

Capacity Manager

Now more than ever, stores must be focused on their primary objectives: driving sales and delivering excellent customer service. However there's also an increasing need for agility across the estate. Layout changes, promotions, synchronisation with other marketing activities all need to be done, and done well. All these tasks of course fall on the store manager and his or her staff, and if they get swamped everything starts to fall apart.

Capacity Manager addresses this problem: how to ensure that estate-wide tasks get done in a controlled, quality manner, without impacting the vital tasks of selling and servicing customers.



Solution

Head office departments can create and submit projects for approval, if necessary months in advance. A project could be, for example, a range review or layout change. Each project has estimated man-hours for each task or milestone. Capacity Manager holds a central database of store information – area of certain layouts, store type, product lines stocked, etc. This is used to tailor expected task durations to each store.

As projects are added to the plan a picture or timeline is built of commitment levels in the stores. Peaks and troughs in workload can easily be seen.

Capacity Manager has the concept of a gatekeeper. This role, often held by people in Store Operations, is responsible for looking after store workload and smoothing out the peaks which could impact the performance of in-store teams. The gatekeeper works with other departments in the business to prioritise tasks for a certain trading period. Where necessary negotiation takes place and activities are re-prioritised or moved on the timeline. In this way an implementable plan is built and agreed that gets the job done without risk to important everyday tasks or to other projects.

Once the plan has been communicated to the participating stores, store staff can update their actions to reflect status (completed / in progress), report issues, and add actual times that it took to complete the task. Stores receive their project information in a Store Planner – a calendar-based view of current and future events.

Appropriate head office people can quickly and easily check on the status of projects. Issues can be dealt with, and systemic issues caught early and instructions amended. Actual task durations can be monitored. All this information can be fed into future plans so that lessons are learned and task management across the estate constantly improves.

Summary

Capacity Manager helps estate-wide task capacity planning so store staff can work effectively. For the first time in-store activities can be managed as part of a single, cohesive plan, with visibility and feedback from the stores. Store loading can be managed to deliver the best possible mix of head office-generated activity and vital everyday sales and service.

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