makers feeling like it's 2001 all over again. The rules listed above are designed to help cut through the clutter and make the right choice. A WFM solution should:

- Offer all core functions, plus specialized features that serve your company;
- Be available through cloud and hybrid delivery models;
- Tightly integrate with a larger suite of services;
- Seamlessly support blended environments;
- Come from a true partner ready to support it over the long haul; and
- Benefit from continued innovation and enhancement in the months and years to come; and
- Provide support for single locations, multi-site networks, and remote users in a growing global environment.



About

Noble Systems

Corporation



About Noble Systems & Noble® ShiftTrack WFM

Noble Systems Corporation is a global leader in unified contact center technology solutions, providing innovative products since 1989. Tens of thousands of agents at 4,000+ client installations worldwide conduct business using the award-winning Noble platforms to manage customer communications. The scalable, integrated Noble® solutions offer unified platforms for your total customer experience.

Our solutions allow companies to more effectively communicate with their customers via multiple channels, including inbound/outbound/blended voice, email, fax and web. This unified system includes the key software technologies that contact centers need most: Predictive dialing, Inbound contact management and ACD, IP-PBX, Self Service IVR software, CTI for intelligent screen pops, Digital Recording, Workforce Management and Reporting, and VoIP Support. Noble also provides seamless integration to existing corporate environments, reducing your learning curve and protecting your technology investments.

The integrated workforce optimization solutions offered by Noble Systems provide customers with powerful systems that allow for immediate, measurable, gains in customer service levels and reduction of contact center costs. WFM enables businesses to leverage their workforce investments by providing efficient deployment of critical resources and effective management of personnel, resulting in significant increases in customer service levels and business profitability. [Noble ShiftTrack WFM](#) delivers easy-to-use, functionally-rich workforce management solutions for organizations of all sizes with enhanced scheduling, forecasting, resource management capabilities and more. To learn more, go to www.noblesystems.com/wfm.

For over 20 years, Noble Systems has been delivering solutions that build performance and productivity, improve the quality of customer contacts, and reduce costs. Contact us to learn more.

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you **grow your business!**

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