Business Situation
Active Health Partners (AHP) offers a cost-effective, pro-active health and absence reporting and management service to UK employers. Over the last four years, AHP’s Nursing Contact Centre (NCC) has continued to grow dramatically and AHP wanted to implement a workforce management solution to automate the staff scheduling process around its complex call volume requirements. It needed to be flexible enough to grow with AHP’s business and more effectively manage staff resourcing in terms of shift adherence and fulfilling customer service goals.

Challenge
AHP’s London-based NCC employs a highly skilled team of 40 FTE nurses, alongside 10 FTE non-medical staff, two QMTs and an occupational health team, all supported by four team managers. Many staff continue to work shifts in local hospitals, and AHP places great importance on training, maintaining and updating medical knowledge to ensure it is offering the most valuable service.

AHP’s NCC currently manages 8,000 inbound calls and 2,500 outbound calls a week. By the end of 2007, the NCC is projected to be managing over 24,000 calls each week and AHP will shortly open a second office in the north of England to support this demand. Inbound calls peak between 6am and 10am, with a lesser peak between 4pm and 7pm in the afternoon, and Monday morning tends to be the most busy period during the week.

As new clients signed up and call volumes increased, AHP’s legacy spreadsheet-based staff scheduling system became ill-equipped to effectively schedule for the increasing number of staff and calls from new business. AHP needed an easy to use workforce management solution that could manage the prediction of call volumes with its associated peaks and troughs, and schedule staff around their hospital shifts to meet these requirements. From a management perspective, AHP wanted to identify how to effectively utilise the nurses’ time during shifts and required a resource that could help them track and report on productivity.

Brett Edwards, Head of Contact Centre Operations at AHP explains, “It was important that the workforce management system could not only forecast correctly for existing staff levels but offer a predictive staff schedule to enable AHP to accurately forecast for future campaigns and new clients. We have an eight week lead time for new client campaigns, so we needed to ensure we could efficiently deliver a high-level of service to any existing and new customer. With a service level target of 80% within 30 seconds, it was important that any workforce management solution could enable us to achieve this target.”

Solution
Following an analysis of market solutions, AHP identified GMT Planet as the only workforce management solution that met its criteria. Since deployment, GMT Planet has significantly enhanced the accuracy both for current
staffing levels for existing campaigns, and in forecasting staff for new customers and predicted call volumes. AHP is now providing staff with rotas four weeks in advance and it has enabled the forecasting of outbound work plans and the on-going rotation of training, outbound and inbound call management and breaks.

By allowing AHP to compare actual agent status to scheduled agent status, GMT’s adherence tool has enabled the analysis of staff productivity in real time, giving management visibility to breaks and call response times, and allowing staff visibility to this data has increased productivity levels. In turn, Brett Edwards confirms that, “Utilisation of nurses has improved significantly since adherence was implemented. We are now hitting service level targets every week.”

Keeping costs down is vital to growing a profitable business, and it is important to have as much visibility to analysis on areas of spending as possible. AHP can now run reports to track holidays and sickness in its employees, alongside timing of breaks. Such analysis helps identify the cost of these activities on the business, providing reporting on inbound and outbound calls, the amount of time spent responding to calls, and identifying its best to train staff. AHP is currently customising GMT Planet to accurately forecast costs on a daily basis according to the different salary for each employee, depending upon their experience and hours, which will provide further insight into costs.

Brett Edwards explains, “The implementation of GMT workforce management has also helped AHP to create a strategy of homeworking, particularly at peak call times. Since we are now confident in our ability to manage and continue to forecast accurately against inbound call demands, we are starting to move towards a model of homeworking using part time staff split over shifts during the busy times of the day.”

He concludes, “In summary, AHP is now accurately forecasting for its existing and predicted call demand. As we take on new clients, we are confident we can support each one; that we can manage the peaks and troughs of call volumes without overstaffing and underutilising the experience of our nursing staff; and equally manage the variable call handling times for each call. GMT has supported a considerable culture change in our business and is driving down costs in our business.”

About Active Health Partners
Active Health Partners Limited provides Absence Management from ‘Day 1’ - an outsourced service to help large and midsize companies in the UK better manage employee absence, ill-health and litigation risk. The Active Health Partners solution, which is unique in the occupational health industry, is designed to provide significant cost savings for our clients and whilst being a real employee benefit.

About GMT
GMT’s workforce and cash optimisation solutions create competitive advantage by enabling companies to improve customer service and sales, while decreasing their variable expenses. The company’s product line combines precision forecasting and intelligent scheduling with powerful analytics and performance management tools – together delivering a complete solution that is priced to deliver quick return on investment. GMT serves financial services and contact center customers worldwide, including ABN AMRO, Citibank, Eurostar, Ingenico, Nielsen Media, Pizza Hut, SunTrust, UPS, Washington Mutual, Wells Fargo and West Midlands Police. The company is privately held with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, and offices in the U.K., Australia, and India. For more information, visit our website at www.gmt.com