SUTHERLAND
GLOBAL SERVICES®

CloudSource

WORKFLEX®
SOLUTIONS

Sutherland Global Services Achieves Work-at-Home Success with Intelligent Agile Scheduling

Established in 1986, Sutherland Global Services is a global provider of business process and technology management services. Sutherland offers an integrated portfolio of analytics-driven back-office and customer-facing solutions that support the entire customer lifecycle and is one of the largest, independent BPO companies in the world serving global leaders in major industry verticals. Headquartered in Rochester, NY, Sutherland employs over 30,000 professionals in more than 50 operational centers across the globe.

> **The Client**
>
> - Sutherland Global Services, a large business process outsourcing company
> - 50+ operating centers
> - 30,000+ employees
> - Expanding rapidly and globally
> - Ranked #3 on FlexJobs 2015 100 Top Companies with Remote Jobs

Work-at-Home Begins

In January 2008, Sutherland launched a work-at-home model (now branded CloudSource), because many of the agents employed in its contact centers professed their interest in working from home. Initially, the company applied its brick-and-mortar scheduling model to the new program, so that the agents who worked from home simply followed the same fixed schedules and the procedures as those physically present in the contact center. Within a short time, it became apparent that this method would be successful only within limited parameters: Sutherland struggled with throughput that impeded growth of CloudSource programs beyond a few hundred agents. Existing infrastructure and legacy brick-and-mortar processes were unable to keep up with demand and/or scalability requirements.

> **The Challenge**
>
> - A leading telecommunications work-at-home program that had difficulty scaling programs beyond a few hundred agents
> - Higher than normal attrition rates
> - Client demand for greater efficiency and flexibility for contact center services

A telecommunications client's struggle to grow program headcount illustrates work-at-home challenges. Members of the team in charge of develop-

ing and managing CloudSource asked themselves what they could do to overcome the program scalability "brick wall" and expand successfully. The client was experiencing two call spikes per day with a long idle time in between. Typically, a single full-time agent would be scheduled to cover both periods, but would be largely idle during the lull, causing unnecessary shrinkage. At the same time, other clients were expecting increased efficiency and flexibility in the services Sutherland provided.

The Program Evolves, Stage I

To address their clients' needs and solve the intraday staffing problem, the management team implemented a part-time employment solution that scheduled agents in shifts that included high volume periods. They launched a nationwide recruitment drive and soon had a full complement of part-time agents on board. Within a month of deploying the new agents, they were confronted with a higher-than-expected attrition rate. Exit interviews revealed the reason: the agents needed fulltime work and left as soon as they found a fulltime position. Dave Holdridge, Assistant Vice-President, Client Services at Sutherland, says the interviews provided the team with invaluable insight. "Those interviews gave us a big 'aha moment.' We knew we had to make changes and we now saw the direction we needed to go in."

The Program Evolves, Stage II: *an Employee-Centric Model via Agent Empowerment Technology*

Since the part-time employment model had failed to remedy the work-at-home program's "scalability ailments," the team developed a new, employee-centric business model that would provide agents with maximum self-scheduling flexibility: they could work full-time or part-time and they could manage their own schedules. Realizing the new model, however, required *enabling* technology – a solution that would:

- Provide agents with anywhere/any-time access to their schedules

- Allow agents to personalize communication methods and "do-not-disturb" times

- Allow agents to pre-define time periods of interest for Extra Hours or Time Off

- Allow agents to see time slots where they could add/reduce/change hours with assured instant approval before they made a request

- Automate intraday staffing analysis, optimal solution identification and agent communication

- Automate schedule-updating in Sutherland's existing Workforce Management (WFM) system

The technology vendor whose solution met all of Sutherland's criteria was WorkFlex Solutions. Designed to easily integrate with existing WFM systems, WorkFlex software offered Sutherland an intelligent intraday empowerment suite that included a mobile agent app allowing agents to view and manage their own schedules, a real-time administrator (RTA) app enabling WFM administrators to optimize intraday staffing levels, and a tablet-optimized supervisor app enabling Supervisors to more effectively monitor and manage their team's performance.

The Program Evolves, Stage 3: *Automated Intraday Staffing*

Connor Sinclair, Workforce Manager for CloudSource, explains how the WorkFlex application automates staffing for Sutherland's work-at-home program. "The WorkFlex interface for agents lets users add preferences about how they want to be contacted

(email, phone call, SMS), when they want to be contacted, and when they wish not to be disturbed. Setting these preferences ensures that they receive Extra Hours or Time Off notifications only for time frames they're interested in. WorkFlex alerts the real-time administrators (RTA's) when there's a staffing variance coming and provides recommended actions to address the staffing variance,

> **The Solution**
>
> - An employee-centric business model
> - WorkFlex Solutions' Intelligent Automated Intraday Staffing Solution
> - Agent empowerment through agent-defined preferences and schedule control

including a list of agents who optimally meet our skills and availability criteria. The RTA can decide whether or not to accept all or part of the recommendation. The agent receiving notifications can immediately accept or reject the schedule change request. Acceptance rates for call-outs has improved dramatically because we're eliminating the spam effect by only contacting agents who have pre-indicated an interest for those time periods. All of this happens without our having to do anything except click once to send out the notifications."

The Program Evolves, Stage 4: *Agent Self-Scheduling Empowerment*

"'Schedule adherence' has gone up because we let people work when they want to work instead of when we tell them to work," Sinclair notes. Agents can easily view their schedule anytime (and with the mobile app, *anywhere*) and if they need to change their schedule, they are empowered to do so. "By enabling our agents to instantly adjust their schedules based on our latest staffing needs, they are helping us optimize staffing levels," he adds. "We schedule fulltime agents for 30 hours per week, and, using Work-Flex, they can choose as many hours as they want beyond that up to 45. The part-timers are scheduled for 20 hours and can pick up an additional nine. The agents love it! They've never had this kind of control over their schedule. WorkFlex self-scheduling

technology uniquely addresses a long-felt but previously unmet need in workforce management."

> ### The Benefits
>
> - Work-at-home program growth to 3,000 agents
> - 96% of schedule changes initiated by agents rather than management
> - 95% of agent initiated schedule changes automatically approved
> - Agent utilization improvement of over 3 hours per agent per month

The Big Payoff

The technology investment Sutherland has made in improving the work-at-home program has paid off handsomely. The agent population has grown to 3,000, agent utilization has increased by over three hours per agent per month and staffing gaps are filled without anyone having to lift a finger. "Our agents are now making over 96% of the schedule changes themselves," Sinclair notes. "We don't even have to ask them to do overtime or take voluntary time off. They just do it on their own." The result is a significant reduction in intraday scheduling tasks and accompanying pressure for WFM administrators, higher job satisfaction for agents and clients who are extraordinarily pleased with Sutherland's performance.

> *"Think about it from the agent's perspective. If you have a personal situation come up, you don't have to beg the boss for a shift trade. You can just do it yourself. It's a much better employee experience."*
>
> *-Frank Kelly, SVP CloudSource*

According to Rob Mackey, Vice-President of Workforce Management, WorkFlex has been so effective for Sutherland in the work-at-home arena that the company is now considering a rollout for their brick-and- mortar agents, too. "Talk to us again in a year," says Mackey, smiling. For the moment, he and the entire Sutherland team are enjoying the success of the current program.

ABOUT SUTHERLAND GLOBAL SERVICES

Established in 1986, Sutherland Global Services is a global provider of business process and technology management services offering an integrated portfolio of analytics-driven back-office and customer facing solutions that support the entire customer lifecycle.

Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland is one of the world's largest independent BPO companies employing over 30,000+ professionals across 40+ operation centers and business operations located in Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Slovakia, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States.

Since inception, Sutherland has remained laser-focused on a single mission: to help our clients maximize their customer lifetime value and increase their competitive advantage by helping drive productivity and efficiency while delivering measurable results.

To Learn More about Sutherland Global Services

Please visit www.sutherlandglobal.com.

About WorkFlex

WorkFlex Solutions LLC is a software and services company specializing in SaaS-based Intelligent Intraday Automation technology for the Contact Center Industry. Our patented, award-winning solutions are designed to easily integrate with existing Workforce Management (WFM), Automated Call Distribution (ACD) and Performance Management (PM) systems, enabling clients to leverage their existing enterprise investments and generate a positive ROI within weeks of deployment. WorkFlex clients include Service Providers and Business Process Outsourcers (BPO's) spanning multiple industry segments including Financial Services, Healthcare, Media/Entertainment, Communications and Government.

To Learn More about WorkFlex

Please visit our website at www.WorkFlexSolutions.com