

# Centerplate

Using Shiftboard, Centerplate manages 400 labor union workers at DC Convention Center.

## Summary

Centerplate (CP) handles all catering and hospitality services for the 2.3 million-square-foot Washington DC Convention Center. Scheduling 400 union workers across multiple departments while complying with union labor regulations was nearly impossible with manual systems. Scrambling to find workers at the last minute, overtime costs, and lack of visibility into how the schedule impacted the budget were major issues.

Centerplate-DC turned to Shiftboard, which allowed them to schedule workers across ten departments while satisfying labor union rules. Shiftboard also streamlined communication between schedulers and line managers, and provided much-needed financial reporting and forecasting.

|             |                |                |               |                 |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>400</b>  | <b>703k</b>    | <b>198k</b>    | <b>77</b>     | <b>500-42k</b>  |
| union staff | sq/ft exhibits | sq/ft meetings | meeting rooms | attendees/event |

## Challenge

The Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington DC hosts large business and political conferences, including twelve inaugural balls for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Like many entertainment venues, sports facilities, and convention centers, changes are frequent as events are added, removed, or start times change.

Centerplate is an event venue catering and hospitality services company that provides food and beverage products, staffing, and services to the convention center using 400 union servers, bartenders, cooks, and retail employees. It's their job to make sure multiple simultaneous events are fully staffed with workers who have the correct skills, proper credentials on file, and who are available, while adhering to union rules and minimizing overtime costs.

Curtis McDonald, Centerplate-DC CFO, manages the administrative team that coordinates all staffing and financial planning for the DC Convention Center. For every event, McDonald's team has a broad workforce management charter that includes integrating staffing requests from ten line managers across multiple departments while complying with union seniority rules and managing overall labor costs to meet financial metrics.

*"The system is definitely working for us. We are hitting our numbers and have been for the past 2-3 months."*

Curtis McDonald  
Chief Financial Officer

## Results

Centralized managing multiple departments with one scheduling and labor forecasting system

Provided managers and employees with access to view the calendar 24/7

Integrated easily with existing 3rd-party software

Complied with union labor regulations while avoiding overtime costs



Centerplate provides all food and beverage products, staffing, and services for the Washington DC Convention Center with a union labor force of 400 servers, bartenders, cooks, and retail employees.

# Solution

*“Keeping in mind all the seniority requirements in our previous spreadsheet paradigm was very time consuming, to put it mildly.”*

Curtis McDonald, Chief Financial Officer

Centerplate-DC needed new labor management software and chose Shiftboard, which was rolled out within weeks. The CP scheduling team immediately benefited from Shiftboard's auto-scheduling functions. A Centerplate scheduler can now load an entire department's shifts for the week or month and use Shiftboard's auto-scheduler to fill them.

All shifts are now easily assigned based on seniority without double-booking an employee or scheduling overtime. *“Keeping in mind all the seniority requirements in our previous spreadsheet paradigm was very time consuming to put it mildly,”* said McDonald.

Shiftboard also standardized the communication process between the schedulers and line managers. *“We used to receive staffing requests via email, or spreadsheet, or handwritten on a napkin for that matter,”* said McDonald. *“We trained all the line managers to use Shiftboard's excel template for loading shifts, and then the schedulers could just check the template. It made everyone happier.”*

Another benefit of Shiftboard's staff scheduling software was executive reporting, which provided insight into shifts, total hours, and especially labor cost forecasting. Every worker scheduled has a certain number of hours and a pay rate, which the system pulls together in real-time.

*“Because we can immediately see the impact of the schedule in terms of labor forecasts for tomorrow or next week, we can make adjustments before we incur the cost,”* said McDonald. *“It's a nice change to act upon the information instead of reacting to already-incurred payroll costs.”*



WA. DC Convention Center

Shiftboard met another critical requirement by allowing Centerplate to integrate directly with their time tracking system, Attendance Enterprise, once the schedule had been created. Now, a custom report is created in the correct format, allowing Attendance Enterprise to automatically invoke limitations around early check-in, as well as provide adherence reported around scheduled vs. actual times.

McDonald summarized Shiftboard in terms of targeted financial metrics, *“The system is definitely working for us. We are hitting our numbers and have been for the past 2-3 months.”*