

# ***CrmXchange & SRC Eduseries***

Forecasting with Accuracy

# Agenda

## Forecasting With Accuracy

- March: Data Management Recap
- Forecasting vs Capacity Planning
- Key Steps in Forecasting
- Common Forecasting Challenges
- Next Steps



## March Session

### Data Management Recap

**How to Build A RELIABLE Workforce Foundation** by implementing a **Strategic Data Management process.**

# *Your Data Should Be CLEAR™*

## **Our Data Management Framework**

**Collect** – Data Collection/Centralized

**Log** – Data Format/Integration

**Evaluate** – Data Analysis

**Arrange** – Data Presentation

**Remove** – Data Retention





# Let's Level Set

## Forecasting vs Capacity Planning

### Long Range:

A **Long-Range Plan** is a **forecast of future workload demand**—typically 6 to 12 months out—based on historical trends, seasonality, growth assumptions, and strategic initiatives.

### Capacity Plan:

A **Capacity Plan** takes the long-range forecast and translates it into **resource requirements**—specifically, how many people (FTEs) are needed to meet demand while achieving service level, cost, and staffing



# Forecasting

## Long-Range Plan

Predicts future **demand**

Focused on **volume** (calls, chats, etc.)

Strategic for **growth planning**

Based on **trends and business inputs**

## Capacity Plan

Calculates future **staffing needs**

Focused on **FTEs** (people/resources)

Tactical for **headcount and hiring**

Based on **AHT, shrinkage, SL targets, occupancy**

# Forecasting

With Accuracy: Predicting Labor Demands

## Phase 1

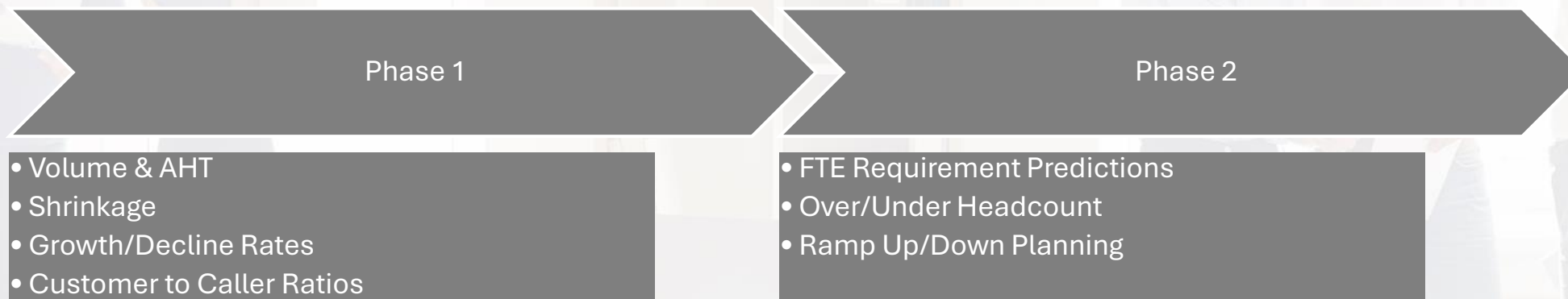
### Input Variables:

- Historical Volume & AHT Goal (Average Handle Time)
- Historical Shrinkage
- Growth/Declined Rate
- Customer/Member to Call Ratio
- Active Members

## Phase 2

### Outputs Projections:

- Total FTE Required
- Over/Under Headcount
- Ramp Up/down Plan



# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

Key Steps in Forecasting w/ Accuracy!

## Demand Forecasting Steps:

1. Confirm Forecast Goal
2. Define Timeframe
3. Identify Relevant Historical Data Points
4. Analyze Trends & Drivers
5. Apply Forecasting Model



# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 1: Confirm Forecast Goal

### Why are we forecasting?

Is this to support hiring, budgeting, vendor planning, seasonal readiness, or executive reporting?

- Forecasts should change based on purpose.
- Example: A forecast for vendor negotiations might be more conservative, while internal hiring might require higher confidence intervals.

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 2: Define Timeframes

**What window are we forecasting?**

**Long-range:** 6–12 months

**Short-term:** 1–4 weeks

**Intraday:** Down to 15-min intervals (for July's session 😊)

- More granularity = more precision required.
- The model you choose depends heavily on the timeframe.

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 3: Identify Relevant Historical Data Points

### Not All Data is Created Equally NOR is it Needed!

Pull at least 12–18 months of historical data when possible.

- **Exclude** anomalies: outages, system issues, special events.
- **Include:** contact volume, handle time, channel breakout.

⚠ *Bad data = bad forecast, no matter the model.*

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 4: Analyze Trends & Drivers

**Look for the “why” in your volume changes.**

- Seasonality (holidays, open enrollment)
- Events (product launches, billing cycles)
- Customer behavior changes (policy updates, promo activity)
- Business growth/decline rates

Use YoY, MoM, and Week-over-week analysis to layer in understanding.

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 5: Apply Forecasting Model

**Now we model. *But don't let the model think for you.***

Start simple:

- Moving averages
  - Weighted averages
  - Regression analysis
  - Seasonally adjusted trending
- 
- Overlay business context on top of the math.

# Let's See This In Real Life!

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# BayCare Health



## Scenario

BayCare Health a healthcare contact center is preparing for the upcoming **Open Enrollment season** (October–December).

- The organization is launching **a new health plan** and expects to onboard **50,000 new members**.
- The contact center only handles **voice calls** and needs to **forecast how many calls** will come in during this enrollment period based on these new members

# BayCare Health

## Scenario

### Contact Center Snapshot:

- **Channel:** Voice only
- **Operating Hours:** Monday–Friday, 8AM–6PM
- **Forecasting Purpose:** Predict the number of incoming **calls per week** during the enrollment period
- **Key Factor:** Estimate the **call volume-to-member ratio** for new enrollees

### 💡 What We're Solving:

“How many **additional calls** should we expect because of the 50,000 new members?”

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

✖ Step 1: Confirm the Forecasting Goal and Audience

## 🎯 Goal:

- Predict **total voice call volume** expected from 50,000 new health plan members during Open Enrollment—so the **CFO** can model contact center costs for the pricing of a new client contract.

## 💡 Key Considerations for CFO-Focused Forecasting:

- Forecast should highlight **call-per-member ratio**, total **call volume**, and **timing of call spikes**
- Avoid granular agent-level planning—focus on **volume** → **cost implications**
- Include **best case, expected case, and worst-case** volume scenarios for risk modeling

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 2: Define the Timeframe

### Chosen Window:

October to December (Open Enrollment window)

Volume forecasted in **monthly buckets** to align with CFO budget modeling

### Note:

CFO doesn't need week-by-week data—they need monthly totals that can feed into financial forecasts, margin models, and contractual pricing.

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 3: Identify Relevant Historical Data

### What to Pull:

- Member-to-call ratios from previous enrollment seasons (e.g., 1 call per 3 members in 2023)
- Monthly call totals during Open Enrollment in prior years
- Call drivers that impacted overall cost-to-serve (plan complexity, benefit changes)

### Why it matters:

- CFOs care about **cost per member** or **cost per call**—your forecast needs to be credible and defensible using past patterns.

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 4: Analyze Trends & Drivers

### **Observed Trend:**

- Last year: 40,000 members generated ~16,000 calls during Open Enrollment
- 40% of those calls came in the first month

### **This Year's Forecast Driver Adjustments:**

- Adding 50,000 New Members.
- 3:1 Member to call Ratio
- More complex plans = likely increase in questions
- Driver timing: Welcome packets sent week 1, plan effective date week 4



# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

## Step 5: Apply a Forecasting Model

### **Model Approach:**

- Base call ratio: 1 call per 3 members
- Volume distributed:
  - October: 45%
  - November: 35%
  - December: 20%

Month	% of Total	Forecasted Calls
October	45%	<b>7,500</b>
November	35%	<b>5,833</b>
December	20%	<b>3,334</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,667</b>

# Forecasting w/ Accuracy

 Step 5: Apply a Forecasting Model (NOW FLIP THAT)

## Model Approach:

- Base call ratio: 3 call per 1 member
- Volume distributed:
  - October: 45%
  - November: 35%
  - December: 20%

Month	% of Total	Calls (≈)
October	45%	67,500
November	35%	52,500
December	20%	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>150,000</b>



# My Journey



# Juanita Coley

SOLIDROCK CONSULTING, CEO  
THE CONTACT CENTER WHISPERER  
**Author of "WFM Go Beyond"**

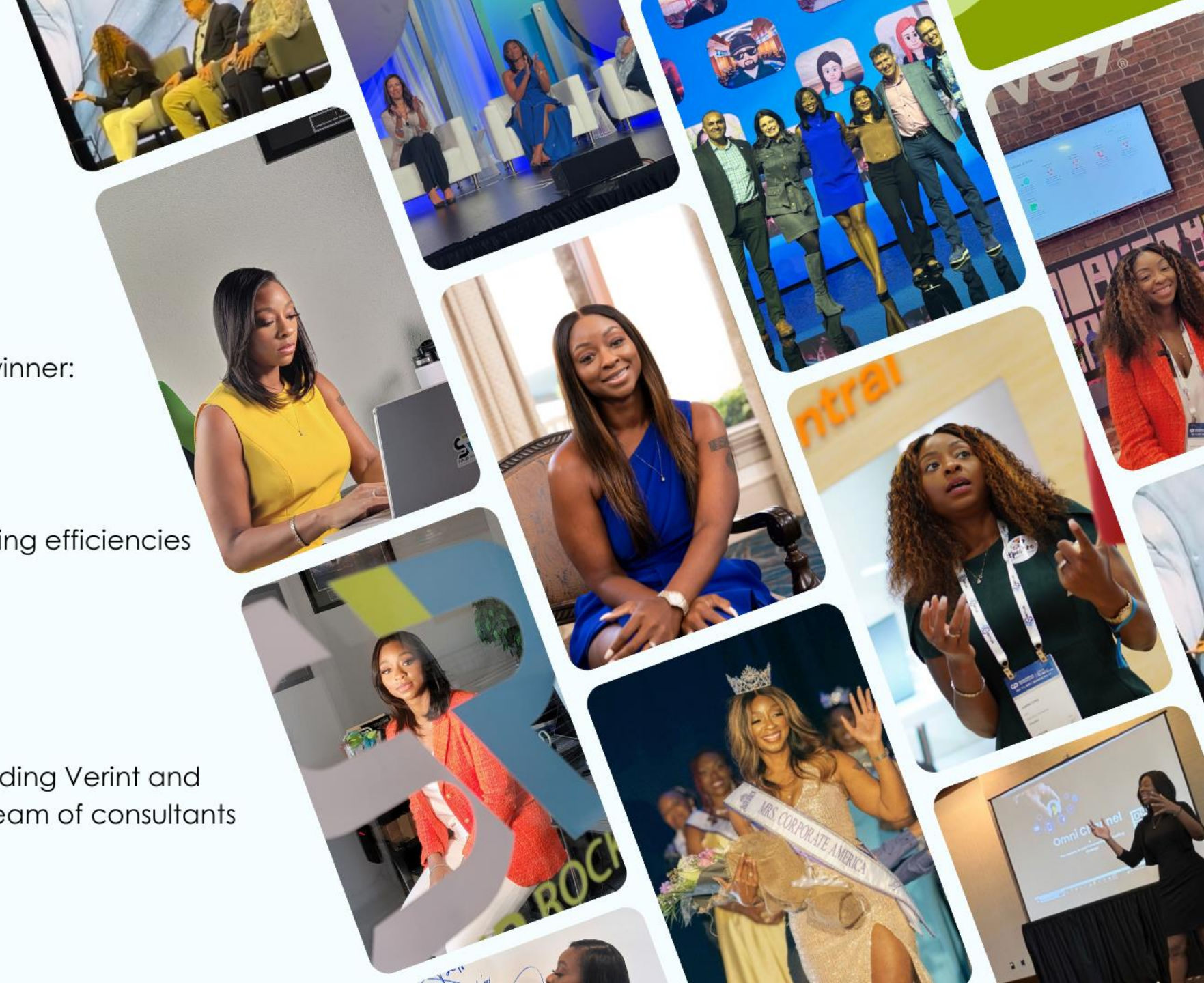
Recognized industry leader & award winner:

- Mrs. Corporate America 2022
- 2022 Most Influential Tech Advisor
- 2022 Top 25 Thought Leader

Over 20 years of expertise in WFM, driving efficiencies for brands like:

- United HealthCare
- Optum
- Walgreens
- Liberty Medical

Consulted for top WFM providers, including Verint and Aspect. Global presence—leading a team of consultants across the US, Canada, and EMEA.



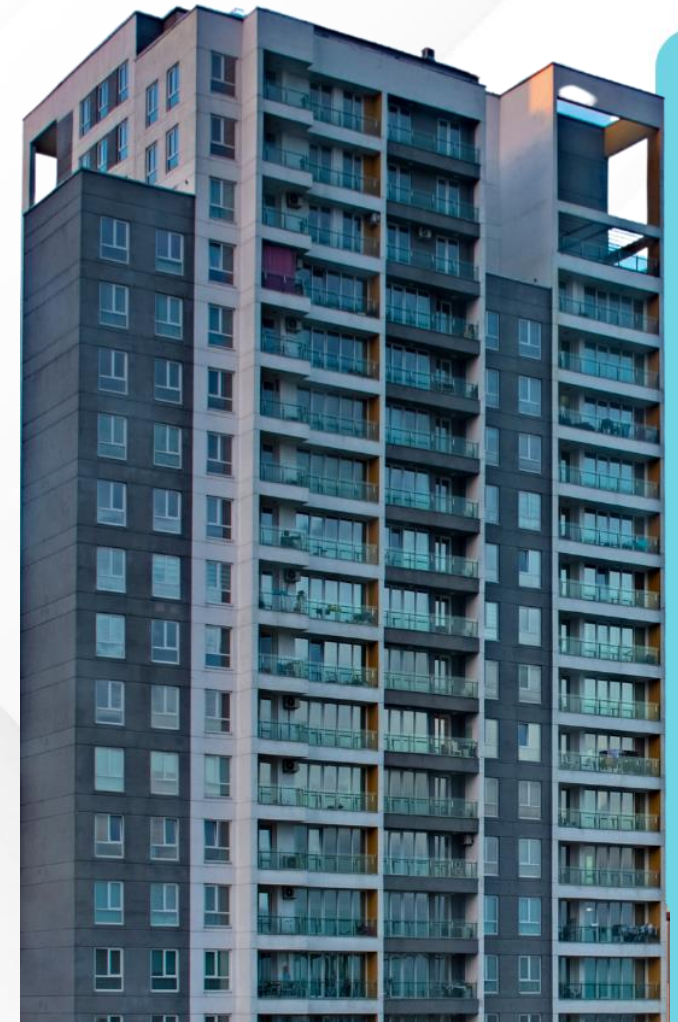


# Common Forecasting Challenges & Overcoming Them!

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# The Big Problem...

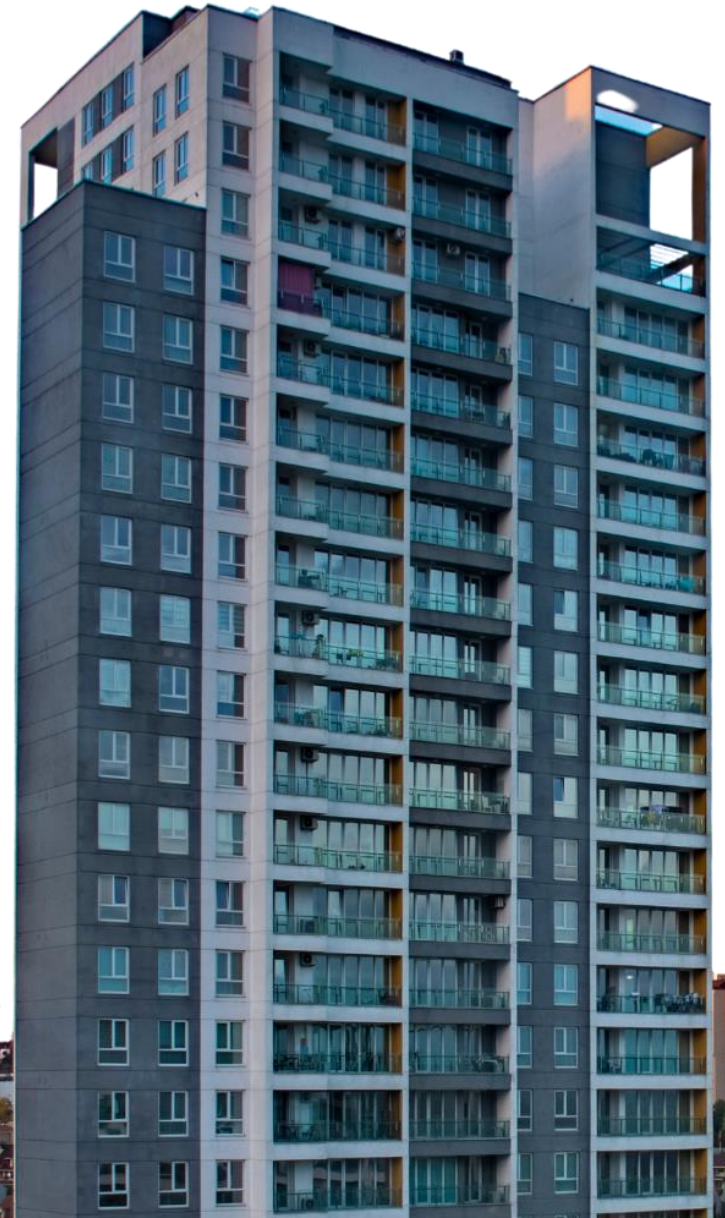




# What didn't work...



# What I Discovered That Gave Me The Epiphany





# Forecasting Framework



# Impact from this Framework...

**38% reduction in work, 2.5x improved decision turnaround.**



**44% forecast accuracy improvement**



**63% more likely to land with +/- 5% of actuals**





# Secret #1

***Know Your Audience*** – When forecasts are built without understanding the **decision-maker/Goal**—context is missing, format, detail, and insights miss the mark.



## ***Secret #2***

***Dirty or Incomplete Data*** – Old, inaccurate, or miscategorized data skews volume predictions before modeling even starts.



## ***Secret #3***

**Ignoring Volume Drivers** – Many forecasts overlook **behavior-based ratios** (e.g., how many calls per member) or what's changing in the business this time around.

# Key Points to Remember

- ✓ Start with the **goal** and **audience** in mind—don't build a forecast that no one can use.
- ✓ Dirty data leads to wrong assumptions, missed targets, and unnecessary costs.
- ✓ Understand the **drivers**—like call-to-member ratios, plan complexity, and business events—that shape your volume.
- ✓ Don't jump into formulas or tools before you've done the groundwork: goal, timeframe, data, and trends.
- ✓ Your job isn't to guess the future—it's to help leaders plan for it.



Remember!

# Grab your **FREE** Gift!

*\*Just Cover Shipping*




*Juanita Coley*

CEO, SOLID ROCK CONSULTING, AUTHOR,  
CONTACT CENTER WHISPERER





# Remaining Session In Series



💡 **July 16 – Optimizing Schedules:** In this session, we'll explore schedule optimization techniques that maximize productivity while accommodating employee preferences. Learn how to create flexible schedules, and improve operational efficiency without sacrificing employee experience.

💡 **September 17 – Managing Real Time:** In this session, we'll cover the key components of effective intraday management, from monitoring performance in real-time to making proactive staffing adjustments. Discover how to improve adherence, reduce service disruptions, and ensure your team remains agile in an ever-changing environment.

