West Midlands Police

- 80% reduction in overtime costs
- Staff turnover has improved from nearly 16% to less than 2%
- Abandoned calls have been reduced from 27,000 to 788 per month on average
- Public satisfaction with call handling increased from 85% to 96%

About West Midlands Police

The West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the United Kingdom behind London’s Metropolitan Police Service, serving a population of over 2.5 million citizens. The central switchboard staff at police headquarters answered nearly 3 million calls last year, with 90% of them answered in 10 seconds or less. A dedicated team of 61 full and part time operators and six supervisors staff the department 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

As part of a major review into the management of call handling at its central switchboard, West Midlands Police was keen to revamp its historic rotating shift patterns. Almost 50% of call centre staff are carers and 68% of the staff surveyed said they would like more flexibility in their working hours. On analysing working patterns, it became clear that supervisors were spending the majority of their time resolving staffing issues, but options for the staff were still too restricted and overtime spending needed to be controlled.

In addition, West Midlands Police faced challenges from the huge demand of data outputs from their ACD management information system and were manually trying to resourse against demand. West Midlands Police have been extremely proactive in recent years, in introducing policies for flexible working and to improve work-life balance. They needed a way to incorporate these principles, yet still provide a responsive 24/7 service to the citizens of the West Midlands and meet strict budget requirements for I.T. expenditures.

Challenge

West Midlands Police formed a special project team, ‘UNITY’, set up to address the growing number of problems associated with call handling including call abandonment, improving the average time-to-answer and reducing repeat calls.

Solution

In evaluating solutions, it became clear that to overcome challenges, a tool was required that would support the West Midlands Police’s strong work-life balance ethos whilst meeting the high levels of performance required. GMT Planet® was chosen for its features and functionality, and especially for particular strengths such as powerful, robust and accurate forecasting; easy to follow graphic displays; and the ability to schedule staff based on availability, skills and proficiency.

Since deploying GMT Planet Workforce Management, staffing demand is better understood and schedule fit dramatically improved from 49% to a target of 85%, making a net saving of £94k in the first year. Since implementation, the overtime budget has only been necessary to cover public holidays, with an approximate annual saving of £50k. GMT Planet’s self-service Employee Time Centre has succeeded in reducing the amount of time supervisors spend organising and resolving staffing issues, and can now focus on more productive tasks, such as supervising calls within the call centre. The activities of six
supervisors manually organising rotas has been replaced by one resource planner covering both the switchboard and the emergency call centre.

Additionally, the introduction of flexible working has been successful because GMT Planet provides an easy-to-use tool that enables resource planners to analyse the impact of each request. Staff confidence in both the system and more choice in flexible working hours have improved attendance and morale on all shifts and reduced employee turnover.

The implementation of GMT Planet also contributed to West Midlands Police central switchboard winning the Best Public Sector Call Centre Workplace Award. The newly improved West Midlands Police Call Centre also won the prestigious ‘Innovation of the Year Award’ given by the Professional Planning Forum at their annual conference.

About GMT Planet

GMT Planet is an affordable and scaleable workforce management solution that accurately forecasts, schedules and staffs for any type of work. Featuring comprehensive reporting, intraday management, a web-based employee module and much more, GMT Planet puts a world of information at your fingertips for effective and timely decision making.

About GMT

GMT’s workforce management and performance optimisation solutions create competitive advantage by enabling companies to improve customer service and sales across their enterprise, while decreasing their labour expenses.

“The staff now have more opportunities to balance their work and home life and our ability to resource against demand has improved beyond our largest expectations”

David Williams
Director of Personnel
West Midlands Police

Facts at a Glance

- Business Type: Emergency Services
- Operation Type: Call Centre
- Region: United Kingdom
- No. of Employees: 1,300
- No. of Calls answered: 750,000 emergency and 2.2 Million non-urgent calls in 2006
- GMT Solution: GMT Planet

The company’s product line combines precision forecasting and intelligent scheduling with powerful analytics and performance management tools— together delivering a complete solution that can be deployed in throughout a company’s contact centre, branch office and back office departments—and is priced to deliver rapid return-on-investment. GMT serves enterprise clients across multiple vertical industries worldwide including BB&T, PRC, Alpine Access, Golfsmith, AirTran Airways, World Travel Holdings, Bank of the West, Zions Bancorporation, Ingenico, West Midlands Police, Contact 1-2-1 and Yarra Valley Water, among many others. GMT is a recognized industry leader in client satisfaction due to its unique SureServices client care methodology.

The company is privately held with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia and offices in the U.K., Australia, South Africa and Dubai. For more information, visit www.gmt.com.