

## **SWPP Workforce Management Certification Approved Project Ideas**

After satisfactory completion of all three online tests, the final step to certification is to submit a project. The projects listed below are all approved projects -- any project on this list does not need further approval from SWPP. Once the project is completed, students must submit any written/electronic documentation to SWPP and present findings and final results to a panel comprised of SWPP Advisory Board members.

1. **PROCESS IMPROVEMENT.** Identify an area of "opportunity" within your call center - attendance, schedule adherence, productivity, etc. Contact several peers in your industry or geographic area to identify procedures or technologies that they have put in to place to effectively improve this area. Using the information you have gathered, create a presentation for your management team outlining the changes you'd like to adopt, including the necessary costs, change management procedures, and projected return on investment.
2. **INTRADAY MANAGEMENT.** Evaluate your process for receiving schedule exceptions and updating schedules. Is it more efficient to: 1) accept all exceptions via phone 2) accept same day exceptions by phone and future exceptions via e-mail or a database 3) accept all exceptions via e-mail 4) allow exceptions to be processed by the front-line supervisor 5) allow exceptions to be entered automatically via an IVR, WFM or intranet application 6) or any combination of the above. You can assess impact by measuring response time and intraday accuracy before implementing the change as compared to after implementing the new process.
3. **SERVICE LEVEL VERSUS ASA.** Let's assume you use a daily Service Level objective of 80% of the calls answered in 20 seconds as your operational success metric, measured on a daily basis. One of the company executives recently heard from a friend that Average Speed of Answer is much easier to understand and conveys essentially the same information about daily performance. Evaluate the two methods and develop an educational overview which shows the impact of each method of call center measurement, along with reasons for your choice.
4. **CUSTOMER SURVEY ADDITION.** Senior management would like to add a customer survey to each call to gauge customer satisfaction. The additional questions would add another 2 minutes of handle time to each call. Determine the impact on service, efficiency, and cost of implementing the survey, using your own handle times and call volumes. Prepare a presentation for senior management that explains the tradeoffs.
5. **CREATING SPECIALIZED GROUPS.** You have a small 50-agent call center that takes two types of calls - sales and service. The call center receives an equal number of sales and service calls. Currently, agents are trained to take both types of calls. Customers have complained about competency and senior management

- would like to break the center into two groups – a specialized sales and specialized service group in order to provide better quality of service. Using the assumptions of handle time, call volume and labor costs of your own center, evaluate breaking a single, cross-trained group into two specialized groups. Describe the potential impact on cost, service, and efficiency, as well as likely impact on both customer and employee satisfaction.
6. **COVERAGE FOR IMPROMPTU MEETINGS.** The President of your company wants to meet all of your agents during Customer Service Week to let them know how much their customer service efforts are appreciated. You'll need to figure out how best to arrange 30-minute meetings with all your frontline staff without too much of a detrimental effect on service, yet minimizing the number of meetings since the President's time is limited. Describe the various alternatives, with financial and service impacts.
  7. **ANNUAL HIRING PLAN.** Assuming your company always wants to have enough staff to handle call volume within its service goal, develop a hiring plan for the calendar/fiscal year that allows it to accomplish that. Include attrition and attendance assumptions and incorporate the length of new hire training, trainer availability, class size constraints, and so on. Consider the impact of newcomer capabilities on AHT and the resulting FTE requirements.
  8. **DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN.** Develop a disaster recovery plan that addresses call routing/call handling for a multi-site operation, making sure to address customer and employee communication. Include emergency routing procedures as well as an internal and external communication process. Consider in your plan various types of disasters, such as a short-term cable cut, as well as a longer-term weather disaster. Extra credit for addressing multiple types of disasters, i.e. not just weather disasters but flu epidemics, cable cuts/outages, etc.)
  9. **UNIVERSAL AGENTS.** You're looking for ways to increase efficiency and productivity in your center and you've identified three call-handling groups with somewhat similar skill sets that could potentially be combined into one group of "universal" agents. Using call volumes, handle times, and labor costs of our own center, compare and contrast the quantitative and qualitative pros and cons of this idea, and make a recommendation with your supporting points. As part of your recommendation, include the benefits of the increased efficiencies, with other impacts such as occupancy, training costs, employee, and customer satisfaction.
  10. **WFM SUCCESS CRITERIA.** Determine appropriate measures of success within the workforce management department. For example, determine the number of intervals service level should be achieved within a defined time period and how many intervals were met; determine number of intervals forecasted AHT should be within range to actual AHT, etc. Create a dashboard and control charts to measure process efficiencies. Include measurements for the team as a whole, and

also individual measures for specialized workforce management functions, such as forecasting or schedule creation.

11. **HOURS OF OPERATION.** Your center is currently open from 6am – 9pm. Senior management would like to know if these hours are too long or too short and would like input from the workforce planning team about advantages and disadvantages of both expanding or reducing the center's operating hours. Perform a cost/benefit analysis on increasing and/or decreasing the hours of operation within a site, considering staffing and scheduling issues, as well as impact on customer satisfaction and value of calls.
12. **APPRENTICE PROGRAM.** Develop a workforce management apprentice program for your group. Determine how to recruit the best candidates, the length of the program, range of tasks to be performed, and what the training curriculum and process will be. Test the program with an internal employee and write a review of the process, including what worked well and what adjustments would be recommended.
13. **PREPARING FOR NEW HIRES.** Create a plan to educate all areas of the company involved in the hiring of employees for the call center (Human Resources, Operations, Training, etc.). Create a training program to educate these individuals on the unique staffing factors of the call center – attrition rates, work environment, scheduling issues, impact on service and cost, etc. Include in your training materials the historical trending of these factors illustrating the art/science that goes into creating and adjusting the staffing plan.
14. **WFM SYSTEM ACQUISITION.** Develop a business case/ROI identifying the need for a workforce management system or an enhancement for your current software. Include in the plan the specific needs based on your current call center operations and how a system/upgrade will benefit various levels of the organization, with an impact on customers, efficiency, and/or cost. Include in the plan how the system/upgrade will be used and what training and/or reorganization changes would be required to make the best use of it. Include a cost/benefit analysis with ROI potential.
15. **DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS.** Identify the various groups within your organization that have an impact on call center workload (such as marketing or billing). Develop a communications plan that educates each of these areas on the workforce planning process and why their input is important to the forecasting process. Create an ongoing communications plan in which these departments have an avenue for informing the call center in advance when workload fluctuations can be expected and how much impact they will have on the call center, and over what period of time.

16. **FORECASTING ACCURACY.** Analyze the forecasting accuracy of one specific work type by half-hour interval over a daily, weekly, and monthly period. Determine the percent of variation by interval and overall for the day, week, and month for a recent month. Identify the number of periods that are within 5% and determine the reasons that other periods fall outside that accuracy range. Develop a plan to improve the accuracy.
17. **SCHEDULE EFFICIENCY.** Analyze the scheduling efficiency for your call center for a specific work type (or all involved under a skill-based configuration). Determine the number of staff that the plan predicts over and under the requirement by half-hour interval for each day of a recent month. Identify those periods that are more than 5% over or under staffed, with particular attention to those times of day or days of week that are consistently off plan. Working with your managers and staff, identify at least two scheduling changes that can be made to improve the match of staff to requirements more consistently.
18. **SPEED OF ANSWER GOALS.** Review the current speed of answer goals your have in your center for each work type. Analyze the tradeoffs of customer service, occupancy/productivity, and cost and communicate to management all the potential impacts of increasing or decreasing the goals. Reset goals as appropriate to match current business conditions.
19. **POWER OF ONE EDUCATION.** Develop a presentation for your new hire orientation classes and existing agent team meetings that will communicate the "power of one" effectively. Deliver the training to existing staff and at least one new hire class. Analyze the average adherence to schedule prior to the classes and after and determine the effectiveness of the training.
20. **NETWORK/TRUNKING DESIGN.** Work with the IT/Telecom/Operations group to identify all trunk groups and call types coming into the call center, along with the current routing plan. Review the traffic load on each of the trunk groups to determine the appropriate number of available channels to ensure there is an appropriate number to match up to available staff. Make recommendations for a trunk design that better matches channel availability to workforce, including potential ways to save money on toll-free network costs.