UKG

Building a Strategic Framework for UKG Workforce Analytics for Healthcare

A blueprint for accelerating return on your business intelligence investment

Laying a Strong Foundation for UKG Workforce Analytics for Healthcare Success

In today's complex, value-driven healthcare environment, maintaining an effective balance between cost and care can be a formidable challenge. In order to align fluctuating patient demand with a diverse mix of staff resources, your managers need answers to critical questions about labor budgets, workload, overtime, absenteeism, shift lengths, productivity levels, and other factors — and they need them fast. UKG™ (Ultimate Kronos Group) offers a powerful analytics solution to address this crucial requirement.

UKG Workforce Analytics™ for Healthcare provides on-demand access to in-depth business intelligence to help your organization make evidence-based decisions that support high-quality, cost-effective patient care. Because day-to-day staffing requirements can vary significantly — by volume, skill set, and more — managers need improved visibility into the workforce to align labor to demand, control labor costs, and achieve high patient and staff satisfaction.

Workforce Analytics for Healthcare does much more than just format large volumes of data into fancy reports, dashboards, and scorecards. The solution transforms an ongoing aggregation of data from various sources into actionable insights that help you manage workforce deployment, productivity, and costs for better business outcomes. But without adequate planning, commitment, and governance, your business intelligence system is just software — and software can quickly become shelfware.

This guide presents a blueprint for building a strategic framework that brings together the right people, processes, and technology to set the stage for the successful implementation, effective utilization, and continual advancement of Workforce Analytics for Healthcare within your organization. The following six recommendations will better prepare your organization to leverage Workforce Analytics for improved financial and operational results that accelerate your return on investment.

1. Secure leadership buy-in and ongoing participation

When it comes to implementing business-critical systems like Workforce Analytics for Healthcare, the importance of executive buy-in is well known. But leadership involvement should not stop with project approval and budget allocation; it should continue throughout the implementation process and beyond to accelerate change, optimize acceptance, and drive ongoing value. Executive sponsorship is vital to project success because it sends a strong message to the organization that Workforce Analytics is a strategic business system that will have a direct impact on financial and operational goals as well as patient and staff satisfaction.

The executive sponsor plays a key role in developing high-level operational goals with measurable outcomes — engaging directors and managers in the process to determine their needs and gather their valuable input. The primary responsibilities of the executive sponsor include guiding critical decisions, building support, and promoting visibility of the Workforce Analytics project — and its expected benefits — across your healthcare enterprise.

Your executive sponsor can lead the charge for Workforce Analytics success by taking the following actions:

- Put the Workforce Analytics for Healthcare project on the agenda for all operational meetings — from the executive level to the department level — to emphasize its importance and discuss its impact

- Provide guidance around goals and objectives, salary exposure, threshold parameters, director/manager participation, timetables, education schedules, and work-unit and service-line reporting

- Participate in Workforce Analytics orientation and training programs to demonstrate support and build enthusiasm

- Monitor progress — whether directly or through a project leader — by holding regularly scheduled status meetings with the UKG implementation team

- Appoint a senior-level analytics coordinator to champion solution usage and share success stories after go-live

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2. Build a culture of accountability enterprisewide

Realizing sustained value from Workforce Analytics for Healthcare starts with creating a culture of accountability. Managers and directors across the enterprise must embrace the solution to make data-driven decisions that deliver short-term cost and productivity gains and to identify opportunities for longer-term process improvements.

To optimize accountability, engage directors and managers in the implementation process from the earliest stages to set clearly defined expectations and to assess the impact the solution will have on their department, including any changes to policies and processes. For example, you may start requiring all departments to flex hours based on workload activities and monitor results biweekly to allow sufficient time for adjustments prior to month-end general ledger (G/L) close. Early involvement also allows directors and managers to provide input as you configure the system, thereby creating a sense of ownership and increasing overall acceptance.

Give your frontline managers the opportunity to:

- Redefine and properly align departmental roles and responsibilities to include Workforce Analytics engagement — from tracking of progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) to uncovering trends and patterns

- Provide input regarding standard definitions, thresholds, KPIs, and variance analysis centered on resource utilization, hours, costs, and full-time equivalents.

- Fully participate, along with relevant direct reports, in Workforce Analytics training programs to drive proficiency and adoption

- Support peers in learning how to use Workforce Analytics and discovering its financial and operational benefits

- Leverage Workforce Analytics insights to implement operational change that will improve financial outcomes without compromising quality, risk, and satisfaction scores

HR leaders bring a holistic human capital management perspective and unique insights to the workforce analytics implementation process.

3. Position HR as a strategic planning leader

Virtually all decisions made at the executive level impact the human resources (HR) function in one way or another — whether it's a leadership change, a merger or acquisition, a shift in strategic focus, or deployment of a new workforce analytics solution. Therefore, it makes good business sense to involve a senior HR officer as a strategic planning leader in your Workforce Analytics for Healthcare implementation.

HR leaders bring a holistic human capital management perspective to the implementation process. They can provide unique insights for leveraging the solution across all areas of workforce management to control labor costs, minimize compliance risk, and improve staff productivity for consistent delivery of high-quality, value-driven patient care. Turn to HR for expertise and guidance as you:

- Define Workforce Analytics requirements to support policy compliance and analysis of staff behavior such as clocking, overtime, tardiness, absences, and shift history

- Configure the Workforce Analytics database, dashboards, and reports to track key performance metrics, deliver meaningful insights, and inform workforce decisions

- Gather data and discuss input related to timekeeping, status types, skill mix, pay codes, pay levels, and more

- Establish goals and expectations related to resource utilization factors such as skill mix, overtime, supplemental labor, policy compliance, and more to drive better alignment of staffing to workload

  - Redefine the annual performance review process to incorporate goals related to Workforce Analytics performance metrics, such as budget compliance, staff utilization, and productivity outcomes

  - Develop educational programming aimed at addressing identified performance gaps and missed financial targets

To optimize accountability, engage directors and managers in the implementation process from the earliest stages to set clearly defined expectations and to assess the impact the solution will have on their department.

4. Engage financial analysts as valued system architects

Avoid asking your financial analysts to serve as Workforce Analytics for Healthcare "police" who track metrics and put pressure on directors and managers to hit their performance targets. If you've built a culture of accountability around your analytics solution, that level of policing will not be necessary; frontline managers will assume responsibility for monitoring progress against KPIs and take the corrective action needed to bring results in line with expectations.

Instead, consider leveraging your financial analysts as valued system architects during the implementation process and as trusted advisors who can help assess and interpret performance outcomes once the solution goes live. Combining their financial analysis expertise with an in-depth understanding of the organization's financial and operational objectives, they are uniquely qualified to:

- Provide input to organizational budgets and charge master content

- Help define meaningful KPIs that map to strategic business goals

- Track value-based KPIs and analyze variances

- Interpret dashboard and report results

- Receive training in ad hoc reporting to create custom reports and dashboards that meet specific organizational needs

- Support users in defining inclusions and exclusions, such as accrual allocations, budget subset accounts, revenue, and hours/expenses related to orientation, training, and meetings, by demonstrating the relationships between Workforce Analytics and G/L reporting

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5. Work with your communications team to sell the value of analytics

Technology investments deliver measurable value only if the solutions are adopted enthusiastically and used consistently as part of daily business operations. Too often, however, intended users are resistant to change and reluctant to learn and adopt another new system. Workforce Analytics for Healthcare can be a huge time-saver, but first managers need to embrace the solution, recognize its value, and truly believe it will make them more effective at their jobs.

When it comes to creating awareness and spreading positive buzz, your communications and public relations (PR) staff are the experts. Work with your in-house communications team to develop an integrated communications plan as part of the overall Workforce Analytics for Healthcare roll-out strategy to build anticipation and keep people informed. Ongoing communications can help promote buy-in by focusing on the many benefits the solution will bring to the organization, including faster decision making, process improvements, better scheduling options, more evenly distributed workloads, and fewer shift cancellations due to low census.

Engage in-house communications and PR resources to:

- Kick off the project with an informational video designed to educate employees and communicate a consistent message about the Workforce Analytics for Healthcare initiative

- Create and execute a multi-touch campaign — including emails, social media posts, posters, flyers, and more — designed to overcome resistance and build excitement among targeted users

- Build a microsite to provide a trusted source of up-to-date project information, including the informational video, Q&As, deployment plans, and status reports

- Develop and promote user success stories via the microsite, in your employee newsletter, and at management meetings to demonstrate the solution's value

- Introduce a recognition program to acknowledge and reward employees who contribute ideas that improve outcomes in performance, quality, service, and cost control

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6. Integrate analytics into established business processes

Workforce Analytics for Healthcare is not intended for use as a stand-alone system; it is designed to integrate with your existing organizational processes — budgeting, hiring, position control, workload forecasting, Lean Six Sigma, time and attendance, performance management, and more — as part of a total business management system. Work with managers across the organization to determine which data is needed to understand labor costs, utilization, and performance, and factor relevant integrations into the implementation process. This way, Workforce Analytics can leverage relevant data from across the enterprise to track key performance metrics, uncover trends, and inform workforce decisions.

How can integrating Workforce Analytics with other business systems and data sources deliver in-depth, actionable intelligence for improving financial and operational outcomes? Here are some examples:

- Incorporate labor productivity and cost insights into the budget development process for improved accuracy and fact-based justification

- Factor performance outcomes into the employee evaluation process to enable data-driven feedback, promote constructive discussion, and inform employee development plans

- Use biweekly cost, productivity, and workforce utilization metrics to help set priorities for Lean Six Sigma and other performance improvement initiatives

- Leverage labor cost management metrics, value in performance results, and work group outcomes as the basis for position control decisions, including hiring plans and use of supplemental labor

- Leverage Workforce Analytics results as a model to forecast future workforce needs and expectations

In addition, it is imperative that your organization establish a process for regularly updating Workforce Analytics assumptions, threshold parameters, and operational targets to reflect changes to labor-related budgets and plans. This process will help ensure ongoing alignment for accurate reporting and reliable, evidence-based insights.

Workforce Analytics can leverage relevant data from across the enterprise to track key performance metrics, uncover trends, and inform workforce decisions.

Conclusion

Building a strategic framework will help bring together the right people, processes, and technology to drive the successful implementation, effective utilization, and continual advancement of Workforce Analytics for Healthcare within your organization. Let's recap the six best-practice steps that will help you deploy and leverage Workforce Analytics for improved financial and operational results and rapid return on investment.

Secure leadership buy-in and ongoing participation

Make sure you have the executive approval, ongoing sponsorship, and active participation needed to build support and promote visibility of your analytics project

Build a culture of accountability enterprisewide

Set clearly defined objectives at the department level and continually monitor progress to keep managers accountable and achieve sustained value from your analytics investment

Position HR as a strategic planning leader

Because all executive decisions ultimately affect the HR function, involve a senior HR officer as a strategic leader in configuring and implementing your analytics solution to drive optimal results

Engage financial analysts as valued system architects

Enlist your financial analysts to help develop assumptions, define KPIs, architect reports and dashboards, and advise users in assessing and interpreting Workforce Analytics results

Work with your communications team to sell the value of analytics

Rely on your in-house experts to develop an integrated communications plan that builds awareness and promotes key benefits as part of your Workforce Analytics for Healthcare roll-out strategy

Integrate analytics into established business processes

Plan and build integrations that allow Workforce Analytics for Healthcare to share data and interoperate seamlessly with existing processes as part of a total business management system

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Our purpose is people