5 Ways Manufacturers Can Manage Last-Minute Call-Offs

Guide

Intro

The <u>National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)</u> paints a startling picture of the workforce shortage. Of the 3.8 million manufacturing jobs likely to be needed by 2033, it's predicted that **over 1.9 million could go unfilled**. Attracting and retaining talent is a **primary business challenge for 65% of manufacturers**.

With an already shallow worker pool, it's important that manufacturers can quickly support last-minute call-offs when they occur. If not, facilities will face the following problems that can detrimentally impact operations.

CROSS-TRAIN EMPLOYEES

#01

Having more employees trained across a diverse range of skills and competencies increases the pool of individuals available to fill unexpected vacancies. Manufacturers can build a more resilient workforce by investing in training and development programs that (1) enhance current skills and competencies and (2) upskill workers to expand their capabilities.

After training employees to cover multiple roles, schedulers and front-line managers should maintain an easily accessible, up-to-date list of everyone's qualifications. This source-of-truth document—preferably digital and housed in a one location for every necessary stakeholder to access—will aid in quicker decision-making when reaching out to employees to cover the shift.

As manufacturing processes evolve and new technologies emerge, the skills and competencies needed may change. Therefore, it's essential to periodically assess the training programs to ensure that employees are equipped with the most relevant skills to address current needs and challenges. This ongoing evaluation and adjustment will help maintain the effectiveness of the cross-training initiative and ensure that the workforce remains adaptable and prepared to handle unexpected vacancies.

#02 ENCOURAGE SHIFT SWAPPING
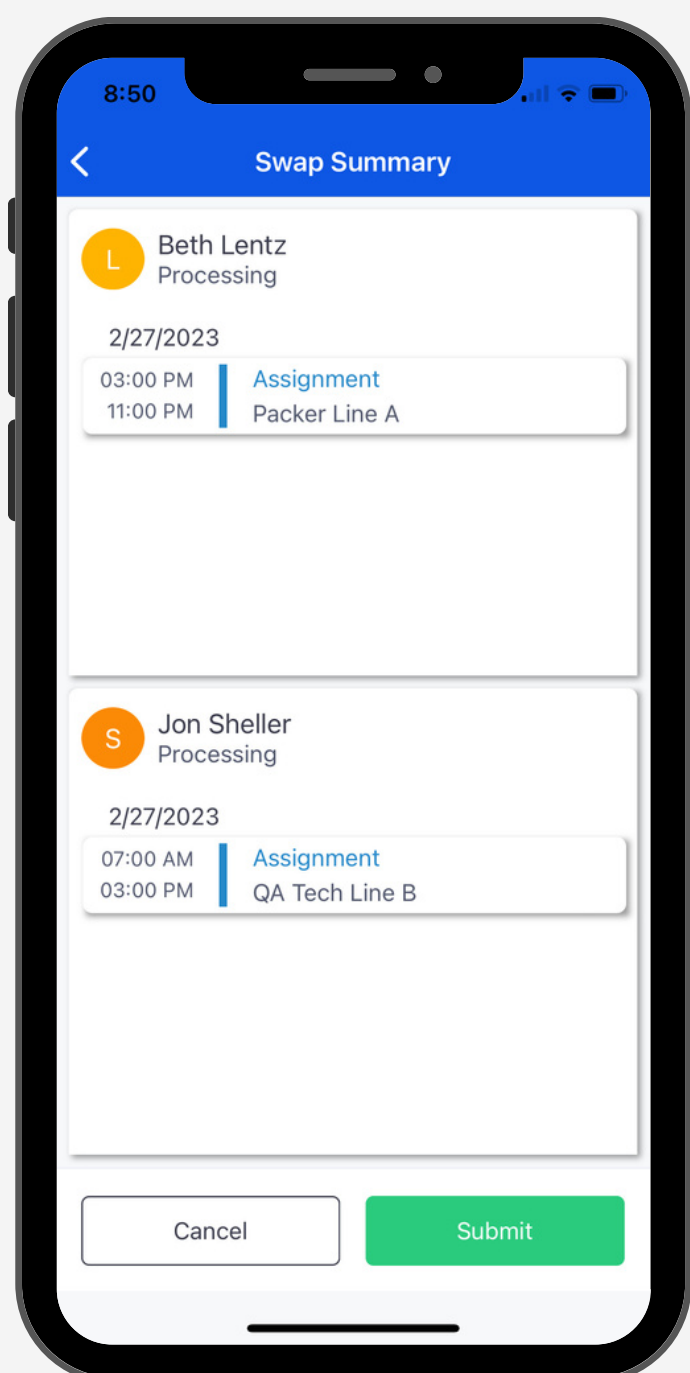
The same NAM study also found that **47% of those surveyed said flexible work arrangements have been their top retention tool**. Considering how notorious the worker shortage is across manufacturing, it's critical to reduce employee turnover as much as possible.

Adopting flexible scheduling options like shift swapping can further help accommodate unexpected absences without disrupting operations. Allowing employees to swap shifts enables them to step in and cover the vacant shift immediately.

Giving employees the ability to swap shifts empowers them to take ownership of their schedules and actively contribute to maintaining operational continuity in the face of last-minute call-offs. But it's important to establish clear guidelines and procedures from the beginning to minimize potential confusion and conflict.

Swap Summary (phone screen)

8:50

Swap Summary

Beth Lentz
Processing

2/27/2023

| 03:00 PM 11:00 PM | Assignment Packer Line A |

Jon Sheller
Processing

2/27/2023

| 07:00 AM 03:00 PM | Assignment QA Tech Line B |

Cancel | Submit

OFFER INCENTIVES #03

Providing rewards or recognition for employees with excellent attendance records can help incentivize punctuality and reliability in the first place. Consider incorporating a tiered rewards system based on attendance milestones. This approach can motivate employees to strive for continuous improvement in their attendance by offering increasingly valuable incentives as they achieve predetermined benchmarks.

Additionally, publicly acknowledging and celebrating employees who consistently demonstrate exceptional attendance can reinforce positive behaviors and inspire their peers to follow suit. Regularly review and adjust the incentive program based on feedback and performance data to ensure its continued effectiveness in promoting punctuality and reliability among employees.

Of course, unexpected absences will still happen. That's why it's also critical to incentivize those helpful employees who step up to provide the needed coverage. It can be a powerful way to encourage teamwork and support in managing last-minute call-offs. For those MVPs who frequently provide coverage, some rewards to consider can include priority vacation time selection, an extra end-of-year bonus, or perks like discounted gym memberships—the opportunities are endless to show colleagues how much they are appreciated.

IDENTIFY CALL-OFF TRENDS

#04

Analyzing patterns and trends involves tracking absenteeism rates over time, examining fluctuations in call-off frequency across different shifts or departments, and identifying any recurring patterns or trends. For example, supervisors may notice an increase in call-offs during certain times of the year (e.g., the day after a holiday) or on specific days of the week (e.g., Friday).

Armed with data on call-off trends, supervisors can develop proactive solutions to address the underlying causes of absenteeism. This may involve implementing policies and procedures to improve work-life balance, providing resources and support for employees facing personal or health-related challenges, or addressing issues related to workplace culture and job satisfaction.

#05

INVEST IN WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

For streamlined, compliant scheduling and enhanced communication when changes occur, implement workforce management software and/or mobile app. The right digital solution will aid in overall absence management and tracking by:

- Quickly filling shifts and notifying relevant staff
- Recognizing opportunities for employee cross-training while tracking each worker's skills and competencies
- Allowing for employee self-service capabilities like shift swapping
- Identifying and analyzing call-off trends

Indeavor, an end-to-end workforce management software, provides all of the above. Indeavor's customizable automation generates a schedule based on complex manufacturing rules and adapts it to real-time changes—all while keeping your workers informed.
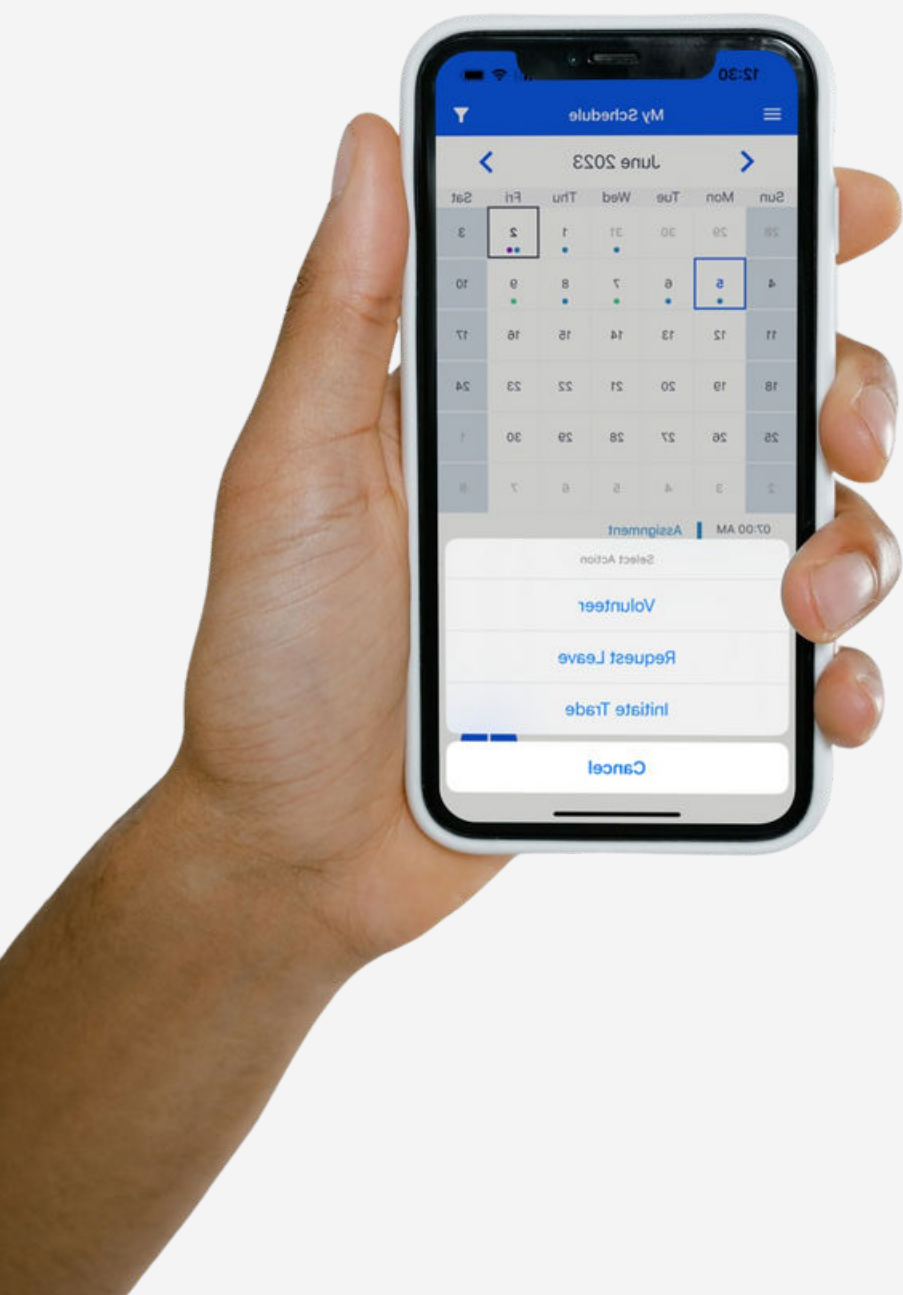
INDEAVOR CALL MORE THAN A CALL CENTER

Manufacturers can support last-minute call-offs with the Indeavor Call feature. **Leverage Indeavor's own workforce management experts to call available, qualified employees on your behalf.**

With a toll-free number, Indeavor Call provides 24/7 call-off management specifically designed for real-time scheduling. It integrates seamlessly with the existing enterprise systems manufacturers already rely on, alleviating the need to rip and replace current solutions. Seamless communication between systems provides up-to-date absence data and analytics.

Real-time notifications ensure that critical personnel are promptly informed of employee call-offs via email, in-app notifications, and reporting. This accurate leave data is incorporated directly into Indeavor's automated labor scheduling solution, eliminating gaps in staffing.

With Indeavor, your manufacturing facilities can generate accurate, compliant labor plans based on real-time knowledge of available labor.

Conclusion

#01 — *Cross-train employees to cover multiple jobs and build a more resilient workforce*

#02 — *Encourage shift swapping to improve retention and let employees feel empowered to fill gaps themselves*

#03 — *Offer incentives to encourage reliable attendance and persuade more workers to fill in for shifts*

#04 — *Identify call-off trends to proactively address absenteeism and implement targeted interventions when necessary*

#05 — *Invest in workforce management software to automate absence management and backfilling for you*

Implementing a set call-out process is paramount for manufacturing operations to mitigate disruptions, control costs, and uphold safety standards. Managing last-minute call-outs requires the right people, processes, and technology.

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